

“With Jesus in the Upper Room - Lesson #2: The Love of Service”

Scripture: John 13:12-17

Graphics: last supper table, Jesus, chalice, towel, basin

Big Truth: The last moments of Jesus’ earthly relationship with the disciples were in the Upper Room around a table, eating a meal together. Those last moments were Jesus’ opportunity to give the most important lessons he wanted them to know and follow. The people of the Panama UMC are called to sit with Jesus and learn the lessons he taught in order to be the disciples Jesus wants us to be.

Focus Phrase: I love to serve so that others will have their needs met by Jesus through me.

1. Introduction

A. PRAY!

- B. (table) Imagine you had one evening with Jesus...one whole evening to sit around a table like this one and just be in the presence of Jesus and his disciples.
- C. And if it was the last time you ever had the chance to do that, you would do everything you could to listen and respond to Jesus.
- D. On the night before Jesus was arrested, prior to his eventual death on the cross (we’ll get to that part of the story in a few weeks), he sat and ate a meal with his closest disciples. Jesus knew this was his last meal with them, even though the disciples didn’t.
- E. Because Jesus knew this was it, he planned to tell them and show them the most critical lessons they would need to know to carry on after he was gone.
- F. And, because we have the gospel accounts of what happened that night, we can put ourselves in that room with Jesus and the disciples on THAT night. We, too, can see and hear these important lessons that he taught.
- G. What a blessing it is to have the gospel accounts of Jesus’ last evening.
- H. Last week, we began in John 13 by simply allowing Jesus to wash our feet...to LOVE us, without doing anything else physically. We just sat. We don’t often take the time to simply be loved by Jesus. That was Lesson #1.
- I. And, as Jesus knelt to wash our feet, he wasn’t just showing us how to wash feet. He was inviting each one of us to enter into an intimate relationship with Him so that we would understand how much he loves us.
- J. And how it felt to BE loved. No matter WHAT happens...you are loved.
- K. Today, we’ll go to the next section in John 13, where Jesus rises from washing the disciples’ feet, and then invites them to live a lifestyle of foot-washing...to passionately love service to those around them.

L. Last week, Jesus showed us The Service the Love. This week, he invites us into Lesson #2 - The Love of Service.

M. Your bible is ready to be opened...to John 13:12...let's read!

2. Scripture

A. READ John 13:12-17

- B. When I was in high school, I wasn't that much into playing sports or being in clubs, except for **one thing**. Band! And not just ONE band, but I played the saxophone in, like, 3-4 different bands: symphonic band, jazz band, concert band...and I was even in the Town Band for a couple years.
- C. I was what you would call a "Bank Geek!" And I had a whole bunch of great friends that were Band Geeks as well. And being from a big school, we were a sizable group!
- D. In fact, in our senior year of high school, in 1987-88, we even had 50 t-shirts made up for the seniors that said Band Geek. AND...I brought that shirt with me today! Yes, I do own 30 year old t-shirts...more than one, actually!
- E. I was a proud Band Geek (still am, I guess). But the funny thing was, I was never really the best at playing the sax. I wasn't terrible, but I was always the guy who played **second chair**. I was the guy who turned the pages for the person next to me, who was better than me...more talented than me...and whose role was critical, really.
- F. I did dream about being the first chair player on the end of the row, nearest to the audience. Playing second chair - second fiddle - was not easy.
- G. But I learned some valuable lessons about being second chair. I learned that I could help the person next to me. I could encourage him, talk over things with him, and just be there. In a word, I could serve him.
- H. The kind of life-style that Jesus called his disciples to was a foot-washing kind of lifestyle...a second-chair lifestyle...even IF they were playing first chair.
- I. Around that table that night, after Jesus got done washing the disciples feet - washing OUR feet - he put on his robe and went back to where he was sitting.
- J. And as we're sitting in a little bit of stunned silence, waiting for Jesus to say something, he asked, "Do you understand what I have done to you?" Notice that the Greek here doesn't say, "...what I did FOR you," but actually says, "...what I did TO you." or "unto you"
- i. Think about that? If Jesus would've just done something FOR the disciples, then they would've been served, loved, all that. They would have clean feet, along with their full bellies.
 - ii. But Jesus did something TO them. He didn't just wash their feet. His goal was to change them...to do something TO them.

