

JESUS IS THE WAY, TRUTH AND LIFE

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

Summary and Historical Background

John 1-12 is the record of Jesus' three plus years of public ministry. The events in John 13-17 occur during the last night before the crucifixion and are limited to His twelve disciples. These four chapters have also been called the "Upper Room Discourse."

When Jesus washed the disciples' feet, He taught several things: (1) social courtesy; (2) Christian humility; but above all, (3) daily spiritual cleansing. He taught that there was a difference between salvation (bath) and daily cleansing (foot washing). He taught that it was necessary for believers to be cleansed in their walk when they became soiled by the filth of the world (13:8-11).

Jesus showed that He was the omniscient God. He foretold what would happen to two of His own disciples: (1) Judas was identified as the one who would betray Him (13:26-27); and (2) Peter was told he would deny Him three times (13:36-38).

Jesus comforted His disciples (14:1) when, instead, it would seem He needed the comfort. He was less than 24 hours from death on the cross. He promised them: (1) a place in His Father's house (14:2); (2) His personal return for them (14:3); (3) the privilege of doing "greater works" than He had done (14:12); (4) the power of answered prayer (14:13-15); and (5) the promise of the Holy Spirit (14:16-19). Jesus said that true love for Him would be proved by obedience to His commands (14:20-25). True information for writing Scripture and preaching the Gospel would be provided through the Holy Spirit's ministry (14:26). Jesus would give His disciples true peace in the turmoil and stress about to confront them (14:27).

I. Lessons from Washing Feet — 13:1-17**A The Occasion — 13:1-3**

13:1 — Jesus knew His hour had come (cf. Jn 2:4; 7:8; 12:23; 17:1). This was His time of death and resurrection when He would provide salvation for all sinners.

"Loved them unto the end" — He loved His disciples to the end of His life. He cared for them and prepared them for the coming events that would bewilder them and cause some to doubt.

13:2 — Judas Iscariot had already bargained with the chief priest to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver and he looked for an opportunity to do his dreadful deed (cf. Mt 26:14-16).

B. The Act — 13:4-5

13:4 — The disciples had been in dispute about who was the greatest of Christ's disciples (cf. Lk 22:21-27). During the supper, Jesus took a towel and tied it around His waist. It was the sign and badge of slavery.

13:5 — Jesus washed His disciples' feet. It was customary for a servant to wash the feet of guests as they arrived, because of the dusty roads, but there had been no servant here and none of the disciples had volunteered to do this lowly task. For Jesus to do this was a lesson in humility. By this act Jesus was teaching them by example that the one who is the greatest is the one who is most humble. He had tried to teach them this truth earlier when He took a child and told them that a child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven (Mt 18:4).

C. The Reaction — 13:6-9

13:6 — Peter did not understand what the Lord was trying to teach him by washing his feet.

13:7 — Jesus was not only removing the dust from Peter's feet. First, He was teaching Peter humility, but He also was teaching him the need for cleansing in his walk as a believer.

13:8 — Peter refused to let Jesus wash his feet. He was too proud to accept Jesus' offer.

"No part with me" — Jesus was speaking of fellowship with Him. There must be daily cleansing for fellowship.

13:9 — When Peter learned that "foot washing" was related to his fellowship with Christ, he changed his mind. In order to have a greater part with Jesus, Peter went all-out and also wanted his hands and head washed; he wanted Jesus to give him a whole bath.

D. The Teaching — 13:10-17

13:10 — "Washed" - Denotes taking a full bath. This has reference to salvation. A sinner needs only one bath; he needs to be saved only once.

"Wash" — This is a different word which speaks of cleansing various parts of the body. To be in fellowship with Christ, we need to be cleansed by His Word whenever we sin (cf Eph 5:26; Ps 119:9). God's Word reveals where we have sinned and then we are to confess and forsake it (Prov 28:13). However, we do not need another bath (salvation). One bath is enough.

13:10b-11 — "But not all" - This is a reference to Judas.

"You are not all clean" — Judas had never taken the full bath and, therefore, he did not have salvation.

13:12-17 — The disciples called Jesus, "Master" and "Lord," and He agreed by saying, "I am." This is another of the "I am" references to Jesus that denotes His deity. "I am" is an Old Testament name for God (cf. Ex 3:14). Jesus had washed their feet for an example to show them how they should love and care for one another (cf. 13:34-35).

This was not to be taken as a new ordinance because it is not a custom for all cultures to wash feet. However, it was a custom practiced in Jewish homes and it reminded believers to be humble. Humility can be shown in other ways in different cultures. In America it could be shown by washing the dishes after a meal. Peter simply records the need for humility in 1 Peter 5:5-6, but does not tell how it is done.

An ordinance is a teaching symbol which was (1) commanded by Jesus, (2) explained by the epistles, and (3) practiced by the early church. The two ordinances which the Bible teaches are baptism and the Lord's Supper. However, there is no harm done if Christians wash each other's feet if their feet get dirty.

II. Limitations of Two Disciples — 13:18-38

A. Judas, the Betrayer — 13:18-30

1. Known by Jesus — 13:18-21

13:18 — The betrayal of Jesus was prophesied by David in Ps 41:9. God, who foreknows all things, knew that Judas would have it in his heart to betray His Son. Just as God revealed this to David, so He revealed it to His Son so He would choose one disciple that would look like a faithful disciple, but later would betray Him (Jn 17:12). Judas did not lose his salvation, he never had salvation. He was a hypocrite.

