

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

JOHN 13.12-26



T. M. Moore

A Scriptorium Study

And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets,

He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24.27

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Gospel of John: John 13.12-26
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Introduction to *John 13.12-26*

Jesus is facing grave danger, suffering, and death. Yet His concern is to love His disciples to the end. This story of Jesus washing His disciples' feet holds many important lessons for the followers of Jesus.

We learn that God's grace is sufficient to sustain and bless, even those who abuse it, and even when self-interest might be clamoring to be satisfied.

We see in this upper room a microcosm of Christ's entire mission – the Master Who came to serve, the Sender Who sends us to serve as He did. The more we set Jesus before us, from every place in Scripture, the more His grace will reach and empower us for following Him.

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1 Conversation Stopper

Read and meditate on John 13.11.

Everything Jesus said was true and important. And everything Jesus did was meaningful and instructive. He wanted to make sure His disciples understood this.

*¹²So having washed their feet,
He took His garments and sat down to eat,
and Jesus said to them, "Now, do you know
what I have done to you?"*

- John 13.12

Reflect

1. Jesus had risen from supper to wash the disciples' feet, and now He was returning to the meal (v. 26; cf. Matt. 26.21). We'll get to the symbolism of this act of Jesus in just a bit. For now, let's see why Jesus thought it important to interrupt His meal to do this. Meals are times for conversation. According to Luke 22.24, what were the disciples arguing about at dinner? What does this conversation reveal about their thinking? How were they defining "great"? Complete this prayer: *Lord, we are not called to seek greatness, not as the world thinks about greatness, at any rate. You want us to be great at...*

2. Doesn't Jesus want us to seek *greatness* in His Kingdom? He does, but what does that mean? Look at Matthew 5.17-19 and Mark 10.42-45. How did Jesus define Kingdom greatness? What had the disciples missed here? *Lord Jesus, I want to be great in your Kingdom, and this means every day...*

3. It was as this conversation was going on that Jesus got up, took off His outer garment, fetched the towel and basin, and headed for His disciples' feet. How do you suppose they felt when they realized what Jesus was doing? What *affections* surged in their hearts? What were they saying to themselves? *I know, Lord, that sometimes I need Your Spirit to convict me, so that...*

4. Now Jesus gives a quiz. Suppose, right at the end of verse 12, Jesus had said, "Write down your answer." What might the disciples have written? What were they thinking *now*, and what were they *feeling*? Was it good for them to be thinking and feeling this way? Explain. *I don't like it when You convict me of my self-centered ways, but I know that...*

5. Jesus was beginning what is referred to as His upper room discourse (chapters 13-16). He wanted to make sure His students are paying attention to *Him*. Which, clearly, they were not. He didn't want them to read what He was about to say through the wrong eyes. He wanted to be clear, and He wanted them to understand. So He began His discourse with a conversation *stopper*. Does He ever do that to you – interrupt your routines with something that jolts you, humbles you, and gets your attention? Explain. When He does this, what does it say about His love for you? Bring together into one the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

Summary

“Jesus washed the feet of the disciples insofar as he was their teacher, and the feet of the servants insofar as he was their Lord. For the dust from the earth and from worldly things is cleared away by teaching, since it reaches nothing else than the extremities and lower parts of the disciples. But those things that defile the feet are also removed by the lordship of the ruler, since he has authority over those who still receive common defilement because they still have the spirit of bondage.” *Origen of Alexandria (185-254 AD)*

Don't fret or become anxious whenever Jesus humbles you or points out some sin in your life. Fret and be anxious when He *doesn't*, or when you don't experience His doing this. Explain.

