

The Lord's Supper in Biblical Perspective
"The Lord's Supper with Peter and Judas"

John 13:1–20

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We will be looking at this event where Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper which we are about to partake in this day.

John 13:1–17 says [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."*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

I had a number of great blessings last Friday. Here is one. I had the privilege to go to the RTS banquet that was held here in Birmingham and it was great to be with them. A friend, teacher and colleague of mine, Dr. Sinclair Ferguson was there and I'm sure many of you have heard of him because I talk about him and quote him quite a bit. My two favorite commentators on the Gospel of John are a Baptist theologian named A. W. Pink and also Dr. Ferguson and the extraordinary work he has done on this Gospel. I said to him 'I am so glad to see you for two reasons. One is I have to get you to come to speak at our church for I'm beginning to think my congregation don't think you exist as I talk about you a lot and the other is, is it okay to borrow some of what you have recorded about the Gospel of John' and he said it was okay. So I want to get right to it.

The Gospel of John is very interesting. We have the four Gospel in which all give their insights but John has already told us his purpose for writing this Gospel and it is probably the last Gospel that was written. When you read the four Gospels it is clear that John took a different approach than the other writers who all have some kind of chronological bent in covering the

facts of the public life and ministry of Jesus from His birth to His baptism to His atoning death to His ascension. John clearly has something in mind and clearly gives it away when he says four times in the Gospel of John 'These things I write so that you may believe in the name of the Son of God.' He clearly had an evangelistic heart in the writing of this Gospel.

It becomes evident as you read the book of John that he highlights the encounters of Jesus with people. So he takes John 1 through 3 to talk about the first week of Jesus' public ministry and His encounters during that week. Then starting halfway through John 3 through John 11 he gives encounter after encounter and then starting in John 12 through John 21 he focuses on the last week of Jesus. No place does he uncover details that the other writers of the Gospels don't uncover then in the institution of the Lord's Supper in the Upper Room and some of the by play that is taking place there. John 13 is so rich as John talks about the Lord's Supper. In this study I just want to give you one little insight on it that He instituted at that time.

When we partake of the Lord's Supper I like for everything in our service to evolve around the Lord's Supper from our confessions, our worship, our readings and the sermon, for that's the way the Reformed Church has always shown its importance of the Lord's Supper. It is not simply adding it to a worship service but having a worship service with a season approach of focus on it so that we can get all that God has designed for us. So I look forward to looking at this passage for what we see about the Lord's Supper and what it meant to Peter by how it affected how and what Peter wrote.

In other words, this event effected Peter so much it effected what he wrote in his epistles. There are about five events that John talks about that show up in Peter's epistles that so impressed him. I'm sure there were more events and experiences with Jesus that effected Peter but there are five very clearly that he is referring to in I Peter and this is one of them. I wish I could spend more time on this passage but I'm just going to pull one thing out for you.

In the text from John there were four times where John mentions how the Disciples don't understand things. He says that Jesus says several times 'you all don't understand,' then 'you will understand,' and 'do you understand now.' Peter and John don't get it here but they will get it and it will affect them but they are not there yet.

The text tells us seven things that Jesus understood and knew. He knew His hour had come to depart. It says He knew that God had given Him all things and authority over all things. That meant He had authority to lay down His life and take up His life. No man will take it from Him for He will lay it down freely and then take it up again and that's called the resurrection. Jesus knew and understood that He had come from God and that He was going back to God. When He made that statement Jesus then rose from supper to wash the Disciples feet. Who in the world would rise in the middle of supper to wash people's feet?

First of all, when Jesus rose in the middle of supper to do wash the feet it should have already been done and this would normally have been done by a servant or a slave. After three years of doing a public ministry with Jesus you would have thought if there were no servants there that one of them would have volunteered to wash feet. So Jesus can I wash Your feet? You would have expected they would have been at that point by now. They're not there yet. Does that not offend you? How many of us every day are kneeling to wash Jesus' feet. Just a couple of days before a woman had anointed His feet with oil and then dried it with her hair and they had already seen that. Now nobody steps up to grab the towel and the basin.

I want you to see this. What Jesus is about to do in washing their feet, is related to knowing He came from the Father and is heading back to the Father. Jesus rises from His seat of honor and we know He had the seat of honor because when He came in two of the Disciples

were arguing about who would get the seats of honor next to Him. These two were the sons of Jesus' aunt, who was His mother's sister. These cousins were John and James. As Jesus rises He takes off the clothing that would have befitted the seat of honor and grabs the accoutrements of a servant – a towel and a basin. Then He kneels to wash the feet of each of the Disciples step by step by step.

