

I. Introduction

- A. John 13:1-17 . . . Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing (*a knowledge of future events*) that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. [2] During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him, [3] Jesus, knowing (*a confidence boosting knowledge*) that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, [4] got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. [5] Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. [6] So He came to Simon Peter, and [Peter] said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" (*Is it right for the master to wash his servant's feet?*) [7] Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter." [8] Peter said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." [9] Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." [10] Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." [11] For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean." [12] So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? [13] You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. [14] If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. [15] For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. [16] Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. [17] If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.
- B. There is much that can be taught from these 17 verses, however, we will consider just five things. (Vs 1) Those who belong to Jesus are loved by Him to the end. (Vs 2) The devil and the worlds allurements are not just tempting you to turn away from God, but against Him. (Vs 3-5) If you are a Christian, then voluntary, humble service to those around you is the norm which grows out of a serious pursuit of godliness, a healthy sense

of security in God, and confidence in God's will and work in your life. (Vs 6-11) Use the clean parts as a foundation and helpful advantage in submitting to God's work of cleansing the dirty parts. (Vs 17) Living up to what we know makes us blessed.

C. Pray

II. Five lessons from John 13:1-17

A. (Vs 1) Those who belong to Jesus are loved by Jesus to the end.

1. Paul said God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were still willfully practicing sin, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).
 - a. John gives us a practical picture of this demonstration of love by telling us that in spite of it being just days away from the pain, suffering, injustice, and sacrifice associated with the cross, Jesus remained focused on loving those around Him – to His last breath.
 - b. As we see in vs 3-16, Jesus – first by example and then by word – taught His disciples a valuable lesson about humility and service in relation to leadership or just being part of a community.
 - c. We see in John 13:21-17:26, that Jesus ate a meal with His disciples, prepared them for what was to come, taught them essential truths for godly living, warned them about the cost of ministry, gave them promises to rely on, comforted them, and prayed for them.
 - d. In John 18:10, as well as in the other gospel accounts, we read that Jesus calmed the crowd that came to arrest Him and Peter by healing the soldier whose ear Peter cut off. And He calmed His disciples by reminding them that the victory wouldn't be won by swords – thus preventing further bloodshed.
 - e. In John 19:27, Jesus, while hanging on the cross, told John to take care of Mary, Jesus' mother, and told His mother that John would be like a son to her in the years ahead.
 - f. And though he was not a disciple, Jesus assured the repentant thief that he would be with Jesus in Paradise (Luke 23:39-43).
2. My purpose in reminding you of these individual accounts of Jesus' last days on the earth is to show you that Jesus not only loved His own when life was a lot easier, but He continued to love them in practical and observable ways when life got a lot worse.
 - a. In other words, at a time when most people would be absorbed by their own troubles, or feeling sorry for themselves, or seeking some sort of relief or comfort or encouragement or sympathy from others, Jesus was not seeking to be loved, but rather to love.

- b. You see, love is focused on giving, not receiving. And if you grasp the significance of this, then you understand these words from 1 Corinthians 13:5, “Love does not seek its own good.”
- 3. There are just two points I want to make from John’s statement about Jesus loving His own to the end.
 - a. First, if in the worst days of His life on earth Jesus made the needs of others a priority over His needs, then can we not feel secure in His love regardless of our circumstances? I am convinced we can! And one of the chapters in the Bible that encourages me to remain confident that I am safe in God’s hands, is Romans 8, which contains these three statements:
 - (1) And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).
 - (2) He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Christ freely give us all things? (Romans 8:32)
 - (3) Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? [36] Just as it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." [37] But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loves us (Romans 8:35-37).
 - (4) Whether you believe it or not, we are loved by God, and we are safe in His hands. And so I urge you, trust His love! No matter how bad life looks or how painful life gets or how sad and heartbroken you are, trust and rest in God’s love.
 - b. The second point I want to make about Jesus loving His own to the end is, “Make loving others a priority over being loved so that even in your darkest days you continue to love those around you just as Jesus continued to love those around Him.”
 - (1) John said it this way in 1 John 4:11, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”
 - (2) I am keenly aware how easy it is to focus on ourselves, our needs, our relief, and our happiness when life is at its worst.
 - (3) But I am also keenly aware that when we dwell in God, and walk with God, and live to please God – by the power of God, it becomes a whole lot easier and makes a whole lot more sense to make loving others our priority.

(4) Therefore, if you are grateful for God's love for you, give as you have received and in so doing, make others grateful for your love for them.

B. (Vs 2) The devil and the world's allurements are not just tempting us to turn away from God in order to do our own thing, but to turn against Him.

1. James drives this truth home when he says, "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4).

a. The imagery here is of a marriage relationship where God is the husband and we are His wife.

b. The act of adultery, the hostility, and making ourselves God's enemy takes place when we become unfaithful to God by choosing friendship with the world over God.

c. Consider: when we choose to live according to any of the ungodly practices of the world, or when we base any of our choices and behavior on the ungodly values and principles that the world embraces, or when we pursue any of the ungodly goals the world esteems, or when we participate in those worldly amusements and gratifications that feed self-centeredness and self-indulgence, we are committing adultery, with the enemy, against God.

d. Therefore, our adultery is an act of hostility toward God, which in turn means we've made ourselves an enemy of God.

