**Picking Up the Towel – Part 2**

**John 13:1-17**

**Introduction:**

1. This story records one of the greatest acts of humility ever recorded in (vs. 1-6). God in the flesh washing the filthy, nasty feet of sinful men.

2. The God-Man, the King of kings, Jesus Christ, was serving others instead of demanding to be served. It is mind-boggling really.

3. Sometimes we read through Philippians 2:6-8 really fast and fail to realize how real that passage is. This story paints a picture on your mind.

4. It gives us a vivid picture of Christ making Himself of no reputation, taking upon Himself the form of a servant (only slaves and servants washed other people’s feet), and humbling Himself totally.

5. This passage brings me to tears because I want what Jesus had. I want that servant’s heart, that humility, that unselfishness that leads me to think of others above myself. Paul said in Philippians 2:5, *“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”* Think like Christ – pick up the towel and serve others.

6. Learning to serve others is the key to a joyful life (vs. 17). It is the key to living a life of impact that has true meaning.

7. The apostle Paul talks about being filled with the fullness of Christ, having Jesus Christ overflow out of our lives. But there is simply no way to be like Christ and to show forth Christ if we aren’t serving.
vs. 14-15

8. Christ was the greatest servant that ever lived. Let’s learn from Him this morning. How can that same spirit of service that filled His mind dwell in and through us? How can we be like Christ and pick up the towel to sincerely serve others?

**First, Christ’s love led Him to serve. vs. 1 (Part 1)**

**Second, Christ served the “unworthy.” vs. 2 (Part 1)**

**Third, Christ was not too “big” to serve. vs. 3**

1. What a verse! Here is Jesus, who rightfully had been given all things from the Father. He holds all things in His hands, yet He willingly **chose** to take on the form of a servant. Are you getting the picture of what’s happening here?

* The disciples are about to partake in the last supper with Jesus Christ. It is right before the major event of the year, the Passover.
* The twelve had been arguing over who would be the greatest in Christ’s kingdom and what position they would have. They are lobbying for themselves and jockeying for position.
* I imagine that they were heated, angry, and full of resentment as they hustled into the upper room and seated themselves. They were bristled, and they doggedly took their places, and then came a pause.
* For any of them to wash the feet of the rest was to declare himself the servant of all; and that was precisely what each one resolved to **not** do.
* So there they sat, looking at the table, looking at the ceiling, arranging their dress. Each resolved that he would not be the man to be servant of all.
* Jesus gets up, heads over to pick up the basin, picks up the towel, and goes over and begins washing everybody’s feet. Jesus was like, “Feet need to be cleaned? I’ll clean them. I’ll do it.”

2. Nothing is more amazing than the fact of God assuming manhood in order to serve man and redeem man. Let’s read verse 3 again.

3. Jesus had:

* Power – *“…the Father had given…”*
* Possessions – *“…all things into* ***his*** *hands.”*
* Position – *“…he was come from God, and went to God.”*

4. He had it all! Yet he served! What does this teach us? Nobody is too “big” to serve others. There are no big shots in Christ’s church. We are all members one of another. Galatians 3:28

5. Washing others’ feet was a common courtesy when people came to your home.

* For example, if you were to come to my home, I may take your jacket, then ask if I could get you something to drink? It's a common courtesy.
* If you came to a home in the 1st century, the first thing they would do is greet you with a kiss on the cheek. Then they would ask, "Would you like your feet washed?" Our culture is a little different. If you come to my house, you’re probably not going to get kissed, nor get your feet washed.

6. But it's important to understand that in that culture, the host would NEVER wash the feet of the guest. That would have been too humiliating. There would always be a servant who would come and wash the feet. The host wouldn’t do it, because, let's be honest, feet are kind of disgusting.

* Imagine if I came to your house and you said, "Hey, Pastor Dan. We're glad you're here. Could I get you a drink? Here take your shoes off, I’ll give you a foot massage!" I might take you up on that! But, you’d never say that. You're not going to touch my feet.

7. In that culture, this was a job reserved for a servant or slave. But they were in a rented room, not a house. So, Christ washed the feet of sinful men!

8. 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.

* We're talking about Jesus, the Son of God, the Lamb of God, the Prince of Peace, the Living Water, and the Bread of Life.
* He’s our Redeemer, our Righteousness. He is the Light of the world. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords.

9. He stoops down and does something that was reserved for the lowest of the low in that society. He picks up the towel and washes dirty feet and says, “I’ll serve!!”

* Can you imagine a church full of people with that same Christ-like spirit?
* Can you imagine if everybody in your house had that same spirit?
* Can you imagine if everybody where you work had that attitude?

10. Here are some verses to ponder:

* Philippians 2:3, “*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.”*
* Romans 12:3, *“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to* ***every man*** *that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”*
* Romans 15:1-3a teaches that position and strength are not to be used for self-promotion, but for service. Wow! What a thought!
	+ Jesus specialized in menial tasks that everyone else tried to avoid: washing feet, helping children, fixing breakfast, and serving lepers.
	+ Nothing was beneath Him, because He came to serve. Jesus didn’t do these things in spite of His greatness, but because of it. Furthermore, He expects us to follow His example.

11. Jesus Christ’s hour had come when He would die for our sins, rise again, and be exalted at the right hand of the Father (vs. 1). When it became the most about Him, Jesus made it about others. Nobody is too “big” to serve!