Humility at the Lord’s Table

John 13:1-17

Introduction:

I. The Disciples – 13:1-3

A. The Essentials – 13:1a

“Now ﻿﻿before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that ﻿﻿His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father,”

John does not give the details of the Lord’s Table as the other gospels do. This “Upper Room Discourse” takes place at the Passover meal, the first communion and their walk to Gethsemane. Jesus knew that His hour had come for Him to depart from this world to be with the Father. Through Mt. Calvary and Mt. Olivet.

B. The Emotions – 13:1b

“having loved His own who were in the world, He ﻿﻿loved them to the end.”

“the end” refers to the end of His time on earth, in spite of their lapses in faith and memory. Also, in the extent of His love. It covers all areas.

C. The Enemy – 13:2

﻿

“And at ﻿﻿supper, ﻿﻿the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s *son,* to betray Him,”

“At supper” is my translation. The Greek is vague, but the circumstances give us the clue.

“Washing of the feet” occurred at the arrival of the guests for a meal. The devil put it into Judas’ heart to betray Jesus. However, Judas did not have to accept and act on the temptation. He apparently was cooperating willingly. And Jesus knew it.

D. The Events – 13:3

“Jesus, knowing ﻿﻿that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He ﻿﻿had come from God and ﻿﻿was going to God,”

This verse gives us understanding about what Jesus knew about His mission and the schedule of events. He was in control of all things. He was not a victim; He was the victor.

He knew where He had been and where He was going.

As Mark reminds us, “He came not to be ministered to but to minister and give His life a ransom for many.” (10:45)

Luke tells us that, at the table, apparently waiting for someone to come and wash their feet, the apostles were discussing among themselves “who was the greatest” (Luke 22:24)

[There was no servant present to do the lowly task of washing their feet. That may be the reason they were discussing who was the greatest.] Someone had to wash the feet. They wore sandals. Their feet would get dusty and dirty. They were reclining at the table, not like the picture of the last supper – sitting at a table.

II. The Depiction – 13:4-17

A. The Picture of Humility – 13:4-11

1. The Repudiation – 13:4-5

“rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. after that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded.”

“When the least of them would not in humility bow, the best of them stooped to show them how.”

Jesus was repudiating their haughty attitude. Notice how many steps of preparation Jesus took before He actually started to wash their feet.

* rose from supper and
* laid aside His garments,
* took a towel and girded Himself.
* after that, He poured water into a basin
* and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded.

2. The Reaction – 13:6-9

a. Peter’s Objection – 13:6-7

1). Peter’s Question – 13:6 ﻿﻿

“Lord, are You washing my feet?”

2). Jesus’ Answer – 13:7

“What I am doing you ﻿﻿do not understand now, ﻿﻿but you will know after this.”

Was Jesus speaking about washing feet? He was speaking of the application.

b. Peter’s Obstinacy – 13:8-9

1).Peter’s Objection – 13:8a

“You shall never wash my feet!” – “forever” – Really?

2). Jesus’ Answer – 13:8b

“If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.”

3). Peter’s Response – 13:9

“Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head!”

Welcome to “forever.”

3. The Revelation – 13:10-11

a. What the Lord Cautioned – 13:10

1). A Word for the Eleven – 13:10a

a). Radical Cleansing – “He who is bathed…”

{ὁ λελουμένος} λούω is completely clean and ﻿﻿you (pl.) are clean this is the cleansing of the New Birth.

Titus 3:5

“﻿﻿not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through ﻿﻿the washing (λουτρόν) of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”

b). Recurring cleansing – “needs only to wash”

νίψασθαι, νίπτω (6X) *his* feet,

2). A Word for the Twelfth Man – 13:10b

“but not all of you.” - There is an exception.

b. What the Lord Concealed – 13:11

“For ﻿﻿He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, “You are not all clean.”

The exception is Judas.

B. The Preaching about Humility – 13:12-17

“So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them,”

1. Approaching the Issue – 13:12

“Do you ﻿﻿know what I have done to you?

Obviously, He was not referring to washing their feet, but, the meaning of it.

2. Apprehending the Issue – 13:13-16

a. An Explanation – 13:13

“You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for *so* I am.”

The word “teacher” [διδάσκαλος] is like Rabbi. He was called that 31 times

He called Himself that 8 times.

Κύριος – Lord = owner and expresses authority and lordship. You are right – that is what I am.

b. An Exposition – 13:14﻿

“If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.”

He is not saying that we ought to have another church ordinance of foot-washing. There is no instruction for foot- washing in the Epistles as there is for Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

c. An Example – 13:15

“For ﻿﻿I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.”

The “washing of feet” stands for any act of kindness:

* No task is too lowly;
* No service is too great;
* No believer is too important; to serve in this way.

d. An Expectation – 13:16 ﻿

“Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.”

Jesus is the great example. No one can say, “I am too good to do that kind of work. What? You are better, more important, more valuable, than Jesus? Meeting ‘others’ needs self-sacrificially is what we also ought to do.

3. Applying the Issue – 13:17﻿﻿

“If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”

By this time, they had surely got the point. That’s great, now you know!

Not enough! Happy are you if you do them.

Conclusion:

On the Isle of Patmos Jesus told John to write,

﻿

“Blessed *is* he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for ﻿﻿the time *is* near.”

Christian happiness (“you will be blessed”) comes through obedient service (if you do them, i.e., these things Jesus commanded).