

John Chapter 13 v. 1-30– “A Picture of Humility”

Read through John Chapter 13: v. 1-30 in the N.K.J. Bible version.

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

² And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to betray Him,

³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, ⁴ rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. ⁵ After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet,

and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded. ⁶ Then He came to Simon Peter. And *Peter* said to Him, “Lord, are You washing my feet?” ⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.”

⁸ Peter said to Him, “You shall never wash my feet!” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.” ⁹ Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, not my feet only, but also *my hands and my head!*”

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, “He who is bathed needs only to wash *his* feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.” ¹¹ For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, “You are not all clean.”

¹² So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³ You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.

¹⁴ If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

¹⁶ Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. ¹⁷ If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

¹⁸ “I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, ‘He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.’

¹⁹ Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am *He*. ²⁰ Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.”

²¹ When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.” ²² Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.

²³ Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. ²⁴ Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke. ²⁵ Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, “Lord, who is it?”

²⁶ Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped *it*.” And having dipped the bread, He gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon. ²⁷ Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, “What you do, do quickly.”

²⁸ But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. ²⁹ For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, “Buy *those things* we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor.

³⁰ Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.

Introduction

Chapter 13: v. 1-30 is an important section of John’s Gospel; Jesus is starting to prepare His disciples for His departure. He gives them a visual aid that they will not forget. This visual aid has a double purpose which we will see later.

In these verses Jesus also identifies His betrayer. He does this for a number of reasons which the text explains to us.

It is a very challenging Chapter. It teaches us what the “Cross” of Jesus is all about and the cost involved to be a true Disciple and follow Jesus. The Chapter also teaches us that it is Jesus who is in control His situation and not satan, or Judas.

As we will mainly be dealing with the subject of cleansing, then it would be good to get an Old Testament perspective on this subject.

The idea of “being clean” is often found in the Old Testament scriptures. Let us turn to Leviticus 16 v. 29-34

²⁹ “*This* shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth *day* of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, *whether* a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you.

³⁰ For on that day *the priest* shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, *that* you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. ³¹ *It is* a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. *It is* a statute forever.

³² And the priest, who is anointed and consecrated to minister as priest in his father’s place, shall make atonement, and put on the linen clothes, the holy garments; ³³ then he shall make atonement for the Holy Sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tabernacle of meeting and for the altar,

and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. ³⁴ This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year.” And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.

This passage talked about the Day of Atonement. It was a day set aside once a year where through the shed blood of animals cleansing would take place for all of their sins.

In Lev. 17:v.11 it says “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.”

Now let us turn to Psalm 51 and read v. 1-7. (N.K.J.)

Have mercy upon me, O God,
According to Your lovingkindness;
According to the multitude of Your tender mercies,
Blot out my transgressions.

² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.

³ For I acknowledge my transgressions,
And my sin *is* always before me.

⁴ Against You, You only, have I sinned,
And done *this* evil in Your sight—
That You may be found just when You speak,
And blameless when You judge.

⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
And in sin my mother conceived me.

⁶ Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts,
And in the hidden *part* You will make me to know wisdom.

⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

David had committed the sin of adultery and he knew that if he repented to God and asked for Him to forgive him, then God could wash him and he would be whiter than snow.

He would then be cleansed from his sin.

Snow is the most pure white color, and speaks to us of complete cleansing in the sight of God.

With this Old Testament background in mind, let us now proceed to uncover Chapter 13.

I am going to divide Chapter 13 into 2 main sections.

1. Verses 1-17 – An illustration of the cross in the life of a believer.
2. Verses 18-30 – Jesus identifies His betrayer.

1. An illustration of the cross in the life of a believer – v. 1-17.

The foot washing incident must be understood within the context of the death of Jesus.

There are three reasons for this.

Firstly in v. 1-3 Jesus is telling us that his death is imminent.

Secondly Jesus contrasts His understanding of events with the Disciples lack of understanding. Look at verses 7, 12, and 28. These verses clearly teach us that the Disciples didn't understand what Jesus was doing. However in v.1, 3 and 11 Jesus tells us that He knew exactly what was happening.

Thirdly Jesus is only 1 day away from the events of the cross. He wouldn't waste a visual aid on anything else but what was just about to happen.

So we can be sure that the foot washing is connected to the death of Jesus on the cross.

Foot washing was the most menial task that could ever be given to a servant. If a rich Jewish man had many slaves, he would never give the foot washing to a Jewish slave, it would always be given to the Gentile slave.