Closing Prayer

I waited patiently for the LORD;
And He inclined to me,
And heard my cry.
He also brought me up out of a horrible pit,
Out of the miry clay,
And set my feet upon a rock,
And established my steps.
He has put a new song in my mouth—
Praise to our God;
Many will see it and fear,
And will trust in the Lord.
Blessed *is* that man who makes the LORD his trust,
And does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.
Many, O LORD my God, *are* Your wonderful works
Which You have done;
And Your thoughts toward us
Cannot be recounted to You in order;
If I would declare and speak *of them*,
They are more than can be numbered.
Sacrifice and offering You did not desire;
My ears You have opened.
Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.
Then I said, “Behold, I come;
In the scroll of the book *it is* written of me.
I delight to do Your will, O my God,
And Your law is within my heart.”

Psalm 40.1-8

Psalm 40.1-8 (*Dix: For the Beauty of the Earth*)

I waited patiently for God; He inclined and heard my cry,
Lifted me up above the sod, set me on a Rock on high!
New songs in my mouth He gave; may He through me many save.

Blessed are all who trust in You, turning both from lies and pride.

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Countless wonders, Lord, You do, and Your thoughts with us abide.
Lord, Your worth who can declare? None with You can e'er compare.

Off'rings You do not require – open now my ears, O Lord –
What from me do You desire? Firm delight to do Your Word.
Take my life in ev'ry part; write Your Law upon my heart.

2 Show and Tell

Read and meditate on John 13.13.

Jesus offers additional lessons about discipleship and disciple-making.

¹³Since it is so,
You call Me Lord and Teacher, and I am,
¹⁴then learn from My example; understand
if I then, Lord and teacher, washed your feet,
you also ought to wash each other's feet.
¹⁵For I have shown you that you ought to do
as I have done to you."

- John 13.13-15

Reflect

1. Let's look first at the disciple-making aspects of Jesus' words here. First, recall that Jesus has commissioned *all* those taught by the disciples to make disciples. How do you see that in Matthew 28.18-20? Disciple-making makes progress along two fronts, one addressing those who do not believe, and one those who do. Each of these fronts involves a different focus and objective. Explain. Complete this prayer: *Lord, I accept that You have called me to make disciples, and today I will have numerous opportunities to do so. As I look ahead to my day...*

2. First, Jesus explained that disciple-making involves *showing*. This is consistent with what He said in Acts 1.8, where the emphasis is on *being* a witness rather than merely *speaking* a witness. Exemplifying what it means to follow Jesus is the ground and starting-point for making disciples on both fronts of our discipleship calling. Why is this so? What does this require of us? *Let Your Holy Spirit ever guide, direct, instruct, and convict me, Lord, as I...*

3. Second, discipleship involves *explaining* what others see in our lives. Peter learned this lesson, and taught us to be ready to explain ourselves. Meditate on 1 Peter 3.15. How can you see in this a reflection of what Jesus explained in this passage? *I want to be ready at all times, Lord, to explain my love for You. Today, help me by...*

4. As disciple-makers, we must be ready to *show* what it means to follow Jesus, and to *explain* ourselves in the light of His sending us to the world as He was sent (Jn. 20.21). We are to *make* disciples as we are going about the course of our daily lives. Suggest some ways believers might be more alert to and effective at this important calling to make disciples as we are going. *Lord, I am easily distracted from spiritual and eternal matters when I'm going about my daily activities. Help me to...*

5. Finally, Jesus offers an important insight about discipleship, one which He taught throughout the course of His ministry. Meditate on Matthew 7.24-27, Matthew 25.23, and Matthew 25.40 and 45. What do these all have in common with Jesus' teaching in John 13.13-15? What should we learn about being a disciple from these? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote from questions 1-4.

Summary

“Our Lord first did something then taught it, because Jesus, establishing the pattern of a good teacher, taught nothing except those things that he did.” *Venerable Bede (672-735 AD)*

How would you describe the state of your discipleship? Are you eager and consistent at *doing* what the Lord teaches? What about your work of disciple-making? Have you identified your Personal Mission Field? And are you faithfully working it for the purpose of making disciples?

