

The Ultimate LOVE STORY

John 13-17

“The Final Hours Before the Cross”

Study Number One – Love Serving – John 13:1-17

Our study is in John 13-17. The gospel of John is the fourth of the gospels, written a lot later than the other three.

Matthew wrote to the JEWS to present Christ as a KING.

Mark wrote to the ROMANS to present Christ as a SERVANT.

Luke wrote to the GREEKS to present Christ as a perfect MAN.

And John comes along with one thesis in mind, and that was to present Christ as the SON OF GOD.

If we were to divide the book up into sections, we would do it as following:

I. He TEACHES INDIVIDUALS—John 1-4.

II. He TEACHES THE MULTITUDES—John 5-12.

III. He TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES—John 13-17.

IV. The BETRAYAL and DEATH—John 18-19.

V. RESURRECTION—John 20.

VI. And His FINAL WORDS—John 21.

The thing that's neat about John's gospel is that his dominant theme is LOVE. And he's a perfect illustration of one who did not love but Christ really came into his life and changed him. He was a man given to:

ANGER and

SELFISH AMBITION.

He's a man who's very ANTAGONISTIC toward others, and yet as a result of the Lord's work in his life, he was tremendously changed.

John 13-17 has been called by many writers as the UPPER ROOM DISCOURSE. That is probably a little bit in error in the sense that only John 13 and 14 are spoken in the Upper Room.

At the end of John 14 Christ has let us go from here and then go down to the Kidron Valley. John 15 is most likely spoken in a vineyard in the Kidron Valley. And then as they get close to

the gates of Gethsemane when John 16 is spoken. And then in the Garden of Gethsemane we have the high priestly prayer that is recorded in John 17.

The word “love” only occurs TWICE in the other gospels—the word *agape* or love. And in the gospel of Matthew Christ says in the last times their *agape* will grow cold. And that word “cold” means extinct. We won’t notice it. We probably won’t see it. It’ll practically not be evident.

And it’s certainly true of the time in which we’re living, that there are very few demonstrations of the kind of love that we’re going to be talking about in these chapters—a love that can really change a life.

The definition of love today is mostly SELFISH. What can “I” get out of a relationship? And when we really love, we ask are “what can I give?” And there is no obligation or response in that which is given.

Craig Glickman wrote a book called *Knowing Christ* and he talks about what love is supposed to do in the story of a little boy and his velvet rabbit:

(Knowing Christ by S. Craig Glickman)

I read a story of a velvet rabbit owned by a young boy. The rabbit became worn and torn and unattractive to everyone but the boy. But he loved the rabbit with all of his heart. Yet one day the boy returned to his home and discovered his rabbit

had been thrown away. He cried over the loss and remembered his love for his long-time companion. Not long after this, a real rabbit bounded through his yard with the markings so identical to his velvet rabbit's that the boy knew his velvet rabbit had become real.

The point of the story, as I understand it, was that the boy's love made the velvet rabbit become real. The story is really a modern myth, because like many ancient myths, it teaches a profound truth. People only become real when they are loved too. And humble dependence upon God which liberates a person from self-centeredness will in turn liberate that person to love others with a love that makes them real. His love will create life.
(source unknown)

Because that word "love" occurs 31 TIMES in these five chapters, we know it's the overriding theme.

Christ would leave something with us and He would say the KEY, the power to motivate, the whole relationship of brothers and sisters in the body of Christ has to be this kind of love.

It's relevant to us to study these chapters because the fruit of our relationship with the Lord is this kind of love. Love what is, how it acts, where we find it—we're going to see it demonstrated in many different facets.

Ruel Howe in his book *Herein is Love* says:

(Herein is Love by Ruel Howe)

The conflict between the love of God and the self-centeredness of man produces an ugly, rugged and bloody struggle.
(source unknown)

That's what the crucifixion certainly summarized.

Ginilou says:

(Loving Again by Ginilou)

I want to brush my teeth
and cut my hair
and build me a plastic bubble
so no one
will
ever touch the inside of me
again!
(source unknown)

In other words, "I want to touch others without being touched and I want to know without being known." That's a different kind of love. That's a love that's been scared and a love now that would just as soon not be vulnerable again.

And perhaps we find ourselves in that kind of condition. We don't want to be vulnerable. We would rather draw off. We'd rather be isolated. We'd rather be careful, live in our plastic bubble where all is nice and safe and snug and warm, rather

than really give ourselves sacrificially to others within the body of Christ.

In this passage we're going to see beautifully demonstrated *agape* love. We've called John 1 of "The Love Story"—Love Serving. We're going to see:

1. LOVE SERVING,
2. LOVE HURT,
3. LOVE COMMUNICATING,
4. LOVE IN UNION,
5. LOVE IN CONFLICT,
6. LOVE MEETING NEEDS,
7. LOVE IN SEPARATION, and finally
8. LOVE ON ITS KNEES.

So let's look at John 13:1-17 in this particular exposition.

