

Tri-State Community Church

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*Gathering a family who loves and serves God through
Jesus Christ and leads others in kind.*

**A Bible Study in Mark
Two Observations Concerning Servant Hood**

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John 13:1-18

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Two Observations Concerning Servant Hood

Last time we took a week off from our studies in Mark to consider a significant event that took place during what we call Jesus' Last Supper. This would be the last time during His earthly ministry that Jesus would enjoy a meal with His disciples for that night He would be arrested, tried, and later crucified.

According to the Gospel of John, Jesus *knew that His hour had come to depart out of this world. Loving His disciples, Jesus rose from the supper. He laid aside His outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around His waist. Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around Him (John 13:4-5).*

This story often sounds a bit strange to 21st century Americans but if we were 1st century Jews we would be very accustomed to foot washing. In 1st century Palestine, the "Reeboks" of the day were sandals. Imagine walking in sandals for even a short distance on dry dusty roads. In no time your feet would be very soiled. Because of this, many households had a servant whose job was to wash the feet of guests. If you did not have such a servant your guests would not expect you, the host, to perform this task for it was given only to the lowliest of servants.

This is why Peter objects to Jesus washing his feet. This was no task for his Lord. Peter tells Jesus "*You shall never wash my feet*" (vs. 8a). But Jesus answered, "*If I do not wash you, you have no share with Me*" (vs. 8b).

I have returned to this story to make two observations. The first is this:

No task is too lowly for the follower of Christ

The author to the Letter to the Hebrews tells us that Jesus *upholds the universe by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3)*. John tells us that *all things were made through Jesus and without Him was not any thing made that was made*" (John 1:3).

If Jesus, the sovereign Creator of the universe, was not opposed to rolling up His majestic sleeves to serve others what excuse could we offer in refusing to do so?

There is no place for pride in Christian service. Jesus said, "*If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done*" (John 13:14-15).

How do we apply this? Should we go around washing one another's feet? There is a ministry known as Samaritans Feet that does exactly that. This ministry attempts to provide shoes for the approximately 300 million people around the world who wake up

¹ Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version.

each morning without them. Imagine what your feet would look like if you did not own shoes? As part of the giving process, the folks of Samaritans Feet wash the feet of those they provide shoes for.

By washing their feet, the folks at Samaritans Feet demonstrate love and humility in the spirit of Christ—something that could not be accomplished by simply handing out shoes.

In our contemporary culture, however, obedience to Christ's charge will not involve the literal washing of one's feet but of providing some kind of service that is needed. This could be going to the grocery store, mowing the grass, shoveling snow, or running simple errands for someone who is unable to do so themselves. Now for our second observation:

The violations of others do not dismiss the follower of Christ from servant hood

Let us consider whose feet Jesus is washing. One of them is Peter. Peter will deny Jesus three times before the evening is over. Another is a betrayer. Judas Iscariot will sell Jesus out for thirty pieces of silver. Upon His arrest, the others would scatter abandoning Jesus in fear.

Jesus knew all of this for He predicted it. Peter's denial does not stop Jesus from serving him. Judas' betrayal does not cause Jesus to skip him. The desertion on the part of the others does not stop Jesus from lovingly serving them.

Let us praise God that we too have realized Jesus' serving touch. Our sins have not caused Jesus to stop serving us. Our violations against God and one another have not stopped Jesus from serving us. Our denial and desertion of Jesus has not stopped Him from serving us.

What should be our response to such a great One as Jesus? Repentance, faith and loving commitment. If you have never committed your life to Jesus consider your blessings. If you are a committed follower of Jesus then I hope this meditation strengthens you.

Christ's call to servant hood is a call to serve even those who do not always treat us the way we like. Christ calls us to serve those who are difficult in the work place, family members who have mistreated us, and others who are perhaps difficult to get along with.

Before I sign off, however, I want to qualify my second point with this warning. I do not wish to apply this observation to victims of chronic abuse. It is very probable that you could serve your abuser by simply getting away from them. If you or someone you love is such a one please seek guidance.

Until next time, May God richly bless you!

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