Closing Prayer

I will lift up my eyes to the hills—
From whence comes my help?
My help *comes* from the LORD,
Who made heaven and earth.
He will not allow your foot to be moved;
He who keeps you will not slumber.
Behold, He who keeps Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The LORD *is* your keeper;
The LORD *is* your shade at your right hand.
The sun shall not strike you by day,
Nor the moon by night.
The LORD shall preserve you from all evil;
He shall preserve your soul.
The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in
From this time forth, and even forevermore.

Psalm 121.1-8

Psalm 121.1-8 (*Duke Street: Jesus Shall Reign*)

I lift up my eyes up to the heights:
Whence comes my help by day, by night?
My help comes from the Lord above!
He made creation by His love!

God will not let our footsteps fall;
He will preserve us all in all.
He does not slumber, does not sleep;
God will His chosen people keep.

You are our Keeper and our Shade;
You have our debt of sin repaid!
You will preserve us by Your might;
Naught shall afflict us day or night.

Lord, You will guard our lives from ill;
You will our trembling souls keep still.

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All our endeavors You will guard;
Eternal praise be Yours, O Lord!

3 Blessed

Read and meditate on John 13.16, 17.

Every Christian wants to know the blessing of the Lord. But for us to be blessed, certain conditions must be met.

¹⁶“I say to you,
a servant is not greater than the one
he serves; and someone who is sent by one
cannot be greater than his sender.”¹⁷ And
if these examples you can understand,
then you are blessed if you do likewise.”

- John 13.16, 17

Reflect

1. Certain words enter the vocabulary of a Christian, some of which we do not understand as well as we should. *Blessed* is one of those words. What is your sense of what most Christians mean when they use the word *blessed*? What do *you* mean? Complete this prayer: *Lord, I seek Your blessing, and I want to be blessed every day. That is, I...*

2. *Blessed* has its origins in the Old Testament. The *blessing* of rested upon His creation (Gen. 1). God promised Abram that He would *bless* him (Gen. 12.1-3). The root of the word makes reference to the knees, as if being blessed had something to do with our knees, perhaps being on one's knees. Suppose what God was saying to Abram was something like, “I will put you on your knees before Me, so that you may know and serve Me, and I may fill your life with every good gift.” How would thinking of being *blessed* like this affect what we mean when we pray that the Lord might *bless* us? *Lord, do not let me seek Your blessings more than I seek You, for You are...*

3. Was Jesus *blessed* of God? In what ways? Did He have the sense of being in God's blessing? Did that mean that His life was going to be all good things and smooth sailing? How does Jesus seem to have understood the idea of being *blessed*? *Lord, You have called me to follow You. I want to follow You into the blessing of our heavenly Father, and I'm willing to follow You today into...*

4. How do we experience being *blessed*? That is, what do we feel? What do we know? When we are aware of being *blessed* by God, are we more likely to be at peace, and to feel safe, or to be disturbed and uncertain? Why? What is the effect of being *blessed* on our soul (mind, heart, conscience)? Does this make being *blessed* a condition to be desired? Explain. *Lord, I want to be blessed every day, because...*

5. The blessing of God is not distributed willy-nilly. God loves even those who do not love Him, as Jesus explained (Matt. 5.43-45). But He does not *bless* them. For whom is God's *blessing* reserved? Does this condition *earn* the blessing of God, or *express* that blessing? Explain. What are the implications of this for our daily lives as believers? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote for questions 1-4.

Summary

“It is not the knowledge of virtue but rather the practice of it that may be appropriately called worthy of both love and enthusiasm.... Whenever actions go hand in hand with knowledge, then assuredly there is no small gain. But when either is lacking, the other will be seriously crippled. And it is written, even faith apart from works is dead. Although the knowledge of God who is one even in nature, and the confession of God in guilelessness and truth is all included in faith, even this is dead if it is not accompanied by the bright light that proceeds from works. Surely, therefore, it is utterly profitless merely to know what is good and yet have no desire to practice it at once.” *Cyril of Alexandria (375-444 AD)*

Believers are *blessed to be a blessing* to the world. The life of blessing begins with us on our knees, having been brought there by Jesus, in the power of His Spirit, to adore our heavenly Father and receive our daily instruction, guidance, and provision. The blessing we know in God’s presence goes with us for joy and rejoicing as we obey Him in all our daily tasks. Thus we who are *blessed* become a *blessing* to others. What can we do to maintain this focus throughout the day?