We have an awful lot of people looking for love and we should have less of them looking if we're really seeing it produced in our own lives. The hallmark of Christianity is this sacrificing and forgiving kind of love.

Colossians sets the stage for our study:

Colossians 3:14

Most of all, let love guide your life.

Love involves **THREE THINGS**:

1. **COMMITMENT**,
2. **FIDELITY**, and
3. **PERSONAL SURRENDER** of our rights.

One writer said:

Chance cannot change my love, nor time impair. For love is more than a feeling. Love is a decision, a commitment to care forever.

(source unknown)

Love involves a commitment and a dedication to somebody else.

Love knows no bounds. Christ can love the Samaritan woman at the well, He can love Judas Iscariot, He can forgive those who are pinning His flesh to the cross. And what we're trying to do in these chapters is fulfill Ephesians 3:18 when the Apostle prays, that we may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is "the breadth and the length and the height and

the depth, and to know the love of Christ which passes all knowledge.”

Now in these chapters, as we start to look at them, we’re a far cry from this kind of love. There’s been a power play among the twelve. We need to kind of set the stage here just a little bit.

John and James, the sons of Zebedee, have gotten momma Salome, who is the aunt to Jesus, to go and ask for the two seats in the kingdom—one on the right and one on the left. And this has the other guys really ticked.

Selfishly they wanted those places. Naturally when it comes time to go into the Upper Room, they’ve left the towel and the basin and everything else because they’re arguing over who’s going to be the greatest in the kingdom. And when they argue over who’s going to be the greatest, they argue over who’s going to be the least.

And none of them want to be the least, because the least are going to be the ones who are going to wash feet. So they have a bunch of proud hearts and dirty feet.

As the scene of the story opens, we’re a far cry from love. We’ve got a guy sitting in the Upper Room who is actually going to perpetrate the betrayal. He’s already set it up.

We’ve got the president of the organization in just a few hours who will deny that he ever knew Jesus. Plus all the rest of the

guys are going to scatter to the woodwork. So the message that comes across on *agape* love certainly is desperately needed. We learn one thing, and that is, when things start to fall apart, everybody starts thinking about themselves.

What are we going to get out of it? Selfishly, what's in it for us? And the commitment is tested when trouble comes. We really can tell how much we love a person and how much our love really means when that love has to suffer. There we are at the beginning point. There we can really begin to test the commitment.

Now look at these verses, because they'll instruct us as we go along through them, and we can get the feel for it. We're in the Upper Room, they've gotten there, they've all got dirty feet. They've been arguing over who's the greatest in the kingdom, and now the Lord is getting ready to do something.

v. 1 Now before the feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the uttermost (eternally).

“Now before the feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the uttermost (or eternally).”

Well, the emotions run the gamut, don't they? We have people

who are upset, people who have hidden thoughts, and people who are still loving and committed to Christ. We have people miffed with each other because they've just gotten through arguing.

It's before the Feast of the Passover. This is Thursday night. The cross is tomorrow so we're at the last night of Christ's life Jesus, knowing that His hour had come, as they gathered together, that He should depart out of this world. The fact He knows it and He's getting ready to tell them.

Beth Jameson wrote that little book *Hold Me Tight* and she talks about the emotional experience that she went through when she was trying to come to grips with the fact that her 14-year-old child was dying of leukemia. This is what she says:

(Hold Me Tight by Beth Jameson)

[As were receiving the word from the doctor] "I am afraid it's leukemia." With these words Dr. Charles August, director of the department of hematology at Children's Hospital pulled the pin on the grenade of our lives. I collapse in my husband's arms like a marionette whose strings had been cut. I hear the screeching, grinding agony of my world crashing around me. Fear drops over us like a heavy wet blanket. My throat becomes clogged with frozen screens. This strange roller coaster of trials keeps picking up speed and problems.

In the next few weeks, our basement flooded with all those stacked boxes everywhere, the washing machine motor

burned out, the furnace went out on the day the temperature dropped to 4 degrees and Jim was out of town. The picture tube went out on the T.V. A plumbing leak developed in the upstairs bathroom, ruining the floor and damaging the living room ceiling. A gust of wind slammed the back door against the house and broke the glass. The vinyl dashboard on the car cracked in four places during a long cold night. I broke a filling on a tooth and turned over a gallon of white paint on the kitchen floor. For the first time in 18 years, we got a notice from the Internal Revenue Service that they wanted to audit our income tax for the last 4 years. A long distance call came from a friend in Houston, they said, “Hey, how do you like Denver?”

(source unknown)

There’s a gamut of emotions in the Upper Room. This thing has just been gathering tremendous momentum. Everybody hates Christ and they’re talking so negatively. And they’re talking about killing Him, and what’s going to happen to the leaders. So they’re all scared. They’re all involved. They don’t know which way to jump.

They didn’t know whether to get committed to Him and go ahead and die or to scatter. And of course, we’re going to see that they scatter as time goes along.

He knows that the hour has come, but the theme of this whole passage is “love” and it’s seen in that phrase.