13:19 — Jesus told His disciples before the time that He would be betrayed so that when it happened they might truly believe He is the Son of God as He claimed to be.

2. Unknown by the disciples — 13:22-25

13:22-25 — Judas was trusted enough to their treasurer (13:29). Peter beckoned to John to ask Jesus who it was who would betray Him.

3. Identified by Jesus — 13:26-27

13:26-27 — Jesus handed Judas a sop, a piece of bread dipped in a sauce, as a sign that he was the betrayer. But Jesus probably did this to several, if not all, His disciples, so the disciples did not know it was Judas that would betray Him. However, Judas knew that Jesus

knew he was the betrayer. Then Jesus told him go and do what he had determined to do.

4. Misunderstood by the disciples — 13:28-29

13:28-29 — Even the dismissal of Judas did not alert the disciples that he was the betrayer. They thought he was merely running an errand for Jesus.

5. Darkness of sin — 13:30

13:30 — "It was night" - Not only was it night literally, it was the night that Jesus had spoken of earlier in John 9:4.

B. Peter, the Denier — 13:31-38

13:31-32 — Jesus' hour had arrived. He would be shamefully treated on the cross, but God would be glorified by His finished work of redemption. Then Jesus would be glorified in His resurrection.

13:33 — Jesus' death would separate Him from His disciples for a few days, but His ascension would separate Him from them for a much longer time, but not permanently (cf. 13:36). Jesus' ascension to heaven is what He had in mind when He spoke similar words to the Jews (cf. 7:33-34).

13:34-35 — Love was the badge that Jesus wanted His disciples to wear, especially love for one another. He was about to show them the greatest example of love by laying down His life for them (cf. Jn 15:13).

13:37-38 — Peter was serious in his willingness to lay down his life for the Lord, but he did not realize the weakness of his flesh. Jesus warned him that he would deny Him three times before the dawn of a new day (cf. 18:15-27).

III. Love from the Lord — 14:1-31

Jesus' love for His disciples caused Him to inform His disciples about many things that would help them through their coming hour of trial and future years of service.

A. About Heaven — 14:1-6

14:1 — The disciples were troubled by news of Jesus' departure coupled with a betrayal and a denial of Him by some of them. Jesus commanded them to stop being troubled and told them to put their trust in God and in Him.

14:2 — "Mansions" - These literally are resting places, not mansions as we think of them. Jesus told His disciples that He was going to prepare a place where they could dwell eternally (cf. Heb 13:14). This seems to have reference to the new Jerusalem that is prepared for all believers (Rev 21:2).

14:3 — Jesus promised His disciples that He would return again and receive them to Himself. This will happen when He returns for His Bride, the church (cf. 1 Thess 4:16, 17).

14:4-6 — Jesus emphasized that He was the only "way" for lost sinners to get to the Father in Heaven. He also was the "truth" about that way, and He was the "life" that sinners receive when they accepted that way.

B. About His Deity — 14:7-15

14:7-9 — Jesus revealed the Father to His disciples. If they knew Him, then they would know the Father because their natures are identical.

14:10-11 — Jesus is of the same essence as the Father and has the same power as He does. Christ's perfect and powerful works prove this to be true. His works demand that our faith be placed in Him (Heb 11:6).

14:12 — The "greater works" must refer to the salvation of souls that His disciples would accomplish through the preaching of His death, burial and resurrection. There were 3000

souls saved when Peter preached at Pentecost (Acts 2:41), far more than Jesus had experienced in His preaching.

14:13-15 — Prayer will be answered when asked "in Jesus' name," that is, on the basis of His authority. Prayer also must be asked according to God's will by one who is obedient to Him.

C. About the Holy Spirit — 14:16-26

14:16 — The Holy Spirit is described in two ways. First, He is called "another Comforter," which means He is a helper, an advocate. Jesus had been the helper and advocate of these disciples while He was on earth with them, but now He would leave them and send them another helper who would always be with them, in fact, He would dwell in them (14:17).

14:17 — Second, the Holy Spirit is called the "Spirit of truth." He would lead them to record the truth when they would write the New Testament Scriptures (14:26). He would never lead them to write contrary to God's Word in the Old Testament, because He had also led those holy men of God to write those inspired words as well (2 Pet 1:21).

14:18-20 — Jesus promised His disciples that He would not leave them as orphans, but He would return to them after His resurrection from the dead. His resurrection would remove all doubts from their hearts and minds.

14:21-25 — Those who truly love Jesus will keep His commandments. In return they will be loved by the Father and by Jesus Christ. Furthermore, God will make Himself known to them, but not to the world.

14:26 — The means by which God would love the believers and manifest Himself to them, would be accomplished through the Holy Spirit. God would send Him to comfort and help them in all their responsibilities. He would come in Jesus' name. It is through the Holy Spirit's presence that believers can say that Jesus Christ dwells in them. A particular blessing that the Holy Spirit would give to those disciples who walked with Jesus was the power to remember what they had learned while they were with Jesus. This would be important to them for their preaching and writing ministries (Jn 2:22).

D. About Peace — 14:27-31

14:27 — Christ's peace is better than the world's peace, which is only temporary and never meets the deepest needs of man. His peace passes all understanding (Phil 4:7) and could not be taken away by the threats of the world. Therefore, it will relieve them of anxiety and fear.

14:28 — The Father is greater than Jesus in His authority and administrative capacity, but not in His nature or essence.

14:29 — Christ foretold His death to His disciples to increase their faith.

14:31 — Christ's obedience to His Father was a testimony of His love for His Father. This obedience cost Him His life.