Closing Prayer

Blessed *is he whose* transgression is forgiven,
Whose sin is covered.

Blessed *is* the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity,
And in whose spirit *there is* no deceit.

When I kept silent, my bones grew old
Through my groaning all the day long.

For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;
My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.

Selah

I acknowledged my sin to You,
And my iniquity I have not hidden.

I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,”
And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Selah

For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You
In a time when You may be found;
Surely in a flood of great waters
They shall not come near him.

Psalm 32.1-6

Psalm 32.1-6 (*Hendon: Take My Life and Let It Be*)

Blessed are they whose sins the Lord has forgiven by His Word!
Pure their spirits are within; them He charges with no sin;
Them He charges with no sin!

When in silence I remained, groaning in my sinful pain,
You Your hand upon me lay; all my strength You drained away,
All my strength You drained away.

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I confessed my sin to You; You forgave me, ever true!
Let confession's pleading sound reach You while You may be found,
Reach You while You may be found.

4 Sender and Sent

Read and meditate on John 13.18-20.

Jesus said we would know to believe Him because He both knew the eternal plan of God, and submitted to it. And He would be sending others in His Name with that same plan.

¹⁸I

do not refer to all of you. For I know those whom I have chosen. But the Word must be fulfilled, according to the Lord: "He who eats bread with Me, he will betray Me."¹⁹This I tell, and I want to say it to you well before it happens, so that when it comes to pass, then you may know the I am He.²⁰I say to you, that he who will receive whom I have sent, receives Me also; and the one receiving Me, receives the One Who sent Me."

- John 13.18-20

Reflect

1. Jesus' betrayal did not come to Him as a surprise. He *knew* from the beginning who would betray Him. How shall we explain His willingness to persist with Judas for some three years, knowing what He did? Is there counsel for us here for our relationships? Complete the following prayer: *Give me patience, Lord, and grace to bear with those who...*
2. According to Mark 3.13-19, Jesus *appointed* Judas to be in the band of His disciples. But apparently, He did not *choose* Him. What's the difference, and what are the implications for those who wish to be disciples of Jesus? *Thank You, Lord, for both choosing me to follow You, and appointing me to my Personal Mission Field. Help me to...*
3. Jesus knew what the Scriptures taught, and He chose to submit to the Scriptures, even knowing what that would require. What does this imply for those whom Jesus *sends* in His Name? What are the implications of this for you? Jesus said that when the teaching of Scripture was realized as He said, His disciples would believe in Him. What counsel is there for us here as we do the work of making disciples? *Help me, Lord, as I grow in understanding Your Word, to...*
4. Jesus indicates that He will be *sending* certain people. Sending them for what? What kinds of responses should they expect? What authority will they possess to do this? *Lord, You have sent me to my Personal Mission Field, and I...*
5. Notice that Jesus is not the end of our reason for being sent as His disciples (v. 20; cf. Jn. 14.6). What is? How can you know when you have realized this goal? Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

Summary

“Whomever the Savior sends to minister to the salvation of anyone, that person who is sent is an apostle of Jesus Christ. But just as the apostle is an apostle of the one who sent him, so is he an apostle only to those to whom he is sent.” *Origen of Alexandria (185-254 AD)*

If we are *chosen* by Jesus, and *appointed* to follow Him, we should understand that He considers us to have been *sent*. How can you tell someone who is on a mission for Jesus Christ?

