

God on His Hands and Knees **John 13:1-13 (3/4/2018 PM)**

We are looking forward to Easter Sunday in both the morning and evening messages. The next four Sunday evenings will be a message from John 13, 14, 15 and 16. These chapters are Jesus' private ministry to His disciples. Chapters 13 & 14 take place in the Upper Room. Nowhere in history in Jewish or Greek-Roman literature is there ever an account of a superior washing the feet of an inferior.

❖ **This account is a picture of the *condescension* of Jesus.**

We need to keep in mind how far Jesus came (1). Lutzer writes, "No one has ever come from that high and descended that low."

➤ Jesus reveals to us the *path to* greatness, Philippians 2:5-11.

Servantship is a difficult lesson to learn and to maintain. There are places in scripture that give us a glimpse of what Jesus left for us, Isaiah 6:1-3. Jesus came from the highest glory.

▪ **Jesus could have *stayed where He was*.**

This was a picture of what Jesus did when he came to earth (4).

The omnipotent One came as a helpless baby and had to learn to walk. The omniscient One had to learn to speak Aramaic. The giver of life gave His life so that we might have eternal life. Jesus' humility was not born out of poverty, 2 Corinthians 8:9,

❖ **Jesus did what He did because of what He *knew*.**

Even a limited understanding of how Jesus could do this helps us to take on the role of a servant. Jesus could not only wash His disciples' feet but go the cross because of what He was assured of.

➤ Jesus knew that *His hour* had come (1).

The theme of "His hour" is highlighted throughout John's Gospel. Three times it is stated that his hour "had not yet come" (2:4; 7:30, & 8:20). In this Gospel everything is arranged to lead up to the climax of the cross itself followed by the burial and resurrection of Jesus. The word "end" is *telios* which means perfection or completeness. God loves the world of lost sinners, John 3:16. Yet He loves His own in a special way.

➤ Jesus knew that He would soon *return* to the Father (3).

Jesus in His humanity knew Who He was and where He came from and where He was going. As believers we also can be assured of these things. Jesus rested in the God's providential will for His life (8:29). God's will for Jesus at this moment was to wash the feet of His selfish, self-centered, self-absorbed disciples. They certainly weren't going to do it.

Jesus did what He did *in spite* of what He knew.

➤ Jesus knew that Judas was *betraying* Him (2 & 11).

It appears that Jesus washed the feet of Judas, Matthew 26:21

➤ Jesus knew that Peter would *deny* Him (38).

Jesus even overcame Peter's objections when Jesus washed his feet. Jesus knew what all of the disciples were *constantly* arguing about, Luke 22:24. This competitive spirit among the disciples is seen also in Matthew 20:20-24; Mark 9:33-37; and Luke 9:46.

Jesus did what He did as an *example* of selfless love (4-5).

1 Corinthians 13:5 defines love in this way "love does not seek its own." Its means that love doesn't look out for its own interests. Jesus is divine love and humility incarnate, Matthew 20:28

➤ Jesus taught them by example what they had not learned through *His words*.

That very week that Jesus had taught them this principle, Matthew 23:11-12. Jesus performed this humble service in a society that was hypersensitive to status symbols of shame and honor. Jesus was hours from the cross. He was the one who should have been honored.

❖ **Peter's *confused* refusal (6-9)**

We do not know if Peter was first or last to have his feet washed. Was Peter's reaction from humility or from pride? Swindoll, "This was nothing short of self-assertive pride that refuses to accept grace from another, the kind that will not be vulnerable in front of others." We must keep in mind that the backdrop of this scene is the ongoing contention among the disciples as to which of them was the greatest. Also Peter is a walking paradox. His response was emotional and extreme (8) "You shall **never** wash my feet!" This is the strongest form of negation. New American Commentary, "Jesus' response (8) was like a firm courtroom verdict that gave the offender a straightforward alternative that admits

no bending.” This shook Peter to his core as seen in his response (9). Peter missed the point entirely because he wasn’t listening to what he was told (7).

➤ Jesus often taught the disciples with a double-level **meaning**.

Jesus used the physical to illustrate the spiritual. This is not just a parabolic story of humility but a far more significant teaching on spiritual cleansing. Jesus used two different words (10). Jesus is talking about the spiritual cleansing of regeneration and sanctification, Titus 3:5. John 3:7, “You must be born again.”

▪ **Jesus taught once bathed always bathed which means once saved always saved.**

We need a daily “foot washing” for daily sin, 1 John 1:9, to stay in fellowship with Jesus. Our sonship is secured. The one who was “not” clean was Judas, the false disciple. No ritual even performed by Jesus Himself can cleanse a person’s heart!

➤ The **application** of the illustration (12-17)

The disciples were marked by pride, competition, and jealousy. They would have probably stood in line to wash Jesus’ feet. That is not what he commanded them to do (13-14). Some believe that foot washing is a part of the communion service. Jesus did not say “do what I have done to you” but “as” I have done to you. Jesus was teaching a timeless principle not commanding an ordinance. Paul in his instruction on communion in 1 Corinthians 11 never mentioned foot washing. This is instructive considering his strong rebuke of the Corinthians’ selfish approach to the Lord’s Supper.

Application: The closer we get to Jesus, the lower we are willing to stoop in service to others.