**Picking up the Towel – Part 2**

**John 13:1-7**

**Introduction:**

Luke 22:24-30 records for us a conversation the disciples had at the last dinner they would have with Jesus before His death. This particular conversation brought strife and contention: the topic – who should be *“accounted the greatest”* to rule with Christ in God’s kingdom (vs. 24). As expected, Jesus had a response. Jesus contrasted His leadership with that of Gentile kings. He stated that those leaders *“exercise authority”* over the people they rule, but Christ said of leadership that the leader must serve (vs. 25-26). Leadership that forces people, whether verbally or physically, cause people to do things out of fear and appeasement. But Jesus led by putting others’ concerns above His own (Philippians 2:3-4); therefore, people have a desire to serve others out of love because of the love Christ gave us (1 John 4:19). Biblical leadership is not lording over people, but recognizing their value and serving them above yourself. How are you leading? How does your leadership compare to that of Christ’s?

**The Focus:**

* **Every believer must serve others with sincerity. How? By understanding that…**
  + **Christ’s love led Him to serve. (Part 1)**
  + **Christ served the “unworthy.” (Part 1)**
  + **Christ was not too “big” to serve.**

Christ heard the disciples bickering back and forth over who would be the greatest. Jesus knew as well that the Father had *“…given all things into his hands…”* (**vs. 3**). Jesus had all power, all possessions, and the greatest position; yet, He willingly chose to take on the form of a servant. Jesus picked up the towel and served! Because they weren’t being hosted in someone’s house, there was no servant designated to wash their feet. For any of them to wash the others’ feet was to declare himself the servant of all; that was precisely what each one resolved not to do. Like in most situations, I am sure some of them felt the tug of God’s Spirit to get up and serve, but their fear or pride hindered them. So, Jesus got up, picked up the basin and the towel, and began washing their feet.

Jesus was like, “If feet need to be cleaned, I’ll clean them. I’ll do it.” Christ, even though He had it all, served. How well do you serve others? When we feel we are too big and too important to serve, we are placing ourselves above Jesus Christ. We are saying that we are bigger and more important than Jesus Christ. Remember, He picked up the towel and served. Jesus Christ, who was the Son of God, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, stooped down and does something that was reserved for the lowest of the low in that society. He picked up the towel and washed dirty feet. Nothing was beneath Him. The reason was His perspective. He came to serve. Jesus became renowned because of how He served others. If we desire to make Jesus known at home, in our community, and around the world, we must seek to serve.

**Response to the Sermon:**

Where is your heart regarding serving others? If Jesus, the very Son of God, stepped into time and assumed the lowest form, the form of a servant (Philippians 2:7), is there anyone you can’t serve. Fulfilling the role of a servant, enabled Jesus to have a different mindset than most people. His mind was an others-focused mindset (Philippians 2:4-5). He sought the wellbeing of others above His own. How much do you care about others who are broken hearted, outcast, abused, the unloved? How does God call us to respond to our enemies (Romans 12:17-21)?

**Bible Study Thoughts & Questions:**

Pastor Dan mentioned Galatians 3:28 which says, *“…for ye are all* ***one*** *in Christ Jesus.”* He informed us that in the body of Christ, there are no “big shots.” We are all a part of the whole. Ephesians 4:16 says, *“From whom the whole body fitly joined* ***together*** *and compacted by that which* ***every*** *joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of* ***every*** *part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of* ***itself*** *in love.”* We are all part of the body of Christ, and every one of us contribute to the body as a whole. We supply, and we use our gifts for the betterment of the whole.

1. What is Paul trying to get you to understand in Romans 12:1 regarding your life?
2. What does Paul say in Romans 12:2 that must happen for us to live out what he asks us to do in Romans 12:1?
3. Even though Paul teaches that we have a diversity of gifts given which are different from person to person (Romans 12:6-8), what is the overall truth that he wants us to understand regarding how these gifts are to be viewed (Romans 12:3-5)? Why is this important?

**Application Questions:**

As a believer and as a follower of Jesus, you must take some time to reflect on why and how you serve others. Is your energy and are your resources only being used on other believers? If so, who is in your immediate sphere of influence that you could reach out to? What could you be doing to reach those that are lost? Pray for God to show you where He desires to move and who He wants you to reach, for His glory. Jesus came and desired to reach the lost and the least (Matthew 15:24; 25:40). Do you have a heart like Christ’s to reach those that need His love?

1. Read John 13:12-15. Imagine that you are sitting there in that room as one of the 12. Think reflectively on the question that Jesus posed to the 12 in verse 12. Regarding the question, how would you respond?
2. What did Jesus say should be our response to what He did (vs. 14)?
3. What did Christ say about His actions? What He did was an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. List some things that you could do to serve others at home, at work, in your neighborhood, and in your community.

**Prayer:**

* Pray for God to show you where He desires to work and who He wants you to reach out to with the love and gospel of Jesus Christ.
* Pray for opportunities to show the love of Jesus to those in your sphere of influence.
* Pray to truly see others and their needs above yours, seeking to esteem them higher than yourself.