Now the phrase “before the feast of the Passover,” refers to the

fact that thousands and thousands of people are there and “Jesus knowing that His hour had come.”

What hour? Well, the hour that splits eternity. The hour from which eternity began, to when Christ dies on the cross and points to the hour of our eternal destination to the kingdom.

The “hour had come.” He always says, “My hour has not yet come.”

Christ was running with a clock. It was just like He knew every single event.

John 9:4

I must work the works of him that sent me, for the time is coming, for the night is coming when no man can work.

It’s almost like He was on target for everything. Do we have that same intensity or are we just fiddling while Rome burns? Just wasting the rest of our years here until it’s time to go to glory? Or are we really spending time, knowing that now this day has ended, we have one day less than when we started this morning, and we’re getting a tick of the clock closer?

Christ said He knew the hour had come. It’s here. It’s the hour for Him to die upon the cross. And His life has been well ordered to this particular event.

Now if we took that first verse, we’d have these five facts:

1. the TIME—“Now before the feast of the Passover,”
2. the PERSON—“Jesus,”
3. “knowing that His hour had come”—that’s His FOREKNOWLEDGE—“that He should depart out of the world to the Father,”
4. the OBJECT—“having loved His own who were in the world,”
5. the DEGREE—“He loved them unto the end.”

There’s our KEY PHRASE.

“He loved them unto the end.”

Agape love has TWO CHARACTERISTICS about it. It is:

1. ETERNAL and
2. UNCONDITIONAL.

Agape love never demands a response—it’s unconditional. It loves and loves and loves. It does not need a response to continue to be in existence. It’s eternal—it never changes. It never stops. And it’s that kind of love that He has here.

“He loved them to the uttermost.” He never stopped loving

them. He loved them unto the end.

What does that mean? He loved them to the end of their earthly life? He loved them to the end of His earthly life? Yes. But He also loved them into eternity. He never stopped loving them.

And so we sing:

The love of God is greater far,
than tongue or pen can ever tell,
Goes beyond the highest star,
and reaches to the lowest hell.

Oh, love of God, how rich and pure
How measureless and strong.
It shall forevermore endure
The saints and angel's song.
(source unknown)

Let's look at verse 2 in the exposition and notice together some more things about this love.

v. 2 And supper being in progress, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him,

“And supper being in progress, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him,”

Well, this love that is demonstrated here is God's kind of love, which is unconditional. It would never think of betrayal. But the evil one is present too. And he's going to put within the heart of this selfish individual to perpetrate an act which is going to hurt this kind of love.

If we were really ourselves, we would ask, "Do I really love like this? How could I test myself?"

1. We'd have an attitude toward our RIGHTS—We don't have any rights. There's no list of demands. We would just love each other for who we are. We would not demand anything in return.
2. We'd have an attitude toward our SERVICE—It's freely given. It's without obligation.
3. We'd have an attitude toward our LORD—It's a delight to serve Him and to please Him.

The problem is so much of our love is bent within itself.

Judas is a candidate for that love, but he's never experienced it. He's never known it. He's never responded to it. And as a result of that, he's vulnerable. And here it frightens us. The devil has already put it in his heart to do this, and now he's getting ready to take over.

What's that tell us? That tells us that with our thought

processes, he can put thoughts into our mind that perpetrate acts which are a denial of the Lord.

There are some great verses in the Bible that talk about the mind:

2 Corinthians 10:5

Bring every thought captive unto the obedience of Christ.

1 Peter 1:13

Gird up the loins of your mind.

Philippians 2:5

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ.

We must be careful about what we think about, because it's through the thought process that he has attacked. That's the only place that he can attack us. And here he's already put it in the mind of Judas Iscariot to do this. And of course, in our next study that's going to be made clear as "Love is Hurt" and we see the act finally perpetrated.

v. 3 Jesus, knowing that all things the Father gave into His hands, and that from God He had come forth and was going back to God,

"Jesus, knowing that all things the Father gave into His

hands, and that from God He had come forth and was going back to God,”

He's come forth on a mission. He's going back to the Father. Everything's been put into His hands.

v. 4 He is rising from supper and is laying aside His outer garments; and having taken a towel, He tied it around himself.

“He is rising from supper and is laying aside His outer garments; and having taken a towel, He tied it around himself.”

Some people have said that this next act is the perfect illustration of the incarnation of Christ. He got up from the Father's throne, laid aside His prerogatives of deity, took upon Him the towel of a servant (Philippians 2), the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of men, kneeled and gave Himself in service to others by His death upon the cross, and provides a cleansing by the shedding of His own blood for sin.

And that's probably true. The thing we want to get though, and the message we have to get out of this, is that Christ sees a need. And there are a bunch of proud hearts and dirty feet and nobody to do it. And He is not above this. He is a leader, He is teaching leadership. And one of the aspects of leadership is being a good servant. And He demonstrates that here.