Closing Prayer

The LORD *is* my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
The LORD *is* the strength of my life;
Of whom shall I be afraid?
When the wicked came against me
To eat up my flesh,
My enemies and foes,
They stumbled and fell.
Though an army may encamp against me,
My heart shall not fear;
Though war may rise against me,
In this I *will be* confident.
One *thing* I have desired of the LORD,
That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD
All the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the LORD,
And to inquire in His temple.

Psalm 27.1-4

Psalm 27.1-6 (*Joanna: Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise*)

Lord, You are our Light and our Savior most dear!
You guard us with might; therefore, whom shall we fear?
Though evil surround us, our enemies fall;
No harm shall confound us when on You we call.

One thing we request, but to dwell with You, Lord.
Your beauty to test and to think on Your Word.
In trouble You hide us secure in Your grace;
No foe may o’erride us: We sing of Your praise!

5 Troubled

Read and meditate on John 13.20, 21.

Jesus was troubled, deeply and visibly troubled. He should have been, and so should we.

²¹Now when He had said these things, then He was troubled in His spirit, and He said, "I say again, one of you will betray Me." ²²Then, perplexed at this, they looked at one another.

- John 13.21, 22

Reflect

1. The sense of the verb troubled, indicates that Jesus was stirred to shaking. He was deeply and visibly troubled. But we have already seen all the things Jesus knew, including that God had put all things into His hands (v. 3). Why should Jesus be so troubled? Complete this prayer: Lord, I'm sure many things trouble You even now, as You rule at the right hand of God, such as...
2. To be thus deeply affected about a situation is an experience we have perhaps all known at one time or another. Is being troubled about something a sin? Could it even be right for us to be troubled about something? Explain. Lord, whenever I feel this way, whenever I'm deeply troubled, I want to...
3. Jesus had previously said that someone among His disciples was not clean (v. 10), and that one of them would "lift up his heel" against Him (v. 18). Now He tells the disciples what He meant by this, and why He was so deeply and visibly troubled. What should this tell us about how the Lord feels about betrayal? What is betrayal? Are you ever faced with the temptation to betray Jesus? Explain. Lord, I know that I'm facing the possibility of betraying You when...
4. Jesus' announcement plunged the disciples into perplexity, uncertainty, and a feeling of despair. We know from the other gospels that "each of them" feared they might be the betrayer (cf. Matt. 26.22). They were horrified at the prospect, and rightly so. Why? Lord, whenever I am faced with the prospect of betraying You, help me to...
5. Sin should trouble us. The prospect of betraying Jesus should trouble us. Sin is not a small matter. We should be alert to every temptation that invites us to choose self-interest over the will of Christ. Such challenges come at us every day, in a variety of forms. How can we prepare so that we will recognize temptations to betray Jesus, and be ready to act in faith and obedience? Bring together into one your prayers from questions 1-4.

Summary

"He was troubled, then, who had power to lay down his life and power to take it up again. That mighty power is troubled, that immovable rock is disturbed? Or is it rather our infirmity that is troubling him? Most certainly this is the case. Let servants believe nothing unworthy of their Lord but recognize their own membership in their Head. He who died for us was also himself troubled in

our place. He therefore who died in power was troubled in the midst of his power. He who shall transform the body of our humility into similarity of form with the body of his glory has also transferred into himself the feeling of our infirmity. He sympathizes with us in the feelings of his own soul. And so, when it is the great, the brave, the sure, the invincible One that is troubled, let us have no fear for him as if he were capable of failing. He is not perishing but is in search of us [who are]...” Augustine (354-430 AD)

Sin disturbs the Lord, and it should disturb us. Every act of sin is a betrayal of the Lord, and of our calling as His disciples. Believers are commanded to hate sin (Ps. 97.10). How can we nurture this attitude toward sin?

