

Go Low Like Christ

by Tim Conway

This sermon delves into John 13, focusing on the profound act of Jesus washing the disciples' feet as a demonstration of humility and servanthood. It emphasizes the importance of imitating Christ's example of selfless service and sacrificial love, highlighting that true greatness is found in serving others. The sermon challenges listeners to reflect on their prayer life, service to others, and perception of God's character, urging them to embrace the path of humility and joy in following Christ.

Scripture: John 13:1, John 13:12, John 13:20, Genesis 1:1, John 14:9

Topics: "Humility", "Servanthood"

Description

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Transcript

Our Father, who art in heaven, Lord, I greatly desire that Your name would be hallowed right now as John 13 is opened up and we put our eyes and our minds, give our attention to that portion of Your Word. Indeed, Your Son said to us and taught us that we do live not by bread alone, but indeed by every word that proceeds from Your mouth. And Lord, the very way that that's set forth would have us think that there is something sustaining, there is something nourishing that comes from the Word of God.

And oh, we ask You for the whole fullness of what that means. Lord, give us, feed us richly from Your Word this very day, I pray it in Christ's name. Amen.

Okay, please open your Bibles to John's Gospel. Chapter 13. Last week, we did somewhat of an introduction, which now brings me to fully diving into chapter 13.

Chapter 13. And I'm gonna read the first 20 verses. John 13, verse one.

Now, before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. During supper, when the devil had already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands and that He had come from God and was going back to

God. And what a statement right there.

Just that before Jesus' incarnation, He was with God. He came from God before He came here. And now He's going back to where He was before.

And He rose, verse four, He rose from supper. He laid aside His outer garments and taking a towel, tied it around His waist. Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around Him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to Him, Lord, do you wash my feet? Jesus answered him, what I am doing, you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand. Peter said to Him, you shall never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, if I do not wash you, you have no share with me.

Simon Peter said to Him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus said to him, the one who is bathed does not need to wash except for his feet, but is completely clean and you are clean. You is plural, but not every one of you.

For He knew who was to betray Him. That was why He said, not all of you are clean. When He had washed their feet and put on His outer garments and resumed His place, He said to them, do you understand what I have done to you? You call me teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.

If I then your Lord and teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I've given you an example that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. I'm not speaking of all of you, I know whom I have chosen, but the scripture must be fulfilled. He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.

I'm telling you this now before it takes place, that when it does take place, you may believe that I am He. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. So you know what we have here? We have a living parable.

Jesus, when He taught, He oftentimes would just simply, we do this, just give verbal instruction, tell them straightforwardly what the truth is. Other times, He would construct these illustrations. We have metaphors that come at us, we have parables.

Jesus would paint these pictures to create a truth for us. Right here, we have a, you can imagine these guys. Jesus got up, they're watching Him.

He pours the water in the basin. He's girding Himself, He's taking His outer clothing off. They're all watching this unfold right before them.

What we have is a visual living picture. I'll guarantee, these guys never forgot this night. Ever.

And of course, now their minds are perfect, just men made holy, and they're running around glory. But you know, when you get there, you'll be able to ask these guys specifically about this night. Listen, the way Jesus did this undoubtedly was more powerful than just some mere verbal instruction.

They never forgot what happened that night. And now, foot washing. Obviously, we have a chapter that deals with foot washing.

And you know what? I don't even think I need to get into it. A lot of guys would like to give you all the historical stuff here. I don't think it's necessary.

What servants did it? What slaves did it? I mean, did people even come into a house and not do it at all? Did people wash their own feet? I mean, what exactly did people do? What we know is this, people wore sandals. When John the Baptist was talking about he's not even worthy to touch one of the straps or the latches on Jesus' basically sandal. We know what kind of shoes they wore.

You know what? If it was dry, your feet got dusty. If it was wet, your feet got muddy. The truth is, it is enough to know what we have in Scripture.

Peter's disposition. Look at it. To that man, Peter, in that day, it was absolutely unthinkable that Jesus was going to do this.

So whatever you want to put together historically or whatever, I know this from Scripture. Right there in verse six, Lord, do you wash my feet? That just tells us everything. And then verse eight, you shall never wash my feet, never.

