

## John 13 sermon

### March 12<sup>th</sup> 2017

When I was training at college, we had one of the best-known preachers in Australia at the time teaching us. John Chapman. Also known as Chappo. He's with the Lord now. But he was a giant. A very humble man who devoted his life to ministry and a gifted preacher of the gospel.

During our four years of study, we all had to eventually do a "college sermon" at a chapel service in front of our peers and lecturers. And then we'd sit down with Chappo in a group of 3 or 4 and he would go through our sermons with us. It was intimidating. He would tear it apart for us. He was encouraging too, but he held nothing back in terms of criticism!

One of the guys in my group had preached a 25 minute sermon. That was a definite "no no" at college. 20 minutes maximum.

And so Chappo said to this guy: "You preached a bit longer than your allotted time brother. Why was that? No-one else really goes over 20 minutes. What made you think that you should?"

The guy replies: "Look, there was just so much in that passage. I really couldn't leave things out. It was just so important to say everything I did."

We all started to squirm in our seats. It was getting a little uncomfortable.

Then Chappo looks him right in the eye and says: "Brother, you're not good enough to preach more than 20 minutes. But I'll let you know when you are."

Ouch.

At this point, I was really glad that my college sermon was 18 minutes long.

Now, please don't time this sermon. And if I go over 20 minutes, it's because I'm not disciplined enough. Not because I think I'm good enough!

Have you ever been humbled like that?

Have you ever had someone honestly say to you: "You're not as good as you think you are!"

Here's the bigger question:

**Have you ever humbled yourself?**

In John 13, Jesus humbles himself by washing the feet of his disciples. And by doing that, he teaches us three things that we're going to explore over the next 18 and a half minutes...

1. He teaches us how much he loves us.
2. He teaches us how he will take away our sin.
3. He teaches us how we should treat others.

So, number 1:

1. Love

*3Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;*

Jesus knew it was all about to happen. He was going to be glorified and go to the Father. Jesus was about to take up all power over all creation. But he takes off his outer garment, puts a towel around his waist, and takes a bowl of water and washes the feet of every disciple.

THIS was the job of a servant. Actually, even Jewish servants were excluded from this job. If any servant was to do it, it was usually left to a Gentile servant. It was such a demeaning job. It was the lowest of the lows.

But he did it to show his love.

Jesus is teaching us that love puts others first. That love lowers ourselves to lift others up. That real love knows no limit. There is nothing that Jesus would not do to show his love for his disciples. Of course, he's going to show that on a much bigger scale when he goes to the cross. But the disciples weren't ready to understand that yet. So this foot washing is a preview of the love he shows on the cross.

Not only that, but we're told in verse 2:

*2The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.*

Jesus knew that Judas was going to betray him. Jesus was at the table with his enemy. Judas' heart had aligned with the devil himself. YET, Jesus even washes his feet of his enemy.

Jesus had all power, but chose to humble himself to wash feet. His love had no limits. He was preparing them to understand the sacrificial love he would show on the cross.

## 2. Cleansing

But the other reason Jesus washes their feet is to show what he is about to DO on the cross – to wash them from their sins.

The feet washing is a symbolic reminder of the washing of sin Jesus is about to do on the cross.

Ill – I sometimes enjoy washing my car. Once a year. That shows how much I enjoy it. But when I do it, I do it well. Thoroughly. Wash outside. Vacuum inside. Now if I happened to get a little bit of dirt on my car the next day, I'm NOT going to wash the whole car again. I'm certainly not going to vacuum it. I MIGHT wash the little dirty area. That's about it. I know some people would frown on that, but... don't judge me.

When Jesus approaches Peter, the lead disciple, Peter says, in verse 6:  
*"Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"*

It was shock! Surely my Lord is not going to wash MY feet! Peter is humbled by this to the point of nearly being offended!

*8“No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.”*

*Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.”*

Then says Peter – well wash my hands and head as well! Give me a bath!

