

Lent – Foot washing, John 13 v 1-17

Background: this occurred on the night before Jesus was arrested, tried and crucified. Jesus and His disciples were eating the Passover meal together.



Read John 13 v 1-17

What three things are we told that Jesus knew? (v1-3)

What did this knowledge prompt Jesus to do? (v4-5)

Washing feet was a slave's job but Jesus did it Himself. How did Peter initially respond? (v6-8)

How did Peter respond when Jesus said, 'Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.'? (v8-9)

Washing the disciples' feet was a visible parable about forgiveness. Jesus said that unless He 'washes someone' they have nothing to do with Him. It's not about clean feet; it's about clean hearts. Those who have 'had a bath' (been forgiven for all their sins) only need to 'wash their feet' (repent for today's sins), v10. They don't need another 'bath' because they are already 'clean'.

Read v 12-17

What does Jesus say His followers should do? (v14)

Bearing in mind what Jesus had just said, what do you think this means?

Read Romans 8 v 1-2

In simpler language, this says that God holds nothing against those who repent and trust in Jesus, because they have been forgiven for everything. How does this make you feel?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you that you have promised that, when I repent and believe in you, I am completely forgiven for everything. I understand now that the new sins I commit will not separate me from you, but you want me to be honest with you (and with myself) and confess them to you, knowing that you have already dealt with them. Please help me to do that. And please help me to follow your example and learn how to forgive the people who have hurt me. Amen.

If you have a Bible, why not look up the verses yourself instead of just reading them here. I've printed them here for people who don't have a Bible!

John 13 v 1-17

It 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."

Romans 8 v 1-2

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ²because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.