It's out of the question. Now, you get a little bit of a picture here what's going on with Peter, right? Look at verse five. Verse five basically seems to indicate that Jesus started with the other disciples.

You see verse five. He poured water into the basin. He began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

And then in six, he came to Simon Peter. So you kind of get the idea here. He didn't start with Peter.

What's happening is Peter's watching this thing unfold. He watches Jesus go to whoever was first in line. Who knows where Peter was in the order of this whole thing.

But Peter's watching this in disbelief and indignation is welling up within him. Everything in him screamed, no way, Lord, you're not washing my feet. And we might think Jesus is wanting to do this living parable before these guys.

We might think that Jesus would be like, come on, man. Peter, you're messing up my whole picture lesson here. But instead, you know what Jesus does? He, right at that moment, he turns foot washing into a matter of whether you belong to Jesus or not.

Man, you see how Jesus, Jesus, he takes things like this. You're not gonna wash my feet. He suddenly makes it a matter of life and death.

A matter of whether you belong to Jesus or whether you don't belong to Jesus. Verse eight, if I do not wash you, you have no share with me. Now here's the question.

Here's the question for all of us. Why would Peter not belong to Jesus if Jesus doesn't wash his feet? What's the obvious conclusion? The answer is this. Foot washing stands for something else.

We're supposed to look deeper. Jesus is saying, Peter, washing your feet, me washing your feet symbolizes what I came to do. That's the issue.

If you refuse the sign, Peter, you're refusing the reality to which it points. That's the whole issue here. So listen, there are two primary lessons that Jesus is gonna bring out of this foot washing.

This is the first lesson. But notice verse seven. Jesus actually doesn't expect these guys to grasp the first lesson right now.

You see it? Verse seven, Jesus answered him, what I am doing, you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand. He doesn't mean after he gets done washing their feet. What he means is later.

Undoubtedly, one of the things that you need to recognize is Jesus hasn't gone to the cross yet. These guys haven't even figured out that he is gonna go to the cross and he's gonna die. And after that happens, they haven't figured out he's gonna rise from the dead.

And after that happens, they still don't know. They haven't figured it all out. But what's gonna happen? The spirit of God is gonna be given them and lead them into all truth like Jesus promises right here in this Upper Room Discourse.

And after that, and you know how we know they finally got it? Because all you gotta do is go read something like 1 John 1-2 and you recognize they got it. They got exactly what was being said. But you know what? Jesus goes ahead with the lesson anyway.

Why? For their sake of remembering this later and for our sake. And so he goes on with the lesson. Now, Peter 8, if I don't wash you, you have no share with me.

I mean, basically, because I don't wash your feet. You're not mine. Now, you know what? It's true that Peter didn't grasp the deeper meaning here.

Jesus says he wouldn't. But you know what he did grasp? You know what he caught here? That Jesus had just made washing his feet a matter of whether you belong to Jesus or not. And all I can say is, brethren, don't all of you feel like I'm with Peter? The moment you hear that, Lord, wash all of me.

That's not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. But you know what? Peter's been mistaken twice. He's first, he's totally wrong to think that Jesus doesn't need to wash him.

That was his first mistake. You're not washing me. No, Peter, if I don't wash you, you don't have a part with me.

He realized he's wrong. Now he really wants to be washed. Now he's wrong a second time.

How's he wrong the second time? Well, second, he's wrong in thinking that he needed to be entirely washed. Jesus said to him, verse 10, the one who has bathed does not need to wash except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you.

Now listen, Jesus' point there is crystal clear. Peter, you don't need your hands and head washed. Why? Well, look at it.

You're already washed. The one who has bathed, bathed, get bath out of that. You see the imagery? Peter's already had a bath.

So he doesn't need another one. Have you read this before? You remember when God began to save the Gentiles and the Jews were recognizing it? And it says, God made no distinction between them and us, Jew and Gentile, having cleansed their hearts by faith. You ever read that in Acts? Cleansed their hearts by faith.

Peter, you're already clean. Not Judas, but the rest. You guys are clean.