Imagine how these guys feel. The host gets up and puts on the

towel, and we just know that Peter said, “Oh, He can’t be doing this, He can’t be serious.” He’s thinking this to himself.

And all eyes are glued on every move He makes. First He gets up from the table and He walks over and begins to lay aside His garments, and He takes the towel and He ties it around Himself. He puts aside His garments, puts on the towel, and He gets ready to do this.

The guys just can’t believe that this could actually happen.

Contrary to Leonardo de Vinci’s long table, the table in the Upper Room was a U-shaped table with an open end. And at the center would be the host of course, Christ. The guest of honor would be sitting on His left and so on His left was to Judas Iscariot.

He probably said, “Judas, I would like to talk to you tonight. I’d like you to have this place as the guest of honor.”

We can almost imagine they’ve been arguing and fighting over who’s going to be greatest in the kingdom and Judas Iscariot is the one who’s chosen to sit in the place of honor on His left.

Teachers always get to sit on the right. John is over on the right. And the rest of the guys are just around the horseshoe. They usually lean back when they’re eating. They didn’t sit up like we do at the table. They lean back and recline.

So John’s head would be leaning right against Christ, and

Christ's head would be leaning right against the chest of Judas Iscariot. So it'd be easy to talk to him right here and it'd be easy for John to talk to Jesus right here. The three of them had a very intimate conversation.

This explains a lot that goes on when we see them talking at the table about who's going to betray Him, and the fact that the rest of the guys don't really understand what's going on. Naturally they wouldn't. They'd be talking and carrying on and these three guys are the ones that are basically involved in what's being said.

Peter asked that it be said. So, here they are melted together. And Christ gets up from the table, takes the towel and He's getting ready to do some servant work.

v. 5 Then He is pouring water into the basin, and began to be washing the feet of the disciples and to be wiping then off with the towel which He had tied around himself.

“Then He is pouring water into the basin, and began to be washing the feet of the disciples and to be wiping then off with the towel which He had tied around himself.”

Now it's awfully easy to get on our knees before men when we've been on our knees before the Father. And of course Christ is going to demonstrate that in the last chapter when He's on His knees talking to the Father. He's been there often so He's not embarrassed to wash their feet and to do this

menial task.

Where did He start? He could have gone right over to Judas Iscariot. He could have singled him out and He could have said, “Judas, I ain’t washing your feet. You ain’t had a bath yet. You want to take your bath and come back and then I’ll wash your feet.” He could have just embarrassed him and set the record straight right there before the rest of the guys.

But probably while He was washing his feet, He looked at Judas with eyes that said, “Judas, it isn’t too late. I really love you. I have loved you for three years. I have provided everything you need Judas. And just because you’ve signed a contract with some guys to take My life and to betray Me, it’s not too late. You’ve got to make the decision to respond.”

Everything that’s done in the Upper Room is done with the express purpose of getting one man to respond. Just like in John 21 everything was done to get Peter to say he really loved the Lord. That breakfast of eight guys sitting around at the Sea of Galilee was getting the instrument ready, who would love him, who would preach the powerful message on the day of Pentecost. Everything was designed in the Upper Room for Judas to see love unconditional so that he would in turn respond to the Lord.

And He started with him. And He just moved around. Notice He’s washing the members that people used to walk on you with. He’s washing their feet and He’s the guest of honor—Christ is—and He’s doing this menial task.

Mark 10:45

For even the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many.

Now He starts around the table. He washes John's feet. Nobody says anything. Eyes are just glued. They can't believe what they're seeing. Just like if someone took a bucket and towel and started washing feet, everyone would get embarrassed and say, "Oh no, not mine."

He moves around from place to place and that's the kind of response that He's going to get just as quickly as He gets to the president of the organization. Here we go—verse 6.

v. 6 So He is coming to Simon Peter. He is saying to Him: "Lord! Are you washing my feet?"

"So He is coming to Simon Peter. He is saying to Him: 'Lord! Are you washing my feet?'"

The emphasis is on the word "my"—"Are you washing my feet?"

This question stems from pride. Pride always makes it very difficult for us to be comfortable in receiving something from somebody else, whether it's love, a gift, or whatever.

Pride, immediately when somebody does something for us, we

want to do something for them in return, because it's tit-for-tat. We have to satisfy our ego by doing something for them, because they did something for us. Love is the ability to receive from the hand of another. And pride has to be dealt with before we can ever be a responder or a receiver to this kind of love.

That's exactly what Peter has to finally learn on the shores of the Sea of Galilee before he can ever preach at Pentecost.

Peter's been along for three years, but he still has a proud heart and he doesn't know a whole lot about love yet.

v. 7 Jesus answered and said to him, “What I am doing you are not understanding now, but you shall learn by experience after these things.”

“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘What I am doing you are not understanding now, but you shall learn by experience after these things.’”

“Peter, I've got to wash your feet! You don't understand it. You don't understand what I'm doing, but you are going to know later on what I'm doing in this situation.”

In other words, “Peter, what I'm doing you're not understanding, but you will so trust Me!”

