

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **John 13:3-11.**
Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God, and was going back to God, 4 rose^ from supper, and laid^ aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself about. 5 Then He poured^ water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. 6 And so He came^ to Simon Peter. He said^ to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" 7 Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you shall understand hereafter." 8 Peter said^ to Him, "Never shall You 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 has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." 11 For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean."
- B. Our world has become a large, impersonal, busy institution. We are alienated from each other. Although crowded, we're lonely. Distant. Pushed together but uninvolved. No longer do most neighbors visit across the backyard fence. The well-manicured front lawn is the modern moat that keeps barbarians at bay. Hoarding and flaunting have replaced sharing and caring. It's as if we are occupying common space but have no common interests, as if we're on an elevator with rules like; "No talking, smiling, or eye contact allowed without written consent of the management."
- C. Juxtapose that with the one major objective that God has in the lives of His people. We are to conform to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:28-29; Col. 1:28).
(Rom 8:28-29) And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. **29** For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren;
(Col 1:28) And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ.
- D. And what is that image? A servant. Jesus came to serve and to give (Mk. 10:45).
"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."
- E. So, what will it be? A throne or a towel?

I. NOT A CELEBRITY, A SERVANT.

- A. Jesus' motto was to be a servant, not a celebrity.
- B. The mother of James and John wanted her sons to be celebrities. She wanted them on thrones, with Jesus in the middle. What position! What power! What glory! (Mt. 20:20-21).
Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons, bowing down, and making a request of Him. 21 And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said^ to Him, "Command that in Your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left."
- C. The other ten apostles were just as inclined. When they found out about her request, they were mad. They wanted to be great too! (Mt. 20:24; Lk. 22:24).
(Mt 20:24) And hearing *this*, the ten became indignant with the two brothers.
(Lk 22:24) And there arose also a dispute among them *as to* which one of them was regarded to be greatest.
- D. Jesus has all--power and authority (Mt. 28:18), and He is head over all things to the church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23). But even with celebrity status He chose the role of a SERVANT. X is "boss" and that makes us servants.

II. PAUL, A SERVANT.

- A. Paul had more going for him than you think. He was a servant from start to finish.
- B. Paul was **transparent**. He didn't have it all together, he wasn't perfect, and best of all he didn't attempt to hide it (1Cor. 2:1-3; 2Cor. 10:10).
(1Cor 2:1-3) And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. **2** For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. **3** And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.

(2Cor 10:10) For they say, “His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive, and his speech contemptible.”

- C. Paul was genuinely **humble**. For an inspired preacher that is quite the complement (1Cor. 2:4-5). And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, **5** that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. (A quick humility test: When confronted, the humble have nothing to prove and nothing to lose.)
- D. Paul was completely **honest**. No hidden motives or meanings. An absence of hypocrisy, duplicity, political games and superficiality (2Cor. 4:1-2; 1Th. 2:3-4).
(2Cor 4:1-2) Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, **2** but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.
(1Th 2:3-4) For our exhortation does not *come* from error or impurity or by way of deceit; **4** but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who examines our hearts.

III. JESUS, A SERVANT.

- A. When asked to describe Himself. Jesus said only two things:
 - 1. He did NOT say He was wise, powerful, or all-knowing and Deity.
 - 2. He said, “I am **gentle**, and I am **humble**” (Mt. 11:28-29).
“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. **29** “Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and YOU SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.
- B. “Gentleness” means strength under control. “Humble in heart” means a lowly helper.
- C. Jesus taught humble, service when He washed the disciples’ feet. They were willing to fight for a throne, but not for a towel (see Jn. 13:3-17).
- D. Three important lessons on servanthood:
 - 1. **A servant is unannounced.**
Jesus never said, “Men, I’m now going to demonstrate servanthood watch my humility.” NO WAY. That kind of obvious pride was the trademark of the Pharisees (Jn 13:4).
rose^ from supper, and laid^ aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself about.
 - 2. **A servant receives graciously.**
Being willing to receive sometimes takes more grace than giving to others. Our reluctance to do so exposes our pride. Learn to receive! (Jn. 13:8).
Peter said^ to Him, “Never shall You wash my feet!” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.”
 - 3. **A servant possesses incredible inner strength.**
We would gladly stand in line to wash Jesus’ feet, but that isn’t what He said. He told them (and us) to wash one another’s feet. That means serving right down in the middle of someone’s stinking mess (Jn. 3:12,14).
“If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things?... **14** “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up;
- E. Remember when Jesus questioned Peter (Jn. 21:15-17):
So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said^ to Simon Peter, “Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these?” He said^ to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said^ to him, “Tend My lambs.” **16** He said^ to him again a second time, “Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me?” He said^ to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said^ to him, “Shepherd My sheep.” **17** He said^ to him the third time, “Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me?” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said^ to him, “Tend My sheep.
“Peter, do you love me?” Yes, Lord, I love you.
“Feed My sheep.” Yes, but it’s easier to study and pray.
“Peter, do you love me?” Yes, Lord, I love you.
“Feed My sheep.” Yes, but I like coming to worship You.
“Peter, do you love me?” Yes Lord, you know that I love You.
“Feed My sheep.” (Loving Jesus means learning to feed and serve His sheep)

IV. YOU, A SERVANT.

- A. Notice the three things that Jesus told His disciples.
- B. *First*, serving means **personal involvement**.
No one ever learned to water ski in his or her living room with a correspondence course! You have to get in the water and get personally involved (Jn. 13:14).
“If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.
- C. *Second*, serving **requires X-like obedience**.
We need to risk reaching out, giving up the luxury of staying safe... giving up our preferences for His. Unselfishness never comes easy, but it must be done (Jn. 13:15).
“For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.
- D. *Third*, serving results in **ultimate happiness**.
The fun comes when we roll up our sleeves, wrap the towel around our waist, and wash a few feet... quietly... graciously... cheerfully... like X who was “gentle” and “humble in heart.” (Jn. 13:17).
“If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Which one do you want... a throne or a towel?
- B. Tonight’s lesson is entitled, “The Servant-as Giver.”
- C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.