You know what it says here? True disciples are completely clean. You see that? So the question this raises, well, if I'm completely clean, why the foot washing? Well, it seems obvious. Because of the accumulation of dirt along the way.

Not dirt that had already been there. You got bathed. It's dirt that is new.

It's on your feet. And you know, but here's the thing. No matter how much the dirt might get on your feet and need to be washed off, it never cancels the reality that you're already bathed and you're completely clean.

And you may feel like there's a tension there. There's a discontinuity there. But you know what? That's what Jesus is teaching.

It never contradicts the very fact that we need to have our feet washed, spiritually speaking. Yet that never contradicts the fact that you're clean. Nevertheless, new sin that accumulates along the way, it has to be dealt with.

And it's symbolized by the foot washing here. And it's that sort of ongoing cleansing that if you refuse, folks, if it's not happening, Jesus says, then you have no part with me. That's what's happening here.

You see it. So let's just talk this, a lesson about the dirt that we get on our feet. And like I say, John really picks this up.

Now listen, listen to this. If we walk in the light, that means if we're a Christian and we're walking in the light, this is what John teaches. As he is in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.

And the blood of Jesus, His Son cleanses us from all sin and has basically the verb there says everything. If we walk currently, presently, then the blood of Jesus is cleansing. It cleanses us.

It's not past tense. It's not, it has cleansed us in the past. It's continuing.

It's an indicative present tense verb. If somebody presently walks in God's light as a Christian, what this is teaching is the blood of Jesus Christ is presently cleansing that person from all the sin in an ongoing fashion. Yes, Peter, you need your feet.

You need your feet washed by me. Yes, you're clean. You're completely clean.

You've bathed. Yet you need this. And Peter, if you don't have this, then you don't belong to me.

It's the same truth here. My little children, I'm writing, again, this is John. I'm writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. And what he's saying here is if these Christians sin, does John say that there's no reason for anything to be done? No, because after all, your sin is totally pardoned, totally forgiven, totally washed. Now there's nothing to be done.

He doesn't teach that. The Bible doesn't teach that. There's an ongoing interceding advocacy that Jesus Christ mandatorily must perform for his people.

The advocate must do his work. And John's not talking about past sin. He's talking about present.

My little children, I'm writing these things to you so that you may not sin, but if anyone does. Now listen to me. Yes, by one sacrifice, by one death, Jesus paid the price for once and for all.

We know once and for all it was done. And the very work our Lord did there on that bloody, cruel cross, we know it stands on our behalf all the time. But get this, you need to really think about this because it'll give you an appreciation for the ongoing work of Christ and his washing our feet and what's portrayed by what he was doing for Peter.

You know what? The death of Jesus is not effectual for future sins until that effectuality is required. Just listen to this. I think the truth is captured here, Romans 8.33. Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? They can't, and they never can.

It's God who justifies. Who's to condemn? None. Christ Jesus is the one who died more than that who was raised.

See, once and for all, it's done. He's at the right hand of God, but who indeed is interceding. That means he's appealing, he's petitioning, he's pleading on our behalf for us.

You know, what you want to think is this. It's best to think of justification as forgiveness for all past sins. And I know what commonly gets said.

Past, present, and future. People love to talk that way. The problem is you'll never find where the Bible talks that way.

What it is is all your past sins are washed away, the guilt of all of it. But it's the grounds for the forgiveness of future sins. Not that any kind of new justifications are required each time we sin, but there's an ongoing application of our justification.

The reality is this. We live in the realm of time and history. When does God forgive anybody's sins? Did he forgive your sins in eternity past? I think we can think of verses that say we're very guilty.

We're very much children of wrath right up until something happens. Were our sins forgiven at the cross? Were our sins forgiven when we repented and believed? Or were our sins forgiven when we actually commit the sin? Although we never fall from a state of justification, Peter, we need an ongoing cleansing. And if you don't have that, you don't belong to me.

So while justification's a permanent state, you don't wanna get away from that. For every Christian believer, from the moment he trusts Christ, the application and the washing effects of Christ's blood is ongoing. It's dynamic in nature.

