

REDISCOVERING OUR PLACE IN GOD'S STORY



ACT 4 BIBLE STUDY

OPENING QUESTIONS

- 1) If you were to film a season of the TV show, "Dirty Jobs," what would be the three dirty jobs at the top of your list of episode ideas?
- 2) How do you most like to express love and care towards family and friends? How do you feel most loved and cared for by your friends?
- 3) When you think of the term, "servant leader," what comes to mind? Who has most demonstrated servant leadership in your life?

SCRIPTURE **Read John 13:1-17.**

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

- 1) Throughout John so far, it has been repeatedly said that Jesus' time had not yet come. This passage marks a shift as John writes "Jesus knew that the hour had come..." What is the significance in Jesus choosing to wash his disciples feet at this time? Why was this one of the last things he chose to do for them before his crucifixion?
- 2) 2) What do you make of the exchange between Jesus and Peter? Why does Peter initially resist the foot washing, but then move to wanting also his hands and his head washed?
- 3) Let's look at verse 10, and the historical and Biblical context behind it.
 - Historically, people used public baths, but would then walk home in their sandals, making their feet dirty again. Therefore, they would only need to clean their feet again, not their whole body.
 - Biblically, we find in Exodus that when a priest was ordained he was fully washed with water (Ex.29:4). After that, every time he was to enter the tent of meeting and approach the altar, he had to wash his hands and feet to ceremonially cleanse himself (Ex.30:17-21).

How does this verse, then, represent what Jesus has done for us? What does it mean that the disciples will no longer need to be washed again?

- 4) What is the message and takeaway from vs.12-17 (last paragraph)? We cannot redeem people or forgive sins by dying for them. And in our culture, most people do not need to have their feet washed in a literal sense. What does it mean for our lives and relationships to do what Jesus has done?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 1) Act 4 of the Biblical story describes the in-breaking of God's Kingdom through Jesus's life, ministry, death, and resurrection. Some have called it the "upside-down Kingdom of God." What is upside-down about Jesus's Kingdom?
- 2) The apostle John, in the prologue of his Gospel, writes that "No one has ever seen God... but [Jesus] has made him known." In other words, when we look at Jesus, we see a perfect picture of who God is. What does this story teach us about who God is? How might knowing that the God of the universe washes feet like a slave impact your relationship and worship?
- 3) Some have taken this passage as a call to be "nice" - to hold open doors and do their roommates' dishes. While small acts of kindness are important, how might this story challenge the way we view the whole of our lives - our careers, how we use our time and resources, our future marriages and families, etc.? How can we live as citizens of the "upside-down kingdom"?

SPIRITUAL EXERCISE

Spend time reading and reflecting on Philippians 2:1-11. Write a prayer of praise and thanksgiving for the humility and sacrificial love of King Jesus. How have you seen him wash your feet? Spend some time prayerfully considering how you can demonstrate that same love toward others this week. Be specific and concrete in your resolutions. Consider different areas of your life where you can "wash the feet" of those around you. (ie. "I will pray for and serve my study group so my classmates get more recognition for our group project." Or, "I will purposefully do behind the scenes tasks - like setup and teardown at MNW - in order to serve my Chi Alpha community or local church." Or, "I will invite an international student to join my friends when we hang out this weekend.")