

Week 8: Washing Dirty Feet

Key Verses:

John 13:1

¹ *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.*

John 13:14-15

¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

Colossians 3:12-14

¹² *Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.* ¹³ *Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.* ¹⁴ *And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*

From the Book:

"Jesus knew, even as he washed their feet, that one of his disciples was about to betray him and all the others – all eleven – were about to abandon him completely. So, the most extraordinary thing here is not that a rabbi was doing the work of a servant, but that Jesus was knowingly washing the feet of people who were about to betray and abandon him. But so great was his love for them and his willingness to forgive in advance that "He loved them to the end". [Pages 88-89]

"Brothers and sisters, let us love one another by forgiving one another just as Christ forgave us. Then the world will start to see something different in us. They will see the fragrant, powerful aroma of God's love and grace in our midst and be drawn to it, instead of being repulsed by perceived hypocrisy. The early church in Jerusalem grew because people in the community liked what they saw. May people like what they see in us today as well and be drawn to the Saviour who has transformed us and lives among us as we love one another in his name." [Page 92]

From David's Message:

- Jesus was a radically different Rabbi. He demonstrated His love for His disciples and gave them an example to follow by washing their feet.

Reflect:

- Is anyone in the group comfortable sharing a situation where they have been let down by someone, perhaps even a fellow believer; and have had to exercise forgiveness? How difficult was that? How were you able to do that?
- Read Colossians 3:12-17. In verse 12, what is the significance of "clothing" yourself with these qualities? Why does Paul use the imagery of getting dressed in making this point? How do each of these qualities help us to exercise forgiveness? Why is the exhortation to forgive in verse 13 'bookended' (before and after) by references to "love" in verses 12 and 14? How do verses 15-17 contribute to Paul's exhortation to forgive one another?
- Read Galatians 5:13-15. This is an exhortation written to a church. What is the specific warning given in verse 15 and what does it mean? What attitudes are we exhorted to have in verses 13 and 14? How might this help us to avoid "biting and devouring one another"?
- Read John 13:1-16. What strikes you most about the actions of Jesus on this occasion? In verses 12-17, Jesus tells his disciples the practical applications that they should learn from his actions toward them. What is his message? In what sense will we be "blessed" if we follow his example?
- As followers of Jesus who are called to emulate Him, what does this [washing dirty feet] look like for you today?

Pray:

Pray for yourselves, that you will be enabled to forgive others. If you feel comfortable sharing, you might ask for the group to pray for a specific circumstance where you need to exercise forgiveness. Pray for your church as a whole; that the love of God will permeate your whole fellowship and that forgiveness will prevail.