Listen, I'm just gonna throw two very well-known Puritan names at you. Because I know for some reformed Christians, this all of a sudden seems like an odd thing. Sins cannot be actually pardoned before they're actually committed.

Thomas Watson says, when I say God forgives all sins, I understand it of sins past. Regarding future sins, God has decreed to pardon them. You see, decreed.

He's purposed to do it. And when He forgives one sin, He will in time forgive all. But sin's future? It's absurd to think sin should be forgiven before it's committed.

The opinion that sins to come as well as past are forgiven takes away and makes void Christ's intercession. You know what it makes void? His ongoing foot-washing ministry. And you know, not actual foot-washing, but the truth that it points to beyond and beneath.

That's Watson. He is an advocate to intercede for daily sins. But if sin be forgiven before it's committed, what need is there of His daily intercession? What need have I of an advocate if sin be pardoned before it's committed? Okay, now listen.

Here's a second truth taught by the foot-washing. There's a truly, truly declaration. Amen, amen.

This is the truth. Look at verse 12, John 13, 12. When He had washed their feet and put on His outer garments and resumed His place, He said to them, do you understand? Now what you want to get is He's teaching two main truths.

One about the implications of His ongoing cleansing, which He says you'll grasp later, which I'm telling you, John got it. There's an ongoing advocacy. There's an ongoing washing, a cleansing of the blood of Christ.

But now He comes to another lesson. This lesson He expects them to understand now. What I have done, do you understand what I've done to you? You call me teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.

If I then your Lord and teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I've given you an example that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. Now Jesus turns their attention from the cleansing power of His blood to the powerful example of His humility. You see, you recognize what Jesus is saying.

Guys, you've seen what I've just done. I am high. My Father's given everything into my hand.

You don't get any higher than that. I'm King of Kings. Everything under my feet, my rank is high, my standing is high, my power is great.

By ordinary worldly standards, I ought to be served. But guys, you just watched me move around this room like the lowest servant. Guys, I know you.

You know what Jesus is saying to these guys? I've been listening to you. I've been with you. Do you know what Luke tells us? Do you know what was happening at that table right before Jesus got up and walked around that room and washed their feet? Jesus took bread.

When He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. And likewise, the cup after they had eaten, saying, this cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

And a dispute arose among them as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. That just took place at the table. Guys, you know what Jesus is saying? Guys, I never want you to live a single day the rest of your lives that you don't remember what I have just done here.

Guys, I don't want you to live a single day the rest of your life where you think that my example doesn't matter in your life. I am high. I've gone low.

You guys are lower than me. I'm the master. What if I've done this? What ought you to do? You know what? We're being confronted with one of the great realities of salvation.

You know what it is? Christ means to save us from being selfish, self-important little people. All around us, and this comes up in the church as well, we find people that are fighting for the throne rather than fighting for the towel. Small people, because Jesus says, you want to know the real path to greatness, and people that seek greatness in the wrong places, what He's really saying is you're not great.

You're the smallest of all people. Small people strive for importance, recognition. You know what happens? A sermon like this can get preached, and somebody's out there listening.

Instead of hearing how it applies to you, you're thinking, oh, I'm glad so-and-so is hearing that. They need to get their life right over there. Brethren, how sickening, and how gross it is to find among those who are supposed to be imitators of Christ like this, people that are just hung up on what other people do or don't do for them.

You know what? You get thin-skinned people in the church, and they're just uptight all the time. They're angry all the time. Something just doesn't... People aren't doing things the way that appeases them.

Well, they didn't greet me right. They didn't talk to me right. And what happens? People walk around hurt.

They walk around self-pitying, depressed. Why? Because others don't greet me. They don't talk to me.

They don't serve me. They don't give to me. They don't respect me.

And so we get people that just mope around. They become childlessly vengeful. Well, if they're gonna treat me that way, then I'm gonna do this to them.

You see what Jesus is saying? Guys, you were just at that table. And you guys weren't, seriously, I'm going to the cross in a few hours. You guys are over there arguing about who's gonna be greatest.

And He walks around and He washes all of their feet. What is it? Let me ask you this. What is it people that are pursuing when they wanna be important? When they wanna be great? What are they after in this quest for importance? Well, you know what it is.