The streets were full of animals and even if you wore shoes they were open sandals and your feet got very dirty. You might even have animal's excretion on your feet. It was no wonder that in v. 6 Peter was horrified about Jesus washing his feet.

It was through the dialogue between Jesus and Peter that we discover what the "Foot washing" was all about.

When Peter refused to have his feet washed by Jesus, Jesus said "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me".

Jesus was giving Peter a wonderful illustration of an important theology.

Unless we are washed in the blood of Jesus, we can have no part with Him. The Greek word that is translated by our English word "having a part" is the word "Meros", it was a word that was regularly used in respect of inheritance.

With an inheritance, it is only paid out once the person has died. So what Jesus is saying here is that I am going to die and there is an inheritance available to you. However you can't receive this inheritance unless you are washed clean through my blood which will be shed on the cross for you.

Peter didn't understand what Jesus was saying, but he understood enough to want to remain with Jesus. Peter then said to Jesus, if that is the case, then I am happy to be washed all over, my hands and my head. (v. 9)

Jesus reply in v. 10 is a challenging one which we must understand fully.

The word translated "wash" in verses 5, 6, 8, 12 and 14 is the Greek word "Nipto" and it means to wash a "part of the body". However the word translated "washed" in v. 10 is the Greek word "Louo" which means to "Bathe all over". The distinction is important, Jesus was trying to teach His Disciples the importance of a "Holy Walk".

What Jesus is saying here is this;

When a person realizes that they are a sinner before a Holy God, and repent of that sin, asking Jesus for forgiveness, their sins are washed away and forgiven. It is like having a "Bath" all over. It is complete cleansing.

However as a Christian continues to live in this world, it is easy to become polluted by sin.

The Christian doesn't need to start all over again, but he or she needs to be made clean from that sin.

In 1 John 1: v. 9 it says "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Why is it important to keep our feet clean if we have already had a bath?

The reason is that we can't have intimate communion with Jesus unless our feet are clean. We have already discovered that in v. 8 of Chapter 13.

We have already discovered one side of the Greek word "Meros" which is translated "having a part" which was linked to inheritance. It also carries the meaning of having a share in something.

When God "bathes" us all over He brings about our "Union" with Christ.

This is a settled relationship that cannot change. The word "wash" in v. 10 is in the perfect tense, which means that it is settled once and for all.

However our "fellowship" with Jesus concerns our intimate relationship on a daily basis.

If we permit unconfessed sin in our lives, we hinder our walk with Jesus. This is when we need to have our feet washed. This is why it is best to have a spiritual check up on a regular basis, especially before Communion once a month.

This basic truth is illustrated in the Old Testament Priesthood. When the Old Testament Priest was consecrated, he was bathed all over. (Exodus 29:4) This experience was never repeated. However during his daily ministry, he became defiled; therefore it was necessary that he wash his hands and feet at the brass laver in the courtyard. (Ex. 30: v. 18-21)

Only then could he enter the Holy place and trim the lamps, eat the holy bread, or burn incense.

So in the words of Jesus, we only need one bath, but may need lots of foot washing.

We are united to Jesus Christ through believing in His work on the cross, but our fellowship with Jesus can be affected through the pollution of sin in our lives.

When we do sin we need to confess that sin to Jesus and trust Him for His cleansing based upon 1 John 1 v. 9.

The important thing is to be honest with Jesus because He knows everything anyway.

John was clear to point out that Peter and Judas were in a different relationship with Jesus.

Yes Jesus washed Judas's feet, but it did him no good, because he had not been bathed all over.

John had made it clear in chapter 6: v. 64-71 that Judas had never been a believer. He had never been bathed all over.

We now come to v. 12-17.

Jesus says in v. 17 "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them"

What does Jesus mean here?

Jesus is switching here from an illustration about the cross to an illustration for Christian Service.

What Jesus is saying here is that the washing of the disciple's feet is to be an example for all disciples of Jesus to follow, if they want to be blessed.

It should be a distinguishing feature of a disciple to humbly follow the example of Jesus.

Jesus lowered Himself in order to serve other people.

In v. 15 and 16 Jesus makes it clear that primarily discipleship is "Servanthood". Jesus can't imagine any of His followers refusing to serve in some capacity.

In v. 17 the word used in English "Blessed" means "highly favored by God. The point Jesus is making is that "Faith" in Him will only be seen as genuine if it is matched with obedient action. This is the proof that a person has understood the "Gospel".