Now a lot of times we respond just exactly like that. When it comes time to respond we're negative. We're like Jacob: “All

these things are against me.” (ref. Genesis 42:36)

We look at Joseph when he says, “You thought it for evil against me, but God meant it for good.” (ref. Genesis 50:20)

God had some purpose in that. And when we look at things, we can look at them in one of two ways. We can look at them from our own understanding, or from the Lord’s.

That’s why Proverbs 3:5-6 is in the Bible:

Proverbs 3:5, 6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not unto your own understanding. In all of your ways acknowledge Him and He’s going to direct your paths.

So just trust Him. Let Him be the one who will explain it .

The neat thing about Peter is that he doesn’t resist to the point where he doesn’t learn. Because when we come to 1 Peter 5, when he’s writing his epistle, this is what he says:

1 Peter 5:5

I want you to be clothed with humility...

The word “clothed” is the word that’s used here for towel.

“I want you to take the towel of humility.” In other words, this

made an impact on him. He realized that this was a manifestation of love and so he recommends that we, as believers, be clothed with humility.

v. 8 Peter is saying to him: “You shall by no means wash my feet in the ages (no, never).” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you are not having a part with me.”

“Peter is saying to him: ‘You shall by no means wash my feet in the ages (no, never).’”

That is the strongest negative that we could get.

“Jesus answered him, ‘If I do not wash you, you are not having a part with me.’”

It’s almost like an argument. That’s a ping pong match going back and forth. There he said, “You shall by no means wash my feet in the ages (no never).”

“Jesus answered him, ‘If I do not wash your feet, you are not having a part with me.’”

Now, pride has come to the point where it’s going to refuse. He’s not going to let the Lord do it. “You’re just not washing my feet.”

Then Peter says, in response to the Lord, “Come on Peter. Get off your pride pedestal. Everybody else has let Me wash their

feet. It's your turn Peter."

Why is he so proud and why is he so resistant? He figures that if he was in this position of leadership and this teacher, he wouldn't be caught dead with a bucket and a towel. And this is not the place for the leader to be, and he's got a real hang-up on that.

What does that mean, "you shall not have part with me"?

Did that mean that he would never have a relationship with Him? No.

Remember when Mary and Martha had Christ over at the house in Bethany? Mary sat down and listened to Christ and Martha was busily engaged then she got really excited. She came in and the Lord said, "Martha, Martha, you're troubled about many things. Mary has chosen"—WHAT?—"that good part." (see Luke 10)

To have part with Him is to have fellowship with Him. Remember we saw that in the vine and the branches in John 15? We can be in relationship and out of fellowship.

"If I don't wash your feet, you're not going to be in fellowship with Me."

The washing of the feet is the cleansing of the daily defilements that keep us in fellowship. It's the catching of the little foxes that spoil the relationship. And so He's saying to

him here, fellowship is important. Out of fellowship comes intimacy. And out of fellowship comes the love that is produced by the Spirit of God in our lives.

“So Peter, I’ve got to do this or you’re not having fellowship with Me.”

Simon Peter is given to extremes.

v. 9 Simon Peter is saying to Him, “Lord! Not my feet only but also my hands and my head.”

“Simon Peter is saying to Him, ‘Lord! Not my feet only but also my hands and my head.’”

Now there’s a subtlety in that. Pride always wants to dictate the terms of the relationship.

“If You are going to wash my feet, then just give me the whole deal. Wash my head and my hands and the whole part of me at this point. Don’t just stop with that.”

So he goes from one swing of the pendulum, clear over to the other extreme. And he dictates the terms of it. It’s really a dramatic response on his part.

v. 10 Jesus is saying to him: “He who has been bathed is not having need except to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.”

“Jesus is saying to him: ‘He who has been bathed is not having need except to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.’”

“He who has been bathed” needs only “to wash his feet.” There’s only one bath of salvation. And when we come to know Jesus Christ as Savior, we are born eternally into a relationship with Him.

Now granted, we can be out of fellowship in that relationship, but we’re never out of that relationship. God will never forsake us. If we have received Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, we have entered into an eternal transaction that is totally God’s responsibility, not ours.

To come into this relationship in the first place is to recognize we can’t, but He can. And when we said, “I do,” and we received Christ into our life—as simple as that was—at that moment He cleansed us and declared us perfectly righteous in the Father’s sight. And that never is retracted. Performance has nothing to do with it.

Our performance and lack of performance has to do with **FELLOWSHIP**, not **RELATIONSHIP**. That’s the same way it is in marriage.

The marriage relationship was established when a couple walked down the aisle, right? Or when they said, “I do.” But fellowship is dependent upon performance now, little acts of

love along the way.

When we do those things that express love, then we are performing for God in the sense that we're expressing our gratitude and our love toward Him. We're keeping fellowship open with Him.

“Jesus is saying: ‘He who has been bathed is not having need except to wash his feet,’”

“Peter, you’ve already had the bath of salvation. All I need to do is wash your feet now, which typifies the daily confession of sin when I am involved in the world in which I walk.”