People think that that's where they're gonna find happiness. They're gonna be happy because they get recognized. Somebody knows, somebody pats them on the back.

But I think the thing we have to ask is, does it really bring fulfillment? I mean, are your best days really the days that somebody complimented you for something? I know that can be encouraging. I'm not talking about encouragement here. I'm talking about people that are running around seeking to be great all the time and who are uptight when that doesn't happen.

People who are not willing to serve others. People who are constantly measuring everything by what they can get. Get, get, get.

That's this mindset. I'm gonna be great. I don't know if Peter would have got too bent out of shape if one of the other guys might have all of a sudden started washing everybody's feet.

Why? Because he was just arguing with that guy about who was gonna be the greatest. And yeah, it might have embarrassed him a little bit. People wanna be happy.

They think they're gonna find it this way. And you know what Jesus says in the midst of all of this? Listen to what he says. If you know these things.

What things? Just listen. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. Blessed.

You know what blessed? That means you'll be glad, you'll be happy, you'll be joyful, you'll be fulfilled. If you know these. What things? If you know that the way to greatness is by serving others and that's the way to happiness and that's the way to joy and that's the way.

Those things. If you really get that. It's not having the highest position.

It's not getting people to talk about you. You remember what happened? Jesus looked at people that sought the glory of men and he didn't count that as a high thing. Aye, aye, aye.

You know what I remember? One of the greatest quarterbacks in American football. His name is Tom Brady. He played for the New England Patriots.

And after he won his first Super Bowl, this is one of the most winning quarterbacks, the greatest of all time. He won his first Super Bowl and he sat in his hotel room afterwards and he just totally felt empty and felt like, is this all there is? You know what? You can have all the accolades. Jesus said, you wanna be happy? And you know how he can be so certain about it? If you will lay your life down and serve others, God will see to it you're happy.

He will see to it you're fulfilled. He will see to it you're full of joy. And you can pursue it all sorts of other directions, but you know what? You won't find it.

It won't be there. What Jesus is teaching here, if you realize what has just happened here in this room, guys, I have just shown you guys the path to the truest, deepest happiness. If you grasp what I'm trying to teach you, if you grasp who I am, how high I am, and what a privilege it is for you to be saved and to be totally clean and to be a follower and imitator of me and follow my example of lowliness and serving others and loving others.

Remember, he loved his own to the end. If you guys will see that example and seek to imitate it, actually do that. You see, blessed are you if you do them, then what happens? You will discover the deepest joys in life are not when people serve you and fall down before you.

The deepest joys are to be found in going low in love and service and sacrifice. You know what? You find people depressed in the church. I can tell you something about that depressed person.

They receive from others, but they're not giving. That is so often the case. Oh, if you dig, can you find an exception to the rule? I don't know, maybe.

But I'll tell you this, if Jesus is promising blessing, I guarantee you this, you'll find that blessing if you imitate him at this point. Christians of Grace Fellowship Manchester, listen to me. Jesus is calling me to go low.

Deacons, he's calling you to go low. Brothers in this church, if you own your own business, you own your own house, you own your own car, he's calling you to go low and serve. Fathers, he's calling you to go low for the sake of your wife, for the sake of your family.

Mothers, he's calling you to do that. Those who have their own business, he's calling you to go low. You may be smart, you may be beautiful, you may be gifted, you may be able to do certain things, perform certain ways, he's calling you to go low.

If you're a big brother, if you're a big sister, he's calling you to go low. If you're white, he calls you to go low. If you're black, he calls you to go low.

If you're brown, he calls you low. Man, go low. Woman, go low.

That's what's happening here. If you're smart, go low. You see it.

And the thing is, look how he ends this section in verse 20. "Truly, truly, I say to you, "whoever receives the one I send receives me. "Whoever receives me receives the one who sent me." I look at that and I think, well, it's just so typical of Jesus saying things that you don't expect.

Because it's like, well, how does that fit? I mean, what a statement. It's another truly, truly statement. It's like, you see what he's saying? The first thing I ask, well, is that a disconnected thought? Or does that fit? Does that connect perfectly with everything that he's been saying? Well, I think in context, you have to say, no, it perfectly fits.