2. And this is exactly what the devil and the world want. They are not investing all this effort just to turn us away from God. Their efforts are aimed at turning us against God – just as the serpent did with Eve. Therefore, be very wary of allowing any sinful ways to enter in or remain in your life, for such allowances will turn you against God even while you think you are for God.

C. (Vs 3-5) If you are a Christian, then voluntary, humble service to those around you is the norm which grows out of a serious pursuit of godliness, a healthy sense of security in God, and confidence in God's will and work in your life.

1. Jesus knew that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God – and it was with this confidence that He willingly and humbly served those who should have been willingly and humbly serving Him. And there are three points I want to make with this.

2. First, regardless of your heritage, education, or leadership skills, you are not worthy to be a leader if you do not voluntarily and humbly serve those you are leading.
 - a. Jesus made this clear when He said, “The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. [26] It is not [to be] this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, [27] and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; [28] just as (*or as demonstrated by*) the Son of Man (*who*) did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:24-28).
 - b. Jesus also asked, “Who is greater, the one who is seated at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is seated at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves” (Luke 22:27).
 - c. Without question, Jesus was the greatest among them, yet He voluntarily and humbly served those around Him – as if He was their servant rather than their leader.
 - d. Therefore, I encourage everyone of us who is in some leadership position to follow Christ’s example of voluntary and humble service to those around us.
3. Second, if you are a Christian and either a leader or the one being led, a boss or a worker, the teacher or a student, married or single, a husband or a wife, a parent or a child, old or young, or male or female, then you ought to have a servant’s mindset.
 - a. Paul said it this way, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; [4] do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. [5] Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.” Then, Paul goes on to describe Christ’s humble, service oriented attitude, mindset, and way of living (Philippians 2:3-8).
 - b. In other words, not only does God expect leaders to have the mindset of a humble servant and set the example by voluntarily and humbly serving, He expects all who believe in Him to have the mindset and attitude of a servant so that all of us live lives of voluntary, humble service to those around us.
 - c. Now, should you think that such a life-style will result in being taken advantage of, let me remind you of several scripture truths.
 - (1) Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). Now if we receive greater blessings when giving than

when receiving, it is reasonable to conclude that we will receive greater blessings from serving than from being served.

(2) In addition, Jesus said, “Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return” (Luke 6:38).

(a) In other words, you cannot give a way more than God will replenish – and His replenishment will always exceed your giving.

(b) In the same way, you cannot lose from serving more than God will replenish – and it is my experience that His replenishment always exceeds what you lose by serving others.

(3) And finally, Jesus said, “Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted” (Matthew 23:12). And James adds, “God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6). In other words, pride sets God against you – which no one needs because life is hard enough – whereas humility gains God’s favor, His blessing, His grace, and His eventual exaltation.

d. Therefore, though God expects all Christians to have a servant’s mindset and behavior, it is wise and to your benefit to nurture this mindset and live accordingly.

4. Third, voluntary, humble service does not come from our old nature. The mindset, attitudes, values, and heart for such service comes from a serious pursuit of godliness, and from believing you are safe in God’s hands, and from confidence in God’s will and work in your life.

a. If you recognize that you lack the mindset, the attitudes, the values, and the heart for voluntary, humble service, then persevere in pursuing that which builds godliness, and a healthy sense of security in God, and a confidence in the will and work of God in your life – for what you persist in pursuing, you will become.

D. (Vs 6-11) Use the clean parts as a foundation and helpful advantage in submitting to God’s work of cleansing the dirty parts.

1. Peter wanted Jesus to wash his hands and his head, but Jesus said that was not necessary because only his feet were dirty.

a. In that culture and at that time, most transportation was by sandal covered feet on dirt roads or dirt paths. Just the dust

- stirred up by your footsteps made your feet dirty, let alone whatever else you may step in along the way.
- b. However, just because your feet get dirty from a trip doesn't mean that other exposed parts, like your hands and your head, get dirty. And if you bathed before making the trip, all but your feet are clean. In other words, only your feet picked up the dust and dirt of the world as you traveled to your destination.
2. My point is this. If you are walking with God and making an honest effort to live a godly, God-pleasing life, and if you are up-to-date in dealing with past known sins – by repenting, confessing, and making things right with God and those you hurt – then you are clean.
 - a. Should you sin again, only that part of you that got tainted or dirty from the sin needs cleansing, rest is still clean.
 - b. And why is this important? Because some of us think that when we sin we become completely dirty – as if there is no good left within us – which leads to unnecessary discouragement and the belief that God has completely turned against us or has abandoned us or that there is no hope of becoming the new creation in Christ Jesus that we have been saved to become.
 3. However, if only the sinful part needs cleansing, that means the rest of you can be used to build on, and strengthen, and give encouragement for pressing forward in making measurable and commendable progress in godliness – in spite of having sinned.
 4. Therefore, when you sin, keep perspective. For sure, take full responsibility for your sin, yet at the same time, use the good that is in you to strengthen your resolve to be godly, to prepare you to resist future temptations, to grow in Christ-likeness, and to persevere in pursuing a God-pleasing life.

III. Conclusion

- A. We will finish today's teaching with an absolutely true statement from vs 17), "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."
 1. Knowledge of God and His word is good. Living according to the knowledge you have about God and His word is better, because it brings exceedingly great blessing in this life and in the next.
 2. Therefore, Jesus said that everyone who hears His words and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock" (Matthew 7:24).