And then He says, “you are clean, but not all of you.”

So who’s He talking about now? He’s speaking of Judas Iscariot.

v. 11 For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, “Not all of you are clean.”

“For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, ‘Not all of you are clean.’”

Isn’t that incredible? He washed his feet but He knew he hadn’t had a bath yet. And He says, “you all are clean, but not all of you.”

Judas comes into the center of the arena in our next study.

v. 12 Then when He had washed their feet and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them: “Are you knowing what I have done to you?”

“Then when He had washed their feet and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them: ‘Are you knowing what I have done to you?’”

There’s the KEY QUESTION of the whole thing.

v. 13 You are calling me Teacher and Lord; and you are speaking rightly; for so I am.

“You are calling me Teacher and Lord; and you are speaking rightly; for so I am.”

v. 14 Since therefore I, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to be washing one another’s feet.

“Since therefore I, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to be washing one another’s feet.”

How do we do that? How do we wash other’s feet? Do we get down on our hands and knees with a bucket and wash feet?

To wash someone’s feet we’re acting in love toward them. There is something which has gone wrong in our life, or some

traumatic trial has happened in our life. We come with a ministry to bear someone's burden.

Galatians 6 says to "bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." (ref. Galatians 6:1,2)

Life has overwhelmed someone so we come to wash their feet.

Perhaps there is something that's come between us and it's necessary for one person, because they're the one who made the mistake, to come and wash the other's feet, and in essence ask for forgiveness. And in the washing of the feet, we are being brought back to that place of oneness.

Harry Ironside said:

When you do this, don't come with boiling hot water and say, "Here! Stick your feet in here," because you're angry. Or don't come with the holier-than-thou, self-righteous ice water and say, "Here, put your feet in here." Or don't come with that business of, "I'll give you a piece of my mind and just tear into you and not use any water at all and try to scrape the dirt off." You know, that's not the way to do it.

He says when you're washing one another's feet you're coming with love and compassion to do that.
(source unknown)

Looking at Matthew 7 in the Sermon on the Mount, we read about the log in the eye of the guy who is trying to take the

speck out of the eye of his brother. And that log is the critical spirit and when we get the log out of our eye then we can see clearly to help somebody else.

When we get that log out of our eye, it has to be replaced with love. Before we can do anything to help someone else, this love has to be demonstrated in our life.

And before we can wash someone's feet, we have to be a living demonstration of this kind of love. We have to humble ourselves before another and serve them and meet their needs and care about them and take the responsibility for them and love them as a person. And Christ says "Like I have done for you, you do for each other. You demonstrate this kind of love for one another."

Dr. Ryrie probably does the best job on it. He says:

(Balancing the Christian Life by Charles Ryrie)

The Lord also gave the command on the basis of the illustration. "You also ought to wash one another's feet." This can only mean that we ought to forgive one another just as He forgives us.

Unfortunately many read this passage and see only Christ's work for the believer and not the believer's work for one another. And it is the ministry of forgiving one another.

Notice again that the innocent party takes the initiative in the forgiving the one whose feet are dirty. There are some interesting details about washing one another's feet that are

suggested by the Lord's action that night before His crucifixion. For one thing, He made no grand announcement about what He was going to do.

Foot washing should be done silently. Obviously, too, one who washes another's feet has to get down to where the feet are! You cannot lord it over another believer if you are in the position of washing his feet.

And this is exactly what we are exhorted to remember in Galatians 6:1: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, you are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted."

The spiritual Christian takes the initiative to restore the sinning brother. But he must do it meekly, remembering also that he too might have been caught in the same sin.

The imagery also suggests that the forgiveness must be complete. This can be no half-hearted act, for only partially washing dirty feet results in muddy feet, not clean ones. One cannot have the attitude, "I forgive you—but."
(source unknown)

He's saying, "You ought to do this for each other in light of what I have done."

We're saying that all eight chapters of this LOVE STORY in the Upper Room are demonstrations of what we ought to do for each other.

We ought to SERVE each other. We ought to realize that love can be betrayed and be HURT. We ought to know that love COMMUNICATES, and we ask questions and we flow freely

into one another's lives.

We ought to see love in UNION and fruit coming from each other. We ought to see love in CONFLICT because the world hates us and the love which we demonstrate. We ought to see love MEETING NEEDS and love suffering SEPARATION, and love ON ITS KNEES.

v. 15 For I gave to you an example in order that just as I did to you, you also should be doing.

“For I gave to you an example in order that just as I did to you, you also should be doing.”

With the PRIVILEGE goes the RESPONSIBILITY.

A lot of times in our lives we come to that time when we've really got to come to grips with a situation. We've tried to avoid it and we've got to come to grips and deal with it. And we have to go wash some feet for the sake of the ministry. For the sake of testimony for the body of Christ, there has to come a time when we begin to wash feet.