Well, how does it fit? Well, whoever receives the one I send. And what's Jesus saying is gonna describe the ones he sends. Well, they're gonna be servants.

They're gonna be people who seek to be blessed and find their joy in serving and loving and sacrifice. And you know what? That person who lives like that, they're gonna be my representative to either be received or rejected. And you know this, if I send some guy like that or some sister like that out into the world, if they receive you, they receive me.

And if they receive me, they receive my father. Wow, we get to be in that position? Jesus is just summing up what he's just said. These blessed, happy ones who go low in foot washing sort of deeds, longing to serve others, not using others.

People who've lived just to use others. They basically, they're always calculating. What can I get out of these people? Rather than seeing people and immediately calculating, how can I help them? Oh, folks, the devil sold mankind just a cheap bill of goods.

He tells us from the time we're spoiled brat little children. You say, I wasn't. Yes, you were.

And we know it. All you have to do is look at little children. They'll fight over a toy.

They make that ugly noise. You did it. Your children do it.

We all do it. We're all spoiled brat little children. And the thing is, we belong to the devil, where the devil, he's got power over this world.

We belong to it. We followed the course of this world, followed the prince of the power of the air. That's how children come in, that natural state.

Ever since we were like that, you know what we're told? We gotta get. We're gonna be happy if mom gives me. My brother's gotta give me that toy.

We just always think we're gonna be happy if we get. That's what the devil's saying all the time. Get, get, get, take, take, take.

But does it really fulfill? It's your most fulfilled day. The day that you grab the toys away from other people. The day that you managed to out finagle somebody else and get what they had.

Does that really fulfill? And you know what? Whatever happiness might come from that kind of stuff, whatever pleasure, well, it's just fleeting. That's all it is. It's just a fleeting puffing up of our pride.

I mean, what do you think? If somebody's serving you, you can bark orders at. Is that gonna give you a really good night's sleep and you're gonna wake up and be all happy and ready to face the next day? Folks, we need to wake up. The vast majority of depressed people I've ever encountered over the years, you know what? They're hung up on themselves.

They're hung up on how they're being treated. They're slaves of how other people treat them. Obsessed with their own feelings.

Jesus says, hey, hey, guys. He's been arguing at the table over who's gonna be the greatest. Guys, watch.

Watch me. You see what I just did? Guys, you know what? I'm getting ready to go out in the world. You guys are gonna be my representatives.

They receive you, they receive me, and they receive my father. They reject you, they reject me, they reject my father. You guys are gonna be my representatives.

You see everything I just did here? And he's speaking it to us too. That's it. Wake up.

Jesus says, hey, look at me. See me washing feet. You wanna be blessed? Well, this is the path for you then.

It's the path of blessing. I mean, look, ask yourself an altogether honest question. How much would you be missed? And I recognize typically, yes, your spouse would miss you.

Maybe not. Maybe in some cases, but you need to ask yourself that. How much would you actually be missed if you just this afternoon, poof, were gone and taken out of this world? If you disappeared right off

the face of the earth, you know what happens? Givers are missed.

People who poured their lives into others, people who are a help to others, people who are sacrificial for others, takers, not so much. People who don't do anything are not really gonna be missed. People who don't serve, people who don't imitate Christ, they're just not really gonna be missed.

Brethren, it's been said before, but I'll say it again. Live your life so as to be missed when you're gone. And I mean, brethren, I ask you this, because this is a big test.

This is a real test, especially coming into this week of prayer and fasting. How much do you pray for others? You know, when you take the towel and gird yourself to wash feet, that's a way to perform a service, a lowly service in behalf of somebody else's good. When you get down on your knees for the sake of the brethren, I just ask you this, how much do you pray? How much do you give yourself to praying and interceding for others? How much do you sacrifice your time and your prayer life? Or how much is your prayer life about you? Brethren, that's a very telling reality.

An excellent barometer to measure yourself, where you're at in serving others. Jesus is calling us clearly in verse 20 to represent Him and represent His Father. You see the path.

This is the path to know His joy. Why? Because you're clean, you're absolutely clean. And what a joy to be able to live this way, pursue this path.