Closing Prayer

I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly;
I go mourning all the day long.
For my loins are full of inflammation,
And there is no soundness in my flesh.
I am feeble and severely broken;
I groan because of the turmoil of my heart.
Lord, all my desire is before You;
And my sighing is not hidden from You.
My heart pants, my strength fails me;
As for the light of my eyes, it also has gone from me.
My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague,
And my relatives stand afar off.
Those also who seek my life lay snares for me;
Those who seek my hurt speak of destruction,
And plan deception all the day long.
But I, like a deaf man, do not hear;
And I am like a mute who does not open his mouth.
Thus I am like a man who does not hear,
And in whose mouth is no response.
For in You, O LORD, I hope;
You will hear, O Lord my God.
For I said, “Hear me, lest they rejoice over me,
Lest, when my foot slips, they exalt themselves against me.”
For I am ready to fall,
And my sorrow is continually before me.
For I will declare my iniquity;
I will be in anguish over my sin.

Psalm 38.6-18

Psalm 38.5-16 (Leoni: The God of Abraham Praise)
My sinful wounds grow foul, and fester painfully;
I bend and groan within my soul most mournfully!
Sin fills my every part;
Conviction stings my breast.

Lord, ease my numbed and burning heart and grant me rest!

You know all my desire, my sighs You know full well.
My strength fails and light's holy fire my eyes dispel.
My friends and loved ones fail;
The wicked do me wrong.
My life they seek, my soul assail the whole day long.

Their threats I will not heed, nor speak to their reproof;
To hear or speak I have no need – I claim Your truth!
Lord, hear my fervent prayer!
Let not my foes rejoice;
Redeem me from their traps and snares – Lord, hear my voice!

6 Grace at All Times

Read and meditate on John 13.23-26

Jesus revealed the identity of the one who would betray Him, but He did it in such a way as not to inflame the others against Him. This is what grace does, even with those who abuse it.

²³Next

to Jesus, leaning on His bosom, was the one whom Jesus loved the most. ²⁴Because of this, then Simon Peter motioned to him, indicating he should find out who it was of whom He spoke. ²⁵He leaned back on His breast and asked, “Lord who is it? Which one of us?” ²⁶And Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I give the sop.” And then, when He had dipped the bread, he gave it to the son of Simon, Judas.

- John 13.23-26

Reflect

1. Verse 23 is John’s humble way of identifying himself. Does this mean Jesus loved John more than He loved the other disciples, or simply in a different way? Explain. Complete this prayer: *Lord, thank You for loving me, just as much, and in just the ways that I need, so that...*

2. Among the disciples, John seems to have been closest to Jesus. Peter and James, and sometimes Andrew, because they are sometimes mentioned as being close to Jesus (cf. Matt. 26.36, 37; John 12.20-22), appear to have constituted a second circle. Then there were the remaining eight disciples, the larger group of around 100 – including the women that ministered to Him and the others who gathered in the upper room in Acts 1.12-15 – and the masses, whose ranks changed based on where Jesus was. Did Jesus love all these people? Did He love them all the same? Is there any guidance for you here in thinking about yourself as an agent of grace within your own Personal Mission Field? *Lord, You call me to be gracious to all people, but not necessarily to the same extent, or in the same ways. What I need to know each day is...*

3. Try to imagine you are Judas. What had happened to him by this time (v. 2). How do you think he might have been feeling? What affections were likely ruling in his heart? What had been done to him (v. 12)? Would that have affected him in any way, or caused any particular feelings to rise in his heart? Do you ever recognize such affections trying to exert rule in your soul? Explain. *Lord, guard my heart! Let the affections that rule in my heart be always...*

4. Jesus answered John’s question, but evidently so that only he would know. Even then, it appears John didn’t fully understand (cv. 28). Jesus felt no need to “out” Judas at this point. He *revealed* the truth indirectly to John, but not to the others. What is suggested about *the manner* in which He revealed this truth? Did He want everyone to know? Did He want to Judas to know He was being outed? Sometimes we will only want to reveal the truth *selectively*, rather than *broadly*. Why? *Lord, I*

understand that truth is such that not everyone receives it in the same way. Some truth can overwhelm people, and cause them to act in ways that might even compromise truth. You fit Your truth to our individual lives and circumstances, so in my witness for You, I need to learn how to...

