

042422

People of the Towel

John 13:1-20



Background:

We return to our studies in the Gospel of John this Sunday, a Gospel that invites us to Come and See who Jesus really is. Our text this week is the well-known text of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples. Would it be even more well-known, because it is in this scene where Jesus turns everything upside-down. He defines Lordship (even deity!) in terms of a towel, then defines what it means to be people of the towel. Join us this Sunday as we explore the foot-washing event by the foot-washing Lord.

Sermon Text (ESV):

John 13:1-20

1 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. 2 During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, 3 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, 4 rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. 5 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. 6 He came to Simon Peter,

who said to him, “Lord, do you wash my feet?” 7 Jesus answered him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.” 8 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.” 9 Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!” 10 Jesus said to him, “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.” 11 For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, “Not all of you are clean.”

12 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? 13 You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. 16 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. 17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. 18 I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, ‘He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.’ 19 I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he. 20 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.”

Discussion Questions:

- Preparation
 - What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
 - What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?
- Sermon Questions
 - As you reflect on the sermon, what stands out to you most?
 - One contextual element that Shawn shared is that Jesus (the Lord) “knows” while the Disciples (and us by extension) “do not know”. In what ways has this proven true in your life as well?
 - How does our world define Lordship? The towel redefines Lordship to mean sacrificial service. What examples of Jesus’s type of Lordship have you seen recently?

- To be Jesus's disciple, Jesus doesn't ask us to wash *his* feet, but to wash *one another's* feet. Newbigin said: "*Our neighbor is the appointed agent authorized to receive what we owe the master.*" Who in your life needs to receive your sacrificial service?
- What are some differences/changes in how the world would look if all of Jesus's followers lived like this?
 - What would it look like for you/us to be people of the towel this week and moving forward?