

B.L.E.S.S.

5 Everyday Ways Love Your Neighbor and Change the World

Serve

Series Overview

Jesus said we're to love our neighbors. As part of our B.L.E.S.S. campaign based on the book by Dave and Jon Ferguson, in this sermon series, we want to consider practical, everyday ways that we can love our neighbors, to bless them, and in so doing, point them to the greatest blessing of all: a life-changing relationship with Jesus.

Sermon Introduction

Have you ever thought a particular job was beneath you? Faced with a dirty toilet, you thought, "That's not *my* job—someone else should do it!"? If anyone ever had the right to demand service, it was Jesus. But Jesus demonstrated his true power by making himself the ultimate servant. If we're going to bless others, we have to follow his lead, looking for opportunities to serve rather than be served.

Passage: John 13:1-17 (NIV)

John 13:1 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 13:2 The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus.

John 13:3 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 13:4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.

John 13:5 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 13:6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

John 13:7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

John 13:8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

John 13:9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

John 13:10 Jesus answered, “A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.”

John 13:11 For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

John 13:12 When 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.

John 13:13 “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am.

John 13:14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.

John 13:15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

John 13:16 I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

John 13:17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions

1. Read the passage. What stood out to you? Was there anything that you found surprising or confusing?
2. Read vv. 1-3. Why do you think John gives all this background? What is your sense of Jesus’ mindset in this moment?
3. Notice the juxtaposition of v. 3 with vv. 4-5. What do you think John wants us to understand about Jesus’ act of service?
4. In Jesus’ day, washing someone’s feet (which had shuffled through dirt, refuse, and animal feces!) was akin to scrubbing filthy toilets at the dirtiest truck stop; only the lowest of servants washed someone’s feet. What do you think it was like for the disciples to have Jesus wash their feet?
5. What do you make of Jesus and Peter’s exchanges in vv. 6-10?
6. Leadership is often portrayed as ordering other people around who have to do what you want. What does Jesus’ service tell us about the true nature of leadership (cf. vv. 12-16)?
7. In v. 17, Jesus makes the extraordinary claim that we’re blessed when we use our power and authority to serve others, rather than demand they serve us. How does blessing someone else bring blessing in return?

Prayer

Often a position of submission helps us physically connect with the spiritual reality of meeting God. A posture of kneeling with open hands can demonstrate our willingness to submit to God's power.

- Praise Jesus for his power and authority over all of heaven and earth (cf. Matt. 28:18).
- Admit those times when you've overlooked opportunities to serve someone else because you considered the work beneath you.
- Thank Jesus that he came to serve, rather than to be served, to give his life for us (cf. Matt. 20:28), and to show us what real strength and power looks like.
- Ask him to give you the opportunity this week to imitate him by serving someone even when it's not convenient or glamorous.
- Continue to pray for the person or family you've committed to bless:

"Heavenly Father, I want to be a blessing to _____. Help me to take the time to listen to what they have to say, eat with them, serve them, and share my story with them so that they could see You in me. I pray that they would know You the way that I know You. Use me to make the introduction. Amen."