Brethren, I just call you with a week of prayer and fasting coming up, serve, and this is a way no one will see it'll be between you and your Father in heaven. Or we can pray for one another in the corporate prayer meetings. But brethren, how much you pray for others in your prayer meetings is a real barometer.

It's a real test to where you're at in serving others. Because it'll tell you how much you're actually thinking about others. Because you know what you typically pray about is what you're thinking about.

Just one thing to end up with here. Sometimes we can be insensitive to the significance of what this portion of Scripture actually tells us about God Himself. Look, this chapter starts with Jesus having loved His own who were in the world.

He loved them to the end. You know what? His serving them was not mechanical. It was not cold.

It was not indifferent. It was not forced. And I am afraid we hardly feel the force of this as we are.

It's things like Jesus washing feet that often cause people of other religions to recoil at our Christianity and at our God. Listen, Muslims, on the whole, they believe God is distant and unknowable. They don't believe God has a son, let alone a son who is Himself God and washes dirty feet.

Listen, in Islam, if you say a God can be known, then in their estimation, it's a small God because a big God could never be known. And so their idea is their God is basically unknowable. It violates transcendency if we say that we can know Him.

And you know what? It's a master-slave relationship. Kevin made this really clear. You remember that? The relationship in Islam is a master-slave one.

It's never, never is it a, God is not, and He certainly is not a servant to anyone. You know what the ancient Greeks, have you ever, did you have Greek-Roman mythology, any of you, when you were in high school,

when you were in school somewhere? I mean, basically the ancient Greeks had gods who were flawed, they were fallible. People just had to endure the decision of their Greek deities.

They were sadistic, they were bullies, they were eager to just make any excuse to inflict punishment and judgment on humans under their power. Have you ever read about the Aztec gods? You know what they used to do? They used to take their captured, either their slaves or those that they captured from the opposing armies, and they basically would rip the heart out, run up the steps, and offer it to their god while the heart was still beating. Their god required blood, they required the hearts.

Hinduism, Brahman is the highest universal principle, the ultimate reality in the universe. The final cause of all that exists, they pray like this, because you're the same impersonal Brahman, I offer my respectful obeisances to you. In Buddhism, Buddha said to have had direct experience of the source reality of existence.

He described it as an impersonal emptiness. Do you realize what happens when demons and men make religions? And you know what God says? Philip says, Lord, show us the Father, and it suffices. It's enough.

Philip, have I been with you so long and you don't know me? If you've seen me, you've seen the Father. Do you think when you look into John 13, at Jesus watching feet, it says anything? He's not like the Aztec gods. He's not like the Greek gods.

He's not like Allah. Baal worshipers, they ran around cutting themselves until their bodies flowed with blood. That's what they thought was required to pacify Baal.

You know what's, you remember Moloch? What did it take to pacify him? You had to throw your children on the red hot hands of their idol. And this is constantly what men and demons come up with, even Catholicism. What is it? Well, God's not really approachable.

The Father, not really approachable. The Son, not really approachable. We got to go through Mary.

You see how Mary is the one, no, no, no. God says, if you've seen my Son, he's the radiance of my glory. Behold my Son.

I sent him there to wash dirty feet. That's the kind of God I am. You think about the God who we have to do with, the God who is keeper of the gates of heaven that I think we want to get into.

He's the keeper of the gates of hell that we want to stay out of. The God who created all things. If you'd started your new Bible reading and you're in Genesis one, you came across that today.

This is the God we've sinned against, the God that we live in the sight of. What's he like? Can you glean anything from what's unfolding in John 13 in that upper room? What's God saying to us? Anything? Look, I think we need just a little bit of a history lesson. Does anybody remember the devil's greatest tactic? He came to our first mother in the garden.

Did God actually say, you shall not eat of any tree of the garden? Already putting a shadow. You'll not surely die. But it wasn't just, he lied about God.

Did God say, nah, you won't die. But then he puts this shadow on the character of God. You know why God didn't tell you the truth? I hate to be the one to have to tell you this, but the reason he didn't tell you

the truth is because he knows that when you eat of that tree, your eyes are going to be opened and you'll be like God and you're going to know good from evil.

