

# Jesus Washes the Disciple's Feet

(John 13:1-17)

## Pre-Session Warm Up

Are there any jobs at home or in school that you don't like to do? [Teacher, make a list on the board, like: clean the toilette, change the cat litter box, etc.] Why don't you like to do these jobs? Are they things that have to be done? Who does them if you won't?

Sometimes we do nice things for others because we're told to do them or because we want others to like us or because by doing those things we might win a contest. Just before Jesus gave His life for us, He taught His disciples a very important lesson about how and why to serve others. He didn't just tell them how to serve; He showed them what He meant.

## Opening Prayer

Dear Lord, we know that You want us to joyfully serve others, give us a heart to follow Jesus' example as we study Your word today. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Memory Verse

*As we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Galatians 6:10)*

or,

*He who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. (Matthew 22:11-12)*

## Lesson

Review....

For the past few Sunday's we've been learning about the last week of Jesus' life. One week before His death, Jesus came riding into

Jerusalem on a donkey. He and His disciples had come to town to celebrate Passover. As He rode in, many people thought he was riding in like a king, so they waved palm branches at Him and laid down their clothes for the donkey to walk over like a red carpet. They shouted, "*Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!*"

The night before His death, Jesus and His disciples had the Passover meal together. Jesus knew it was His last night on earth. He knew He would return to God the Father from where He came. Before going back to heaven, He wanted to give His disciples some last-minute instructions to get them ready for His death. He got them all together in the upper room and had the last supper with them.

Before dinner the devil spoke to Judas' heart and told him that this was the night to carry out his plan to betray Jesus. But before Judas did that evil deed, Jesus established what we call the *Lord's Supper* when He asked His disciples to eat broken bread and drink wine in remembrance of His sacrifice on the cross.

Then, after dinner Jesus did a very odd thing...

John 13:2-5

*It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, 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, drying them with the towel he had around him.*

[Teacher, at this point in the lesson do a foot washing! Bring a basin and a pitcher. Wash the first child's feet and have that child wash the next child's feet and so on, until you've gone all the way around the class, with the last child washing your feet. You will make a lasting impression on the children, to be sure! You'll get all kinds of reactions... but the lesson objectives will be firmly made!]

Why would Jesus wash the disciple's feet? The people in Jesus' day wore sandals, and streets were dusty. Just like we take our shoes off when going into someone's home so that we don't track dirt into the house, it was customary in Jesus' day to wash guests' feet when they

arrived at your home. Foot washing was usually a job for a household servant to carry out.

Can you imagine? Jesus, God the Son, washing dirty feet? What do you think Jesus wanted to teach His followers? Even though He was their leader and God Himself, He was not too proud to be a servant. He was serving them with a humble heart. If Jesus is willing to serve, then we must also be servants, willing to serve in any way that glorifies God.

A humble person does whatever is necessary to help someone who has a need. He's not concerned about acting important or making others like him. The Lord Jesus was serving His disciples because He loved them.

If Jesus is your Savior, God wants you to serve others with a humble heart. The Bible says that *"as we have opportunity, let us do good to all"* (Galatians 6:10). That means, you are to look for every chance you can find to do something nice for someone else. Jesus was teaching the disciples a lesson about true greatness.

But, Peter strongly objected to Jesus' washing his feet.

John 13:6-9

*When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" (7) Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will." (8) "No," Peter protested, "you will never ever wash my feet!" Jesus replied, "Unless I 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!"*

Imagine being Peter and watching Jesus come around the table washing each of the other disciple's feet, all the while moving closer and closer to you. Peter was upset that Jesus, His Lord, should stoop to serve like a common household slave. But Jesus insisted. If Peter would not obey and allow the Lord to wash his feet, he would have no fellowship with Jesus. Peter didn't understand that Jesus was trying to teach them a spiritual lesson.

John 13:10-11

*Jesus replied, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not all of you." (11) For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, "Not all of you are clean."*

When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you are washed from your sin, meaning that you will not be sent to hell as punishment for your sin.