5. Jesus had grace even for Judas. Commentators differ on whether what Jesus offered Judas was the bread of the Supper or just an ordinary piece of bread, dipped in water or wine. I am inclined to think that Jesus gave Judas the elements of the sacrament here, and that there sharing in this sacramental meal was not so *pro forma* as we are accustomed to in our practice. He offered Judas His body and blood, and Judas took it, but he took it in an unworthy manner. Meditate on 1 Corinthians 10.27-32. What does it mean to take the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner? How can our consideration of Judas in this situation help us in answering this question? Bring together into one your prayers from questions 1-4.

Summary

“Even the way he rebuked Judas was calculated to put him to shame. Judas did not respect the table, though he shared the bread. Be that as it may, who would not have been won over, however, by receiving the bread from Christ's own hand? Yet it did not win Judas over.” *John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)*

Jesus has grace for every sinner. So should we. But we must not abuse the grace of our Lord, and we must be especially careful about the manner in which we receive His body and blood. How would you counsel a new believer to approach receiving the grace of our Lord at His Table?

Closing Prayer

O God, do not be far from me;
O my God, make haste to help me!
Let them be confounded *and* consumed
Who are adversaries of my life;
Let them be covered *with* reproach and dishonor
Who seek my hurt.
But I will hope continually,
And will praise You yet more and more.
My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness
And Your salvation all the day,
For I do not know *their* limits.
I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD;
I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only.
O God, You have taught me from my youth;
And to this *day* I declare Your wondrous works.

Psalms 71.12-17

Psalms 71.12-18, 3 (*Solid Rock: My Hope is Built on Nothing Less*)

O God be not too far from me; my ever-present Helper be!
Consume and shame my enemies; let them reproached and humbled be.
A Rock of habitation be; command Your Word to rescue me;
My Rock and Fortress ever be!

But as for me my voice I raise to sing in hope and constant praise!
With saving grace my voice will swell Your never-ending grace to tell.
A Rock of habitation be; command Your Word to rescue me;
My Rock and Fortress ever be!

O Lord, I praise Your righteousness, Who me from youth have taught and blessed.
Forsake me not when I am old, 'til I Your mercies all have told!
A Rock of habitation be; command Your Word to rescue me;
My Rock and Fortress ever be!

7 Lessons in Discipleship

Read and meditate on John 13.12-26.

This account of Jesus washing His disciples' feet – in the light of all that Jesus knew – is a study in the workings of grace. As His disciples, we must learn from and follow Him in being agents of grace to a lost and needy world.

*¹²So having washed their feet,
He took His garments and sat down to eat,
and Jesus said to them, "Now, do you know
what I have done to you? ¹³Since it is so,
You call Me Lord and Teacher, and I am,
¹⁴then learn from My example; understand
if I then, Lord and teacher, washed your feet,
you also ought to wash each other's feet.
¹⁵For I have shown you that you ought to do
as I have done to you. ¹⁶I say to you,
a servant is not greater than the one
he serves; and someone who is sent by one
cannot be greater than his sender. ¹⁷And
if these examples you can understand,
then you are blessed if you do likewise. ¹⁸I
do not refer to all of you. For I
know those whom I have chosen. But the Word
must be fulfilled, according to the Lord:
"He who eats bread with Me, he will betray
Me." ¹⁹This I tell, and I want to say
it to you well before it happens, so
that when it comes to pass, then you may know
the I am He. ²⁰I say to you, that he
who will receive whom I have sent, receives
Me also; and the one receiving Me,
receives the One Who sent Me."*

*²¹Now when He
had said these things, then He was troubled in
His spirit, and He said, "I say again,
one of you will betray Me." ²²Then, perplexed
at this, they looked at one another. ²³Next
to Jesus, leaning on His bosom, was
the one whom Jesus loved the most. ²⁴Because
of this, then Simon Peter motioned to
him, indicating he should find out who
it was of whom He spoke. ²⁵He leaned back on
His breast and asked, "Lord who is it? Which one
of us? ²⁶And Jesus answered, "It is he*

to whom I give the sop.” And then, when He had dipped the bread, he gave it to the son of Simon, Judas.