Not only do the Disciples not understand but in a couple of hours from this supper they are all going to flee Him. There is one there who will betray Him, Judas Iscariot and Jesus is washing His feet too. There is one there who will deny Him three times. When He gets to Peter to wash his feet Peter says 'No! You will never wash my feet!' And I thank Dr. Ferguson for pointing this out to me in this text but Peter is literally saying 'No, not for eternity will you wash my feet!' And this is how it would be stated in the original. For the eternity of all the eternities You will not wash my feet! In our language we would say 'Not in a million years Jesus will You wash my feet!' We certainly don't see Peter grabbing any towel and basins here.

Then we see how Jesus responds to Peter on this; *Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me."* Eternity got real short when Peter heard this for Peter then says 'Then wash all of me Jesus.' Jesus just washes his feet and when He had finished washing the Disciple's feet He rose up. So Jesus stood up from the seat of honor, laid aside, knelt down, rose up, put His clothes back on and took the seat of honor once again. This effects Peter so much that we see this in I Peter.

For instance, Peter out of this event says this in I Peter 5:6, *[6] Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you.* This event so affects him that in his arrogance that is soon to be humbled and he will get even humbled more will take this lesson he has learned to share it with us because it is so important. This is so important that in the verse before this (I Peter 5:5) Peter says, *[5] Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."* Peter had watched Jesus clothe Himself with the servant's materials.

Here He has given us an example for His death is not just an exemplary death but an atoning death but His journey to the cross lays out for us how we who put our trust in Him alone for salvation should live, not to be saved but because we want to follow our Savior and so he tells us how to live with each other. We are to serve each other. You wash each other's feet. This will become so important that when a woman is supported for doing ministry in the church one of her marks is she washes the disciples' feet, therefore she is put on the list.

It is something that the people of God are beginning to see and it started with Jesus. Jesus led the example. It is like when you learned how to write and your teacher wrote out the words for you so you could trace them. Jesus is basically giving us how we can trace His life. This isn't what you do to get saved or to get good enough to be saved. You come to Me for my atoning death pays it all for you and when you come to Me, put your trust in Me and I will give you everlasting life. Then when You follow Me, live following Me.

Here's an example. Perhaps you are thinking 'Harry, you don't know some of the people in this church.' I know but you haven't run into Judas yet and He washed his feet. He washed the man's feet who was going to deny Him three times – Peter. He washed the feet of all these Disciples and every single one of them are going to forsake Him. You don't wash the disciples feet because they deserve it but because they need it and by God's grace you know what you are so by God's grace I'm ready to kneel. I'm ready to lay aside my pride, kneel and love those who I am about to sit at the table with. There is nothing so low that I cannot do it and I want to do it.

John will understand this years later and his Gospel was probably the last Gospel written. The Spirit of God has led him to put all this in here because he understood it. Jesus knowing He came from the Father to save us from our sins and was going back to the Father, then He rose from supper. He laid aside His clothes and put on the clothes of a servant. He grabbed the towel and the basin and went down on His knees to wash their feet, then rose up, put His clothes back on and sat down. Does that sound familiar?

Jesus is giving you a living parable of His entire life and ministry for us in what He did here. It is recorded for us in Philippians 2:5–11 which says [5] *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,* [6] *though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,* [7] *but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.* [8] *And being found in human form, **he humbled himself** by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.* [9] *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,* [10] *so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,* [11] *and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

We see here in John how Jesus rises up from His seat of honor and lays aside His clothes of honor and puts on the servant's apparel, then kneels down. When He finishes rises up, re-clothed and ascends back to His position of authority. Jesus laid aside His privileges, knelt down to become a Man, knelt down to become a bond servant, knelt down to become to die on the cross in our place and knelt further down into a tomb. Then He rose up, clothed with a new body enthroned in the heavens from where He came to bring us to be with Himself.

Right here He gives this living, dramatic parable for them and for us to see and know we're saved in Him. It is also for us to see to know how saved people live. We humbles ourselves. We take aside anything that would exalt us and we kneel down with towels and basins – welcome to the order of the towel, welcome to the order of the basin – if you and I are Christians and followers of Christ. He knelt down that we would rise up.

Perhaps my most favorite statement in this passage after John has thought about this and understood it is when John says in John 13:1, [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.***

This reminds me of that great hymn *Jesus! What a Friend for Sinners* by J. Wilbur Chapman and Roland H. Prichard which says;
Hallelujah! what a Savior!
Hallelujah! what a friend!
Saving, helping, keeping, loving,
He is with me to the end.

Because He loves us that is the love we have to your spouse. You don't have to worry when you go to bed if I'm going to be here tomorrow. It's the love we have to our children, to our friends, to our fellow believers because He is with me to the end.

It is My end to be with you to the end and to go with Him who will never let me go all the way to the cross which you now remember at this Table. Also remember that on His way to the cross He laid out the pattern for how we live for Him and with each other. Let's kneel down that others can rise up. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments in Your Word. Would You come now and minister to our hearts from the throne above as we Your people behold our Savior, as we Your people feast upon Him at this Table, for I pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.