It's like the devil is saying, I've seen the way God's been treating you all along. I've watched how he tries to frighten you with this threat of death. If you even touch it, I've been wanting to tell you the truth, but I hate to be the one to have to be the bearer of bad news but let me just tell you, you know what the real issue is here? God's holding out on you.

God's trying to keep you down. God just doesn't want you to be blessed. You know what the real issue is? God's secretly jealous.

He doesn't want you to become like him. That's what he's saying. God's just, he's bluffed you with this threat of death just to keep away from you that one thing in the garden that would really make you happy.

And the devil comes along just like that and he attacks the very character of God himself. He got our first parents to believe that God is basically this jealous God, small, selfish, just a monster. Somebody who's against them.

Somebody who delights in just spoiling their lives. You know what? We've got some young people. Some of you young people here, you're not saved.

You come here because your parents bring you here. And you know what? I know you. I know what you're like.

I know what you think because I used to think like you. You know what? You basically believe that God delights in spoiling your life. The God of scripture just takes all the fun out of life.

You've resisted this Christianity stuff because it's like, well, people make fun of me. I won't really, I mean, it's just, it's all these rules. You feel like it's all just holding you down.

So restrictive. It's just inconvenient. Robs me of so much, so narrow.

And you know what? You're just waiting for the opportunity to get out from under your parents because then the last place you'd want to be is any place like this. I mean, Christianity is so narrow, cramps my style. Sounds like all these rattling chains.

They just want to bind me down, hold me back. You imagine that behind Christianity is this God who's against you. Just opposed to all your joy, all your fun, all your happiness.

This God doesn't wish you well. He doesn't desire you to enjoy anything. And you know what? Your doubt is goodness.

But you know what? You know what John 13 makes me say to you? You better face the facts. Face them. I mean, look them straight in the eyes.

What are you going to say? Are you going to tell me? Are you going to go away thinking that Jesus washing feet doesn't matter to you? That doesn't mean anything to you? Does it mean anything to you? That if you see the Son, you see what the Father is like. Does that mean anything to you? There He is. The Son of God in the pages right here.

Washing dirty feet. What are you going to do? You're going to conclude that God is against me. That God doesn't like me.

He's cruel. Is that the, you know what? That's madness. That's insanity.

The devil's just thrown dirt in your eyes. Don't believe that. What are you going to... Stop listening to the devil.

You've been beguiled. You've been deceived. You need to face the facts.

You need to abandon the foolishness. Do you know what the devil told our first parents? Don't believe God. Don't believe him.

He can't be trusted. You need to trust me. I'll tell you the truth.

Let me tell you something. There was only one lie in the Bible. There was one liar and one murderer in the garden that day and it wasn't God.

God had told them what would be for their greatest good and He had put them in the Garden of Eden, a paradise. The devil's a liar. And I'll tell you what, this account right here, listen to me.

You want to listen. Does this account indicate that God is cruel? Or does it say to us God is kind and God is good? That He has your best good in mind. Look at it.

God says, look at my son. Do you see him? If you've seen him, you've seen me. I'm like him.

I'm not like Allah. Who are you going to compare me to? I'm not like Allah. I'm not like those Greek gods.

I'm not like those Aztec gods. I'm not like Zeus. You see my son humbling himself for sinners? I sent him to do that, to show you what I'm like.

And you know what he says to us? Submit to my mercy. Be washed by faith in Him. Completely clean.

And then you know what? Follow my example and it will lead you into such blessing. It'll blow you away. And can I tell you something? No true Christian who's experienced this blessing ever looks back at their lost life and says, oh man, look how much I had to give up and this is just chains and this is killing me.

They don't say that. Why? Because Christ is it. He's the treasure.

We found Him. And He's brought such joy. He's brought forgiveness of sins.

He's brought the promise of eternal life. He's brought happiness. He's brought joy.

Don't let the devil deceive you. Don't do it. Face the facts.

Stop your insanity. Face John 13. Amen.

Father, I pray. Oh, may John 13 just speak loudly, clearly. I pray it in Christ's name.

Amen. You are dismissed.

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