

**~Other Speakers S-Z: David Servant:**

Jesus said that the greatest person is the servant of all (Matt. 23:11), and so we should expect that Jesus, who is the greatest, would also be the greatest servant. Today's story of Him washing His disciples' feet certainly confirms that. However, Jesus' greatest act of servitude was His death for us on the cross: "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28).

Also being the greatest teacher who ever lived, Jesus knew that the best lesson is not a lecture but an example. It boggles our minds that the Lord of heaven would humble Himself to wash the feet of 12 men, but we must not forget that He did it not only to serve them, but to illustrate what He expected of them. Jesus wants all of His followers to serve each other, but I think that it is significant that He specifically commanded the future leaders of His church to wash one another's feet. The reason that the church is so divided today is because its leaders are so divided. How much good might come out of monthly meetings of pastors who gathered just to wash each other's feet?

Of course, foot washing was a cultural practice in Israel in Jesus' time, because people wore sandals and traveled on dusty roads used by both animals and people. Washing a guest's feet was a common courtesy, usually done by servants. I am not persuaded that Jesus expects Christians of all times and cultures to literally wash each other's feet, but I'm sure He wants us to humbly serve one another. Literal foot washing, however, certainly can't hurt to that end! If you've been involved in a foot washing, you know that is true. Jesus promised, "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them" (13:17).

I once heard of a church that, tragically, split over the issue of foot washing. Some believed that foot washing should be literally practiced, and some thought that they should humbly serve one another in other practical and culturally-relevant ways. They couldn't agree on how to love each other, so they split, demonstrating to the world how they hated each other.

Like Peter, if the Lord doesn't wash us, we have no part with Him (13:8). Only He can forgive us and clean us up! And also like Peter, once we've experienced the Lord's initial full washing, thereafter we still need Him to wash us at times. That is the sanctification process, and that is the reason we can pray every day, "Forgive us our debts," as Jesus taught us (Matt. 6:12).

I wonder what was going through Jesus' mind as He washed Judas' feet? Probably the same thing that goes through His mind every day as He shows His love for those all over the world who hate Him. Incidentally, isn't it amazing that when Jesus announced to His disciples that one of them would betray Him, none of them suspected Judas (13:22)? He played the part of a follower of Christ quite well for more than three years. He was, apparently, not one who could be "known by his fruits," at least, not until his act of betrayal.

Although the devil put into Judas' heart the idea to betray Jesus (13:2), Judas was a free moral agent acting on his own volition. This is proven by the fact that he, by his own free will, decided to follow Jesus for over three years, did not betray Him earlier, and felt remorse afterwards to the point of committing suicide. Satan presented the temptation to betray Christ for profit, Judas weighed it, wrestled with it, yielded to it, and ultimately regretted it. Judas was neither God's or Satan's robot.

We've already read the self-denying requirements for one to be a true disciple of Jesus in Luke 14:25-33. Today we learn that the mark that distinguishes the true disciple before the world is his love for other disciples. Thus we should all ask ourselves, "As the world looks at me, do they see me as a person who loves those who love Jesus?"