

***It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He now showed them the full extent of His love. John 13:1***

Just before the Passover Feast,

- The night Jesus is betrayed...
- Friday morning, He will be crucified.
- This takes place on that Thursday evening.
- There is very little time.

Jesus knew...

- He is in control.
- He is not surprised.
- He is keenly aware of His purpose.
- He knows where He has come from and where He is going.
- He knows that the time had come... just a few more hours with the disciples.
- He will soon surrender His life.
- He will choose to die.
- He will leave this world... and go to the Father.

Jesus knew...

Jesus loved...

- His heart is full.
- He looks into the eyes of the disciples and His heart is filled with love.
- He claims them. They are "His own."
- Did He know that if a few hours Peter would deny Him, Judas would betray Him?
- Did He know that soon He will ask them to watch and pray and instead they will sleep?
- Did He know that when He is arrested, tried, beaten, crucified – they will scatter like sheep without a shepherd? They will desert Him, abandon Him, leave Him!
- Did He know? Yes!

Jesus knew...

Jesus loved...

- His heart is full.
- He looks into the eyes of the disciples and His heart is filled with love.
- He claims them. They are "His own."

Jesus knew...

Jesus loved...

Jesus showed...

- The full extent. He loved them to the end. He showed them this love.

***Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under His power, and that He had come from God and was returning to God... John 13:3***

All things under His power...

All authority...

- angels, demons
- life, death
- principalities and powers
- past, present, future
- destiny, eternity
- power to judge, power to act, power to condemn, power to save.

- ***Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. John 1:3***
- ***For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. Romans 11:26***
- ***For He “has put everything under His feet.” 1 Corinthians 15:27***

He had come from God and was returning to God.

- Jesus has always been.
- He was before Bethlehem.
- He left the glory and splendor of heaven

***Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under His power, and that He had come from God and was returning to God... John 13:3***

I have always loved the way John builds in verse 3. – All power... all authority...

What will He do...

Red sea parting...?

Transfiguration...?

Coronation...?

***So He got up from the meal, took off His outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around His waist. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around Him. John 13:4-5***

I can see the shock on His disciples faces.

- He disrobed, wrapping a towel around His waist.
- He no longer looked like their teacher... now He looked like a slave.

He washed His disciples’ feet – dirty, dusty, smelly, unclean.

He takes them in His hands and washes them.

Allow this picture of Jesus to be imprinted on your minds and on your hearts.

- Jesus who knows.
- Jesus who loves.
- Jesus who shows.

We have come with dirty feet... or should I say... dirty hearts - minds - souls.

- Our motives and intentions are not very Christ-like.

- Even the good we do is generally for the wrong reasons.
- We have grown so accustomed to living with pride, lust, envy, jealousy, and hatred that we hardly notice.
- He hold grudges and feel justified in doing so.
- There are people we don't like... our manners kick in... there are people we don't care for... (Picture finicky children at a supper table.)
- We are concerned about our position. Where do we fit in?
- What is in it for me? Me?
- I'm only coming, I'm only going to show up, I'm only going to get involved... if I think it will meet some personal need... if it relates directly to me!

We come with dirty hearts – minds – souls.

We have gotten used to it.

- We come in need of Jesus!
- We need Jesus to wash our feet!
- We need Jesus to cleanse us!
- We need Jesus to take us – dirty as we are, and touch us, and wash us.

The One who made the universe is willing to bend down and wash our dirty feet.

And that is the only way we will be clean.

We can't wash ourselves.

What can wash away my sin? What can make me whole again?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus!

I picture Him pulling them close to Him as He says, ***“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.”***

***John 13:34-35***

The days ahead would be dark.

- They would be tested and tempted at all turns.
- Soon they would not know the warmth of His embrace.
- Soon they will not be able to follow.
- Jesus is preparing them, helping them, loving them.

NEW – He gives them a new command.

How can Jesus command us to love?

- He can because He knows what love involves.
- He knows the choices.
- He knows the consequences.
- He knows that “Love is action.”

A New Command: Love one another **as I have loved you.**

How has He loved us?

- Unconditionally.
- Sacrificially.
- Completely.

Unconditionally –

- Soon they would deny Him, betray Him and desert Him. He would go on loving them.
- There is nothing we can do to earn His love and there is nothing we can do that will cause Him to stop loving us.
- Drive nails in his wrists, and hear Him say, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.”
- While we were sinners, Christ died for us. He reaches into the depths of our sin, and loves us in spite of ourselves.

Sacrificially – He was willing to pay the price, even if it meant His life’s blood.

In Ernest Gordon's Miracle on the River Kwai. The Scottish soldiers, forced by their captors to build a jungle railroad, had degenerated to hateful and depraved behavior even toward each other. But one afternoon something happened.

"A shovel was missing. The officer in charge became enraged. He demanded that the missing shovel be produced, or else. When nobody in the squadron budged, the officer got his gun and threatened to kill them all on the spot . . . It was obvious the officer meant what he had said.

Then, finally, one man stepped forward. The officer put away his gun, picked up a shovel, and beat the man to death. When it was over, the survivors picked up the bloody corpse and carried it with them to the second tool check.

This time, when they counted there was no shovel missing. There had been a miscount at the first check point.

The word spread like wildfire through the whole camp. An innocent man had been willing to die to save the others! . . . The incident had a profound effect. . . The men began to treat each other like brothers.

"When the victorious Allies swept in, the survivors, human skeletons, lined up in front of their captors . . (and instead of attacking their captors) insisted: 'No more hatred. No more killing. Now what we need is forgiveness.'"

Jesus said, *Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.*  
*John 15:13*

Jesus shows us what this love is about.

***“This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as a n atoning sacrifice for our sins.” 1 John 4:10***

Unconditional, Sacrificial, Complete

His love is the greatest force, the greatest power in the universe.

Sins that are scarlet can be washed as white as snow.

***As I have loved you, so you must love one another. John 13:34***

Must!

- Not optional, not something we can take or leave, do or not do.
- Claim to be a Christian and just ignore that part.

It is the “Defining Characteristic”

- Jesus said, this is how people will know you belong to Me.
- John will go on to say, that if we fail here, we really don’t know God.
- ***We love because He first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And He has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother. 1 John 4:19-21***

So, what do we do?

- What do we do with all the hatred, anger, and bitterness inside us?
- What do we do with all the grudges, and times when others have wronged us?
- What do we do with all the self-interest and desire to get our own way?
- What do we do about our lack of compassion or concern for others?

What do we do?

- We confess our sin.
- We lay them at Jesus’ feet.
- We turn to God.
- We let His love fill even the deep places of our hearts.
- We look to Him to do what we can not do for ourselves.
- We love with His love, with His words, with His compassion, through His eyes.
- We let His love be what defines us a person and as a church.
- We obey His command.