- iii. It's almost like the feeling you get when someone pulls a trick on you or are amazed by an illusion. When you stop and think about what you just saw, you realize that your thoughts have been altered in some way. Something NEW has occurred to you.
 - iv. The disciples had to stop and think about what Jesus DID TO them.
- K. He loved them so that they would have a burning desire to love others, following his example. That's Lesson #2 - the LOVE of SERVICE.**
- L. Jesus said, "You call me Teacher and Lord, which I am. SO...if I, your teacher and Lord, have washed YOUR feet - my students feet - then you ought to wash one another's feet."
- i. What Jesus did TO them turned their world upside-down. The well-worn convention of servant serving and masters being served went out the window with the dirty foot-washing water.
 - ii. He even went on to say that the servant is not greater than the master. The messenger is not greater than the one who sent him. The lowest place is the place to be...where you WANT to be!
 - iii. Even though the disciples were hoping beyond hope that Jesus was to be crowned King and take over the nation of Israel, rescuing them from being oppressed, second-class people to Rome, that wasn't the plan.
 - iv. Jesus was to die. Jesus was to submit to the will of the Father. Jesus was to speak the message of the Father.
 - v. Jesus washed their feet to get their attention...to tell them that what they were expecting was the wrong thing.
 - vi. It was shocking to have their feet washed, but Jesus was about to do something even MORE incredible...and not just for the disciples, but for everyone! He would sacrifice himself on a cross...calling us to do the same thing.
 - vii. In John 12: 25-26, Jesus said, "Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him."
 - viii. And to begin that process, Jesus said, "Wash one another's feet." Not just the disciples. Not just the people in the room...but anyone who has feet.
 - ix. But it wasn't about washing feet...it was about loving people.
- M. Jesus was changing them to be people who lived a foot-washing lifestyle. People who were just willing to play second fiddle, but who desired it so much that they wanted desperately to have people in their life who needed to be served that they open their eyes wide to see them.

3. Application

- A. Church, are we ready to open our eyes wide enough to see the people in our community who need to see Jesus?
- B. And not only are we ready and willing, but do we have an unquenchable hunger for that? Are we hungry for people to SEE Jesus through us?
- C. We have lots of windows in our house...27 windows to be exact, and a few more in the garage.
 - i. We (and by we, I mean Stacy) does a very good job trying to keep all of those windows clean. It's a huge job.
 - ii. The whole purpose of a window is for light to pass through it so that you can see through it to whatever is on the other side. When it's dirty, it doesn't do what it was designed to do. But, when it's clean, it can let the light in, and let us see through it.
 - iii. Your life as a disciple was designed to be a window to God's love. But, you have to be cleansed by Jesus in order to do that. And not just cleansed but changed from living in a state of dirty to knowing you're clean.
- D. That's what I think Jesus was talking about when he asked the disciples if they understood what he did TO them. He cleaned them so people would be able to see Him through THEM when they did what they were designed to do.
- E. As we watch Jesus get up from his knees and take his place back at the table, hearing him say that you're now supposed to do what he has done, what does that look like practically?
- F. Well, it has to start by letting Jesus do to you as he did to the disciples...
- G. **RECEIVE LOVE and be changed by it**
 - i. I pray that this past week, you've spent time just being loved by Jesus. **In order to love, you must be loved.** I didn't even ask you to receive that love...just to BE served by Jesus and loved by Jesus.
 - ii. Jesus is asking you, in response, to love others WITH THAT SAME LOVE.
 - iii. Loving others is not something you can do because someone told you to do it. Having a pastor stand up here and say, "Love others...wash their feet." means nothing unless the Jesus represented in my words has changed you.
 - iv. Telling you to love without first telling you - and even showing you - that you are loved is like telling you to write a check from a bank account that has no money in it!
 - v. You're clean because Jesus loves you enough to clean you. You're full of love because Jesus loves you enough to fill you with His love.
 - vi. He hasn't done that FOR you as much as he's done that TO you.

