

Life Group Topic #27
People of the Towel
John 13:1-14

WELCOME: (15 minutes)

Name a book that you would like to read this summer, and tell us why you'd recommend it.
(or) What is the best book you've ever read? Why?

WORSHIP: (15 minutes)

Use whatever means possible to turn the group's attention to the wonder and majesty of our God- including music, prayer, meditation on the Psalms, and other art forms.

WORD APPLICATION: (45 minutes)

Briefly read or paraphrase the following sermon summary before moving to the heart of this section: the discussion around the application questions.

Read John 13:1-14 together:

It is just before Jesus is arrested and the cross is just ahead. Jesus has invested 3 years of His life with these men and now He must have wondered if it had been at all profitable. On the road from Bethany to the upper room where they were to celebrate the Passover together, they had been arguing about who would be the greatest in the Kingdom. It must have had a debilitating affect on Jesus---had anything sunk in? The adversary must have monopolized on this moment and said, "You've wasted your time with these people---take these idealistic concepts back where you came from!" This exhibition of pride at this point in Jesus' three year journey was critical...after 3 years of teaching and example they could argue about who would be first. His instruction, at this point, was unusually tender...He has shared the last supper with them...He knows His departure is imminent...*Having loved His own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of His love. (v 1)*

- Once He loves, He loves always...
- When He writes your name on the palm of His hands, it is never erased...
- A covenant means that He will love you even when you fail.

JESUS ACTION IS BOTH INSIGHTFUL AND INSTRUCTIONAL...John 13:4-14

It was with this full knowledge that He took the position of a servant. Verse 4 says He took off His outer clothing...F.B Meyer says it is the picture of the incarnation...

- He rose from His throne of the universe...
- He laid aside the garments of creator and ruler...
- He took the towel of humanity and wrapped it around himself...
- He poured his own blood into the basin of the cross washing away our sin
- It is still an act that He does not delegate...I John 1:9 still says that *if we confess our sins HE is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness...* it is never a menial task, it is His task.

Why foot washing?

- They are the significant part that touches the world we live in.
- It was clear that their fellowship with Him would be maintained by foot washing

- Peter's negative reaction is mirrored in all of us. It was motivated out of affection and humility but also ignorance.
- Letting Jesus wash your feet requires submission

Foot washing will always involve the Word of God...Hebrews 4:12...*For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

Foot washing is more than confession and forgiveness. It is searching the Word with Jesus to discover WHY I do what I do. It handles the root issue...Psalm 139:23-24...*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

When Peter asks to be totally bathed Jesus says it is unnecessary...

- **Bathing is for legal cleansing when you experience justification.** You do not need to be born again and again and again...your bathing is complete.
- **Foot washing symbolizes day to day purification...**my sanctification...my progressive becoming like Jesus

However there is not just a personal application, there is a corporate application...a one another command to wash one another's feet. We would have to be blind and deaf to not see the imperfections of each others character and actions. But are we content to note, to criticize and to just learn from those observations? Jesus feels an obligation to remove the dirt, to brave the resentment and the potential annoyance. Perhaps the issue is that we are not willing to stoop low enough...to wash one another's feet

Jesus KNOWS! He knows where your life has been touched by this world and needs cleaning. He is here to do that cleaning if you will let Him put your feet in the basin...will you?

Jesus KNOWS! He has given you the powers of observation that cause you to see someone else that needs a gentle foot washing. **What will you do?** He said...*I have set for you an example that you should do as I have done for you.*

Word Application Questions:

Flowing out of John 13 and Jesus washing of His disciple's feet is the major theme of incarnation.

- **Trace the steps of Philippians 2:6-8 and note how they fit the picture of Jesus arising from the meal and taking a towel to wash the disciple's feet**
- **In order for that kind of incarnational action to happen in our lives what does verse 5 note as crucial...what would be the pivotal issues for you? Whose feet would you attitudinally be challenged with?**
- **What does Philippians 2:1-4 indicate as underlying thought replacement that is necessary...which of those things do you see as the most challenging?**