A lot of times this happens when people begin to get very ill and we realize that we have something against them or we've hurt them or we've done something to them. And in the midst of that, we need to go and make it right.

Beth Jameson, when she's talking about her daughter Kim getting very close to death, she realized that as a mother she

had failed Kim in a lot of ways. And so literally she washes Kim's feet in some of the last few moments of her time together. She describes it in the book like this:

(Hold Me Tight by Beth Jameson)

Oh, Kim, my child, as my eyes and fingertips search your face in death, was it only 14 years and 9 months ago that I examined your face, just as I am doing now? Then I searched each tiny feature of your pink, newly born face with sensitive eyes and fingers. And my heart overflowed with the awe at that beautiful baby in my arms, this God-given gift so fresh from heaven's home. And though my heart is now full of unspeakable sadness as I trace your features once more, I am still in awe at being blessed with your presence in my life for as long as 14 years and 9 months.

Your chilled face has turned from pink to gray, but there is a beautiful radiance as you let go and let God have His wonderful way. I know it's time for me to let go also, but my grief at watching you leave is so intense. Kim, I am haunted by the ways I have failed you. Perhaps I tried too hard to be a good mother. You were so much like me. So many times I was harsh and impatient with you over trivial matters.

Remember when you ruined my last good pair of pantyhose of wearing them to school, and I didn't know it until it was time to get ready to go to church? And when you left my eyeshadow open on the windowsill in the bathroom and the sun melted it? When you wore my new green shoes that just matched the top you had made, and when you came home the heels were all scuffed?

Remember, when you would be a hurry to go somewhere and leave handfuls of your beautiful long brown hair, which was falling out, in the bathroom sink, and loose strands all over the floor? Losing your glasses at school.

Remember when you forgot a book you needed for a class report and called me from school to ask me to bring it to you, and I already late for a dental appointment. When you got involved with what I considered too many extracurricular activities at school, which drained your physical strength?

Just irritations over trivia—Forgive me, Kim. You were only anxious to get on with living.
(source unknown)

Now sometimes it's tragic that we have to wait until our time to set the record straight with each other. As far as our relationship with each other is concerned, we have a responsibility. That responsibility is to deal with those things. To wash one another's feet, to make allowances and make wide berths, for the love of God to be demonstrated in each of our lives. And like she does in this situation, we need to set things right.

Michael Harper in his book *The Love Affair* says:

(The Love Affair by Michael Harper)

Forgiveness is the final and the indubitable seal on true love. It authenticates it.
(source unknown)

v. 16 Truly, truly I am saying to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor one who is sent greater than the one who sent him.

“Truly, truly I am saying to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor one who is sent greater than the one who sent him.”

v. 17 Since you are knowing these things, you are blessed if you are doing them.

“Since you are knowing these things, you are blessed if you are doing them.”

The Lord draws a picture, He tells us what He wants us to do, and then He says, “There’s a blessing for you if you’ll do it.”

When He got down to the end of the Sermon on the Mount He says, “The wise guy builds his house on the rock. The foolish man builds his house on the sand.”

The wise man who builds his house on the rock is the man who does these things, he doesn’t just listen to them. He does them.

The foolish man is the guy who goes away and doesn’t do anything about it.

Psalm 1:1, 2

Blessed is the man who does not walk
in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stand in the path of sinners,
nor sit in the seat of scoffers.
But his delight is in the law of the Lord;
his law as he meditates.

“you are blessed if you are doing these things.”

We may know them, but we’re going to be blessed in a special way if we’re doing them.

As we wrap this study up there are seven lessons that we get out of this study.

Lesson #1: Christ’s love is unconditional and it lasts forever.

It’s unconditional and eternal. It does not have to have a response and it will never change.

Lesson #2: Guard your heart.

We find this in Proverbs 4:23, “for the devil likes to plant his seeds there.”

He has already planted these seeds of betrayal in the heart of Judas Iscariot.

Lesson #3: Pride from Peter provides a spirit of resistance against the Lord.

Pride has been the big problem with King Agrippa, “Almost you persuade me to become a Christian.” (ref. Acts 26:28)

Pride keeps us from becoming Christians. Then when we become Christians, it turns around and there’s another problem. We don’t like the way God’s doing things a lot of times, and so we resist the way He does it. And the Lord comes to wash Peter’s feet and He says, “You don’t understand what I’m doing but you will, just trust Me.” And Peter’s pride won’t let him do that. He resists the Lord.

Lesson #4: We may not understand what He is doing in our lives at this moment, but we will understand.

“Peter, you don’t understand what I’m doing now, but you will understand.”

Hang onto that verse. When the going gets rough and things get tough and we don’t understand, just hang onto it because the Lord’s promises we will.

Lesson #5: There is only one bath of salvation, but there’s daily cleansings of the feet.

This is us maintaining fellowship by dealing with the offenses that come into our lives. And so the Lord is teaching there is one bath of salvation, but many foot washings on a daily basis.

