

**March 2, 2008 – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent**

**Jesus, In Every Way Like Us**

**“Ever Wonder What You Would Say If You Were Sharing A Last Meal With Friends?”**

(Continued next week)

John 13:1-17 NLT

Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He now showed the disciples the full extent of his love. 2 It was time for supper, and the Devil had already enticed Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to carry out his plan to betray Jesus. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. 4 So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, 5 and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he had around him.

6 When he came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, why are you going to wash my feet?"

7 Jesus replied, "You don't understand now why I am doing it; someday you will."

8 "No," Peter protested, "you will never wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "But if I don't wash you, you won't belong to me."

9 Simon Peter exclaimed, "Then wash my hands and head as well, Lord, not just my feet!"

10 Jesus replied, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. And you are clean, but that isn't true of everyone here." 11 For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, "Not all of you are clean."

12 After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing? 13 You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because it is true. 14 And since I, the Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. 15 I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. 16 How true it is that a servant is not greater than the master. Nor are messengers more important than the one who sends them. 17 You know these things--now do them! That is the path of blessing.

“Ever wonder what you would say if you knew you were sharing a last meal with friends?”

Vinnie and his friend Sal go hunting and are sitting around a camp fire out in the woods. They are eating something they have hunted when suddenly Sal grabs his chest and falls

to the ground. He doesn't seem to be breathing; his eyes are rolled back in his head. Vinnie whips out his cell phone and calls 911. He gasps to the operator, I think Sal is dead! What should I do?

The operator, in a calm soothing voice says, 'Just take it easy and follow my instructions. First, let's make sure he's dead.'

There is a silence .. and then a shot is heard.

Vinnie's voice comes back on the line, 'Okay... now what ?

“Ever Wonder What You Would Say If You Were Sharing A Last Meal With Friends?”

In our scripture Jesus has a last meal with friends. Being it is His last meal with them, what He does and says is very important. They would remember this last day with Him and the things He said to them. “Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He now showed the disciples the full extent of his love.” Jesus loved His disciples. Jesus wanted to express His love to them, and the way it did it would surprise them.

(v4b-5, 12-17) (Jesus) wrapped a towel around his waist, and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he had around him...After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because it is true. And since I, the Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. How true it is that a servant is not greater than the master. Nor are messengers more important than the one who sends them. You know these things--now do them! That is the path of blessing.”

The first thing Jesus tells His friends at the Last Supper is

### **1. Serve (as Jesus served)**

Foot washing was a common act in Bible times. People traveled mostly on foot in sandals across the dusty roads of Judea. When entering a home, it was customary to wash one's feet. To not offer to wash a guest's feet was considered a breach of hospitality (see Luke 7:44). Washing guests' feet was a job for a household servant to carry out when guests arrived (1 Sam 25:41). It was a subservient task -- wives might wash their husbands' feet; students their teachers' feet, (a servant would wash his master's feet) etc., but not the other way around. What was unusual about this act was that Jesus, the Master and Teacher, was doing it for his disciples. He wrapped a towel around his waist, as the lowliest slave would do, and washed and dried his disciples' feet.

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The washing of feet was a task normally assigned to a servant, but Jesus volunteers to do it. Well, none of the disciples were volunteering. They had the normal human response of, "Let someone else do it." Jesus tells them to follow His example.

Phil 2:5-7(NIV)

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

We are to imitate Christ in serving God, one another, and all people. And we should have His same attitude. Jesus washed their feet because He loved those He served. Jesus was not telling us we should literally wash feet. Some churches do practice that. I know in the Catholic church there is a ceremonial washing of feet, I believe it is done on Holy Thursday commemorating this event by Jesus. I remember a girl in her early 30's telling me one time that her dad had decided to become a deacon in the church. He would be washing feet in the Holy Thursday service. He could choose anyone he wished to wash, but he asked his daughter if he could wash her feet. She said that in her teen years and into her early 20's she was rebellious, got involved in drugs, had some trouble with the law, and caused her dad much heartache. She told me how she sobbed when in a very powerful moment her dad knelt down to wash her feet.

But, Jesus was not telling us we should literally wash feet. He *was* telling us to humbly serve others. He was telling us to:

Taking on a menial task or accept a lesser role.

Not to insist on our "rights" or "privileges."

Meet others' needs before meeting our own.

Look for a job no one else will do and cheerfully doing it.

Focus on the results being achieved, not who is getting credit.

(based on The Life Application Commentary Series)

The disciples of Jesus are to follow His example because, "a servant is not greater than the master." Finally Jesus says that serving others is "the path of blessing." For, we are not blessed, joyful, and fulfilled if we know these things, but if we do them.

For the next lesson to His disciples we go to (John 13:33-35 NLT) "Dear children, how brief are these moments before I must go away and leave you! Then, though you search for me, you cannot come to me--just as I told the Jewish leaders. So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

## **2. Love (as Jesus loved)**

To love each other is not a new commandment. It was taught in the Old Testament. What is new about the commandment is to love just as Jesus loved you. This is revolutionary. Jesus was the living example of God's love and we are to be the living example of Jesus' love. This love would be a mark of distinction because, as Jesus said,

“Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.” Not only does our love for one another empowered by the love of Jesus for us and the Holy Spirit in us, cause others to believe in Jesus, but it will keep us strong and united.

Do people see petty bickering, jealousy, and division in our churches? Or do they know we are followers of Jesus' by our love for one another? Do they see our love in action, for love is more than warm feelings. How can we love others as Jesus loves us? By helping when it's not convenient, by giving when it hurts, by devoting energy to others' welfare rather than our own, by absorbing hurts from others without complaining or fighting back. Jesus loves those who are not loving Him, Jesus sacrificed for others. This kind of loving is hard to do. That is why people notice when you do it and know you are empowered by a supernatural source.

(based on The Life Application Commentary Series)

The third thing Jesus told His followers at the last supper is found in: (John 14:1-7 NLT) "Don't be troubled. You trust God, now trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father's home, and I am going to prepare a place for you. If this were not so, I would tell you plainly. When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. And you know where I am going and how to get there."

"No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "We haven't any idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you had known who I am, then you would have known who my Father is. From now on you know him and have seen him!"

### **3. Stay hopeful (trust in Jesus)**

When we face troubling times we often feel overwhelmed by fear, doubts, grief, and conflict. Our own resources are inadequate. However we have and must trust in Jesus (Phil 4:13 NLT) “For I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need.”

No matter what comes our way, we have assurances in Jesus' words to remain calm and hopeful:

God is trustworthy, and He has sent Christ, who is also trustworthy, to us. No one else deserves our trust.

God has a room reserved for us in heaven so we never have to fear separation from Him. Jesus speaks the truth. He has never been proven wrong. We can rely on both Jesus' teaching and His promises.

Jesus did exactly what He said he would do, return to the disciples after the Resurrection. In so doing, He guaranteed our entrance into God's presence and our place in God's house.

Jesus is always with us, and someday we will be face to face with Him. Whatever the future holds, Jesus promised to be our companion. We know who Jesus is and how much He loves us.

(based on The Life Application Commentary Series)

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.

So don't let heart be troubled, tell yourself the right things (as shared above)

There is much more that Jesus had to say (we will continue next week)

John 15:15 – “I no longer call you servants, because a master doesn't confide in his servants. Now you are my friends , since I have told you everything the Father told me

“Ever Wonder What You'd Say If Sharing Last Meal With Friends?”  
Here is what Jesus told His Friends: & you are His friends, so He says to you:

Be a servant

Love one another

Never stop trusting Jesus Christ, stay hopeful.