Jesus always matches "Theology" with "Action". Here He connects the "Cross" with "Service".

Rick Warren who Pastors a very large Church in America is very critical of the "Sit Soak and Sour Ministry". What is that ministry? Well this is where a person comes to Church each week and soaks in the ministry of the word, soaks in all the Pastoral care, and does nothing to serve the ministry of the local Church. They eventually become "Sour" and start to criticize those people who are serving Jesus.

This person is like a swimming pool that has water flowing into it, but not flowing out from it. What happens to a swimming pool where the water only flows in? it becomes stagnant.

What happens to stagnant pools? , they produce mosquitos, we all know how annoying they are!!!

If you want to be blessed by God, find a ministry at OIC. I always say to Church members that they should have two ministries.

1. The things that must be done in order for a Church to function. Things like serving communion, stewarding, Sunday School, power-point, sound engineer etc. We may not like to do these things but they need to be done.
2. Then there is the second ministry, this is where we use our God given gifts and talents, and grow into a ministry that edifies our soul and blesses our heart. This may be a Music Ministry, or Sunday School Teacher, or Evangelist, or Pastoral Care etc.

If you are not serving in some way at OIC, be careful, you may end of in the “Sit Soak and Sour Ministry” and there is no blessing in that ministry, only heart ache for other people.

Maybe today you might like to make your faith real and prayerfully consider 2 ministries at OIC. There are plenty of vacancies in the Sunday school and other areas.

James 1: v. 22-27 makes it clear that blessing comes from “doing the word”.

²² But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.

²³ For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. ²⁴ You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like.

²⁵ But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. ²⁶ If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless.

²⁷ Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.

We now move to the second half of our passage - This is v. 18-30.

The plot to kill Jesus continues with His betrayer being identified. The Bible is quite clear that Jesus was in control of the whole situation. A major focus needs to be on v. 19.

God had a plan and Jesus knew about that plan. God's plan was to rescue sinful men and women from the penalty of sin. This penalty was separation from God forever, and eternal punishment. Somebody had to betray Jesus. Somebody who was close to Jesus but was not a believer. The person chosen was Judas. He was a thief and kept stealing money from the joint purse of money that was used to provide for the needs of the disciples and Jesus.

It is important to note that Judas was not a true believer. He was a hypocrite.

He had never believed in Jesus.(6:v. 64-71).

He had not been bathed all over (13:10-11)

He had not been among the chosen ones whom the Father gave to the Son. (13:18,17:12)

At this moment Jesus had two concerns. The first was to fulfill the word of God and the second was to “Glorify God”. (v. 18)

Here Jesus quoted Psalm 41: v. 9. When David wrote this Psalm he was probably referring to his counselor Ahithophel, who turned out to be a traitor and joined Absalom's rebellion.

However Jesus was in a similar situation where the person who He showed nothing but kindness to was about to betray Him.

Jesus was concerned that the actions of Judas would weaken the faith of the disciples, this is why he related the incident to God's word. When the disciples later saw God's word being fulfilled, they would have been strengthened and not weakened.

Right back in John 6: v. 64 Jesus revealed that he already knew who would betray Him.

Judas had the same spiritual privileges as all the other disciples and yet he chose to harden his heart.

Someone once said that the same sun that melts the ice, only hardens the clay.

Judas was definitely the clay that was hardened that day.

(It is interesting that both Judas and Ahithophel committed suicide.)

Judas left the room and went out into the darkness, it was night time.

Jesus is the light of the world, you can come to the light and be saved, or you can choose darkness, but in the end it leads to death and not life.

Application

- a) To the disciples at that time, it was a complete shock that Jesus would take on the lowest job of a servant and wash the disciple's feet. However following the events of the cross, the disciples would understand what Jesus was teaching them.

John's presentation of the events teach us that He understood how the cross must be central to membership in God's family. Also it needed to be central in the ongoing life of a believer.

The whole passage places an emphasis on the intimacy of the love of Jesus for His own people, those whom He was about to die for.

- b) To us now it is exactly the same application. However we weren't there at the time, we are just reading about it. Nevertheless the impact upon our lives should be similar to the disciples. We should be overwhelmed by His love towards us so that to do the menial tasks for Him is a delight. Never forget that Jesus came to serve and we follow Him by serving too. Make your service for Jesus a delight, even if it means cleaning the toilets or clearing up the mess after the fellowship hour. Your service will be rewarded.