Lesson #6: We are to wash the feet of our brothers and sisters by forgiving their faults and bearing their burdens.

Forgiving their faults and bearing their burdens. Love looks right through the faults and believes the best, and bears the burdens of those who hurt and are overwhelmed.

Lesson #7: Happiness is the result of being obedient to His Word.

Now our spirit can resist this teaching and we can desire not to wash feet, but we'll be blessed if we will. We'll be a happy person in the process.

Probably the greatest demonstration of unconditional love is seen in the parable of the Prodigal Son. He goes away in his arrogance and he says, "Father, give me...so I can go and do my thing." (see Luke 15). And the father, in love, as he comes back says, "Father, make me as one of your hired servants. Let me just serve." And the father forgives him unconditionally, throws his hands around him, demonstrates this love.

George Matheson said it so well:

O love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee.
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

(source unknown)

Two questions:

1. Have we responded to His love?

“God so loved (*agape*) the world, that He gave His only begotten Son...” (ref. John 3:16)

2. Are we one in whom that love is being produced?

That’s the test.

In the last days the Lord says it will practically become extinct. It’ll be hard to find it because people are so selfish, so hard-hearted, wanting to build their plastic bubble and to touch without being touched, to know without being known. Because to love someone means we accept the responsibility for them and we’re willing to be their servant. We’re willing to wash their feet.

The Lord demands it of us. We’re going to see it three times in this letter. He commands that this love be a part of our lives.

Father, we thank You for the fact that we could look at a passage of scripture that so classically demonstrates what love is all about. Lord, we realize that sometimes we get hurt in loving and want to insulate ourselves from human need. We come to that point where we don’t want to love anymore and we realize that’s the spirit of resistance. We pray that our

pride would be broken, that we would be receptive to the help and the encouragement of others. And as our feet are washed, we'd wash still others. And that together we would serve one another in the body of Christ, not concerned about who's going to sit on the right and on the left in the kingdom, but how we can more effectively demonstrate our love to one another and be a witness to the world. Lord it would just be so wonderful if people could say, "Behold how they love one another." That characteristic would be the love and the concern we have for each other and we demonstrate it daily by the things we do. We ask now that You might take the thoughts of this lesson, inscribe them upon our hearts, enable us to compare and to test our own selves in light of the truth of the Word of God. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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The Ultimate LOVE STORY

John 13-17

“The Final Hours Before the Cross”

Study Number One – Love Serving – John 13:1-17

NOTES

v. 1 Now before the feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the uttermost (eternally).

v. 2 And supper being in progress, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him,

v. 3 Jesus, knowing that all things the Father gave into His hands, and that from God He had come forth and was going back to God,

v. 4 He is rising from supper and is laying aside His outer garments; and having taken a towel, He tied it around himself.

v. 5 Then He is pouring water into the basin, and began to be washing the feet of the disciples and to be wiping them off with the towel which He had tied around himself.

v. 6 So He is coming to Simon Peter. He is saying to Him: “Lord! Are you washing my feet?”

v. 7 Jesus answered and said to him, “What I am doing you are not understanding now, but you shall learn by experience after these things.”

v. 8 Peter is saying to him: “You shall by no means wash my feet in the ages (no, never).” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you are not having a part with me.”

v. 9 Simon Peter is saying to Him, “Lord! Not my feet only but also my hands and my head.”

v. 10 Jesus is saying to him: “He who has been bathed is not having need except to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.”

NOTES

v. 11 For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, “Not all of you are clean.”

v. 12 Then when He had washed their feet and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them: “Are you knowing what I have done to you?”

v. 13 You are calling me Teacher and Lord; and you are speaking rightly; for so I am.

v. 14 Since therefore I, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to be washing one another’s feet.

v. 15 For I gave to you an example in order that just as I did to you, you also should be doing.

v. 16 Truly, truly I am saying to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor one who is sent greater than the one who sent him.

v. 17 Since you are knowing these things, you are blessed if you are doing them.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read John 13:1-17 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. Explain the phrase “His hour had come” in verse 1.

3. Explain Simon Peter's response to the foot washing in verses 6-10.

4. What does Jesus mean by the phrase "you are clean but not all of you" in verse 10?

5. What is the answer to Jesus' question in verse 12, "Are you knowing what I have done to you?"

6. What does Jesus mean when He says, "You also ought to be washing one another's feet" in verse 14?

7. What is the meaning of verse 16?

8. It is not just enough to know, according to verse 17.
What else is involved?

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Christ's love for us is unconditional and lasts forever.

LESSON #2: Guard your heart, for the devil likes to plant seeds there.

LESSON #3: Peter's pride provides a spirit of resistance against the Lord.

LESSON #4: We may not understand what He is doing in our lives at this moment, but we will understand.

LESSON #5: There is the one bath of salvation, but the daily cleansings of the feet.

LESSON #6: We are to wash the feet of our brothers and sisters by forgiving their faults and bearing their burdens.

LESSON #7: Happiness is the result of being obedient to His Word.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

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