- vii. Receive His love! Be changed by it!
- viii. And even if you didn't know or think you needed him to clean you, fill you, love you, and change you in order to love...**you do!**
- ix. Receive his changing, cleansing, filling, love so that it transforms you, gives you an identity as His, and allows people to see Him through YOU!
- x. Let him do that TO you. Even if you have a hard time trusting...or have something in your past that makes it hard to open up to others. Jesus made your heart. Jesus is the only one you can fully trust with your heart...to transform it so that it's full of His love.

H. Then, **GIVE LOVE so others can see Jesus.**

- i. 1 John 4:19 says “We love each other as a result of his loving us first” (1 John 4:19 NLT)
- ii. From the moment Jesus cleanses and fills you with His love, he's unequivocally changed your heart to be a loving mechanism.
- iii. And because your heart was designed to love...and it's now filled with fuel, your heart wants to love others. Now is the time to kick the engine into gear.
- iv. With a changed heart, always be looking for opportunities to love others. Better yet, allow him to love others through you, window.
- v. There was a moment in my previous ministry appointment when I was taking out the trash at church. I wasn't happy about it either. In fact, I was downright mad that someone had forgotten to take the trash out and I, THE PASTOR, was doing this menial task. As I dragged the heavy smelly bags the 8 feet to the curb (seriously...it was a FULL 8 feet), I had what I can only describe as a moment that Jesus did something TO me. He was fed up with my attitude and slapped me upside the head. “Just take out the garbage...who do you think you are?” It was at that moment, in my first couple years of ministry, that I began to understand what Jesus did to me... he washed my feet and changed me into a foot-washer too.
- vi. Your mission, disciple, is to search for opportunities to take the second chair. Look diligently for every chance to serve and meet needs of another, with the love of Jesus.
- vii. Sometimes, we see who we want to see and don't see who we don't want to see. COVID isolation has made it really hard to find new opportunities to take second chair and wash others' feet.
- viii. All that means is that you have to seek and find those new opportunities to live out your foot-washing lifestyle in this new reality. We're never going back to the way things were...you may've been serving or loving in a

certain way that just isn't a thing anymore...so now is the time to open your eyes **really wide** to see the new people in your life...new feet.

- ix. And, you know, that it's not about washing feet at all, unless you find yourself kneeling before some who has their shoes off at some point. The disciples didn't run around washing people's feet thinking they were being good disciples. They went where they were called. They said what the Holy Spirit told them to say. They loved who they met.
- x. It's about letting your heart yearn desperately to get low for others. It's about letting Jesus train your heart and hands to serve without wanting to get anything in return...without needing to be first chair. "Just take the garbage out, man!"
- xi. Receive Love...Give Love.

4. Conclusion

- A. When I was a senior in high school, I remember our final jazz band concert. I was, of course, the second chair alto sax. I have a picture in my mind of the audience looking on as I turned the pages of the first chair saxophone player who ripped off the most incredible improv solo I'd ever heard from him. I sat there in awe of his talent and passion.
- B. I remember feeling like I had a small part in the whole mood of the show...highlighted by my friend's blazing riff. I liked being second because it lifted someone else up and allowed them to shine!
- C. Church, would you join together in going out from this place today to be second? To WANT - desperately - to be second? To be a window for the love of Jesus to shine through?
- D. Jesus' promise, at the end of this passage from John is this: "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."
- E. Let's get out of here to passionately live a foot-washing lifestyle. You'll be blessed if you do them...if you learn lesson #2 from Jesus and love like he does.
- F. Let's pray...
- G. PRAY!