And Jesus says: “I don’t need to. You’ve had a bath. You’re clean. You just need your feet washed.”

So what does he mean by this?

What he means is that by becoming a disciple of Jesus, you are cleansed. You are forgiven. You are saved. Completely.

But the feet washing is Jesus’ way of SHOWING what he’s about to do on the cross.

Jesus is showing that he is actually physically going to deal with the filth, the sin, in our life. It’s like he’s saying:

“Look, you are clean before God. You’ve put your trust in me and you are right with God. But I’m washing your feet to show you what I’m about to do on the cross. I am physically going to deal with sin. And unless you accept my work on the cross, you can have no part of me.”

Now, something else to notice here is what Jesus says in verse 10:

*“And you are clean, though not every one of you.”*

He still recognises Judas is not clean. Think about that. He washes Judas’ feet, even though Judas is not clean. And he will DIE for Judas’ sins, even though Judas will not be cleansed because he has not accepted Jesus as Lord.

Jesus goes to the cross even for his enemies. Jesus dies for the sins of the **world**. His death is **sufficient** for the sins of the whole world. But there are still people who will refuse to accept that cleansing, that sacrifice.

You must receive Jesus to be cleansed from your sin and be saved. But know this: he still died for you. He’s just waiting for you to accept him as Lord and accept his sacrifice for your sin. Otherwise, you remain unclean. He washes your feet but you remain unclean unless he is your Lord.

Ill – When I was in primary school I loved library day! I loved to borrow books. I would always borrow the maximum number of books I could. I had the longest borrowing list in the whole school. But the thing is, I didn’t read them! I didn’t particularly enjoy reading. I enjoyed borrowing, but not reading. What good is that? What good is it to borrow a book and never read it?

What good is it if Jesus dies for our sins, but we never accept his offer of forgiveness?

Jesus’ foot-washing is a sign of what he’s about to do. He offers to wash away your sin. But, like Judas, it means nothing if he is not Lord of your life.

### 3. Modelling

The final thing Jesus teaches us is in verse 15:

*15I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.*

Jesus sets us an example. An example of humility. And no, we're not going to start a tradition of foot-washing here at St Phil's. That would miss the point. Foot-washing in that culture was seen as an act of humility – done by the lowest servant. It made sense in that culture.

So what do we do? What example do we follow here?

Humble service. Verse 16:

*16Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.*

We're not better than Jesus! If Jesus was prepared to be the most humble servant, we should be prepared to do that too. Are you prepared to serve? Are you prepared to serve your enemies? Are you prepared to serve sacrificially and selflessly? Are you prepared to love without limit? Are you prepared to forgive without exception?

Many people here at St Phil's do that, don't they? You know servant hearted people here right? You know people who will do the dirty jobs, the unseen jobs, the people who will give sacrificially. The people who will be friends with anyone and serve everyone without expectation of reward or recognition?

So how do we know if WE have a servant heart?

**By how we react when we're treated like one.**

How do you react when people treat you like a servant? Like you're beneath them? Like they're better than you? When they expect you to do the dirty job that they won't do? When they expect you to sacrifice when they will not?

Wait for it. Wait for that moment. Jesus not only washed the feet of Judas, but the feet of all of his disciples who were ALL about to desert him at the crucifixion. Peter himself would deny even knowing Jesus three times.

Wait for it. Wait for that moment when someone treats you like you're beneath them. How will you respond?

Will you respond with the deep, deep, humble love of Jesus?

1It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

2The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. 3Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

6He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

8"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

9"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

10Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." 11For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

12When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

### **Jesus Predicts His Betrayal**

18 "I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: 'He who shared my bread has turned against me.'

19 "I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am. 20Very truly I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me."

21After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me."

22His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. 23One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. 24Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means."

25Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?"

26Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. 27As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.

So Jesus told him, "What you are about to do, do quickly." 28But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. 29Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor. 30As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

## **Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial**

31When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. 32If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

33 "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

36Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?"

Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later."

37Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."

38Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!