- John 13.12-26

Reflect

1. In our study of the first part of this chapter, we looked at what Jesus knew, all He understood about what had been given Him and what lay just ahead. In this part of John 13, Jesus leads us to think about the implications of following Him. Jesus is our Master and Sender; we are His servants whom He sends to the world. What are the implications of verse 15 for your daily life? Complete this prayer: *Lord, You call me to be like You, and to do what You would do. Today, this means...*

2. As Jesus' followers, we have been cleansed from our sins. We are *clean*, Jesus tells us. But how can we know this? The disciples weren't sure which of them was *not* clean (v. 22). What made this disciple not clean. How can we be sure we are? *I know You have cleansed me, Lord, because...*

3. In verse 18, Jesus offered His disciples a lesson in understanding Scripture. Meditate on John 5.39. We can learn about and from Jesus in every part of the Bible. What are the implications of this for how we should read and study Scripture? *All Scripture is inspired, Lord, and it's all about You. So when I read Your Word, I...*

4. Meditate on Philippians 2.5-11. John 13 provides in microcosm an illustration of Jesus' entire earthly ministry. Explain. How can Jesus' example here become more consistently the model for how you live? *Thank You, Lord, for coming to earth as God's Servant for our need. Help me to...*

5. From what we've seen thus far in John 13, how would you define grace? How does it work? How can we have grace to help in our times of need? What is the role of grace in the life of a disciple? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

Summary

“It is not the knowledge of virtue but rather the practice of it that may be appropriately called worthy of both love and enthusiasm.... Whenever actions go hand in hand with knowledge, then assuredly there is no small gain. But when either is lacking, the other will be seriously crippled. And it is written, even faith apart from works is dead. Although the knowledge of God who is one even in nature, and the confession of God in guilelessness and truth is all included in faith, even this is dead if it is not accompanied by the bright light that proceeds from works. Surely, therefore, it is utterly profitless merely to know what is good and yet have no desire to practice it at once.” *Cyril of Alexandria (375-444 AD)*

The more we set Jesus before us, studying and learning Him from every part of Scripture, the more we will be able to draw from the Master the grace we need to serve Him daily in our callings. How can you encourage your fellow believers to seek the Lord and serve Him more faithfully and consistently?

Closing Prayer

I have set the LORD always before me;
Because *He is* at my right hand I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices;
My flesh also will rest in hope.
For You will not leave my soul in Sheol,
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.
You will show me the path of life;
In Your presence *is* fullness of joy;
At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.

Psalm 16.8-11

Psalm 16.8-11 (*All to Christ: Jesus Paid It All*)

You are ever with me, Lord; in You I shall not fall.
But rejoicing in Your Word, I abide within Your call.
 Make me know life's way! Pleasures fill Your hand;
 Fill my life with joy each day! Before Your face I stand.

Soon Your glory I shall see, for as Jesus rose again,
You will come to gather me to my home with You in heav'n.
 Make me know life's way! Pleasures fill Your hand;
 Fill my life with joy each day! Before Your face I stand.

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. Paul says we who believe in Jesus have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2.16). What does that mean for how we approach our daily lives?
2. What can we learn from Jesus about the role of the mind and heart – thoughts and affections – in the life of discipleship?
3. What does it mean to have “a part” with Jesus? How does that “part” come to expression in a disciple’s life?
4. What do we learn from Jesus here about doing the work God has appointed to us?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from John 13.1-11? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

Items for prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.