However, in our day-to-day life, you and I still sin (our feet get dirty.) We must seek daily cleansing by confessing our sins.

When Jesus said, *"You are not all clean,"* He was referring to Judas.

Do you think it was hard for Jesus to wash Judas' feet, knowing that Judas was going to betray Him? How would you feel if you were Jesus? Jesus loved Judas and wanted to give him one last opportunity to choose NOT to do the evil thing he was planning.

John 13:12

*After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing?"*

The Lord wanted to be sure that His disciples understood why He had washed their feet. By His action He was showing His love and He was teaching them a truth. Do you know what Jesus was trying to teach them? If the Master and Lord is willing to humble Himself and be a servant by washing the disciple's feet, then the disciples should be willing to be servants, also.

Why is it sometimes hard to serve others with a humble heart? We want to be served; we want our own rights; we like to do important things so others will see and reward us. Yet Jesus told His disciples, *"Whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant"* (Mark 10:43). That means if you want to truly please God, you will serve others with a humble heart. You may not be noticed or thanked

here on earth, but God will reward you someday. If Jesus is your example, you won't be too proud to do jobs that seem unimportant.

John 13:13-15

*You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. (14) And since I, your 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.*

Who can you serve? How can you serve others? [Teacher, give the children opportunity to share ideas. Allow children to name specific ways they can help others.] God wants you to serve others with a humble heart.

### Closing Prayer

Lord, we know that You want us to serve others with a happy humble heart, help us to look for ways to do that this week. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

### Learning Activities

#### Craft Corner

Using the example coupon that follows, make a coupon book to take home and give to parents or someone of their choice.

- This coupon good for one trash pickup around the house.
- This coupon good for helping Dad wash the car.
- This coupon good for two nights of washing supper dishes.

Encourage children to fill in the coupons with chores that are not already their responsibility and that they don't particularly like to do.



## This coupon is good for:

*As we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Galatians 6:10)*



### Game Center

Use the Memory Verse in a relay game. Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. What did Jesus and His disciples do on the night before His death? (They had the Last Supper together.)
2. What did the devil tell Judas to do this night? (Betray Jesus.)
3. What special ceremony did Jesus do at the Last Supper that we do sometimes in church and why? (Have the Lord's Supper: eat broken bread and drink grape juice in remembrance of His death for us on the cross.)
4. After supper, what odd thing did Jesus do? (After supper Jesus got up, took off His robe, wrapped a towel around His waist, poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciple's feet and to wipe them with the towel He had around Him.)
5. Why would Jesus wash the disciple's feet? (The people in Jesus' day wore sandals, and streets were dusty. Washing guests' feet

was a job for a household servant to carry out when guests arrived.)

6. What do you think Jesus wanted to teach His followers? (Even though He was their leader and God Himself, He was not too proud to be a servant. He was serving them with a humble heart. If Jesus is willing to serve, then we must also be servants, willing to serve in any way that glorifies God.)
7. Who strongly objected to Jesus washing his feet and why? (Peter. He thought it was beneath the Lord to serve like a common household slave.)
8. What was the spiritual lesson Jesus was trying to teach the disciples by washing their feet? (When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you are washed from your sin, meaning that you will not be sent to hell as punishment for your sin. However, in our day-to-day life, you and I still sin (our feet get dirty.) We must seek daily cleansing by confessing our sins.)
9. Do you think it was hard for Jesus to wash Judas' feet, knowing that Judas was going to betray Him? (No, Jesus loved Judas, too, and wanted to give him one last opportunity to choose to do the right thing instead of the evil thing he was planning to do.)
10. Why is it sometimes hard to serve others with a humble heart? (We want to be served; we want our own rights; we like to do important things so others will see and reward us.)
11. Who can you serve? How can you serve them?
12. What is today's memory verse? (Galatians 6:10, *As we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.*)