

LIFE GROUP LESSON

John the Life-Giving Gospel • Week of July 5

Introduction

What does great leadership look like? Is it voicing a command and everyone scrambling to comply? Is it demanding respect in the home or workplace via an imposing projected persona? Is it having the corner office away from others 'beneath' your accomplishments? Is it having to remind underlings of your position with threats and fear?

What if great leadership is not status, grandeur, or an imposing façade of strength? What if this world's definition of greatness is not what 'greatness' is at all? What if it is serving in the soup kitchen, changing a diaper in the nursery at church, a dad praying with each of his kids at night ... and continuing to pray as they grow to be teens and adults. Maybe it's a pastor who spends his Saturday evenings praying over all who will be in worship.

Great leadership may look like a new chief executive officer, who sees his first assignment is to model humility. Before taking over operations, before leading a meeting of exec's, he first stops by the men's restroom to scrub toilets. For him, this is not janitor's work, this is a leader's work; For he lives by the mindset: "If I'm too big to do the small things, then I'm too small to lead." With leadership like that, the world will watch that company grow.

Background

In John, chapter thirteen, Jesus models a willingness to do the small things. He is at supper with his disciples just days (perhaps hours) before his sacrifice on the cross. Once all are seated, Jesus does what only a lowly servant would do. He gets up from the table, takes off his robe, wraps a towel around his waist, pours water into a basin, and begins to wash the feet of each disciple and dries them with the towel.

Why would the One to whom all authority is given – the Light of the world – kneel and humbly wash the feet of every disciple?

Read John 13:1-17

Discussion:

- Gospel-writer John stacks the first two verses with details. List each detail you see in vv1-2.
- When the Lord Jesus comes to Simon Peter, what is Peter's response? Note the exchange between Jesus and Peter (vv6-9). What do you make of Jesus' words in v10-11?

If we have invited Jesus into our heart, asked for his forgiveness, and placed our faith in him, we are 'clean'. But we are still walking around in this dirty world. Our feet get dirty. It seems some days we are surrounded by 'filth' ... dirty jokes, lies, gossip, making fun of people. The dirt of impure thoughts, addiction, and unfaithfulness. The dirt of betrayal as relationships go bad; covering up the truth, trying to maintain a house built on sand, using kids as pawns. Dirt, filth, and darkness is no place to live, especially if we have professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- How are we cleansed, according to Jesus' model of humility here in John 13? (see also 1 John 1:5 – 2:2)
- Jesus asks us today, *Do you understand what I am doing?* We call him Teacher and Lord, and he is! Thus, he has given us an example to follow.
- What does each of the following look like in day-to-day life—
 - Being a servant to people
 - Forgiving others
 - Praying for them, also loving and encouraging them
 - Washing others' feet
- What does John 13:17 say? Read together:
"Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them."

Read John 13:18-30

- What stands out to you in these verses?
- Judas leaves and goes into the night (v30). When we leave Jesus' presence, we are going into dark territory. Given the fact that John has repeatedly used the metaphor of light and darkness, what is stark about this note regarding Judas?

Read John 13:31-38

Jesus says, "So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples" (Jn 13:34-35). This very command

was first given by God to Moses in Leviticus 19:18. Yet, the Greek word used for 'new' here is *kainos* which can also be expressed as *REFRESHED*. Jesus *refreshes* an old commandment. 'Love one another' now includes loving our enemies, forgiving seventy times seven, and laying down our lives for our friends.

When the Lord calls us to a higher standard, it begins by going low. How? We must first be willing to humble ourselves and go 'low' – much like how Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-42). We also need the Holy Spirit. Read together: "And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love" (Romans 5:5).

In Closing

There are some days, we run out of love. Yet, the Lord can give us more!... Call out to him and ask the Holy Spirit to fill your heart with more love for others. Nothing takes the Holy Spirit by surprise and Jesus is not shocked by your failures. He is ready to forgive and restore, just as he was with Peter (Luke 22:31-32; John 21:15-17; 2 Peter 1:12-17). Had Judas not hanged himself, but instead asked Jesus for forgiveness, Judas too could have been restored. If you need forgiveness today, pray this prayer:

Lord, I don't want my failures to be my funeral. Please forgive me of all my sins – my selfishness, my foolishness – my choosing dark paths over the light of your presence. Lord, I need you to restore me. May your tender mercies flow upon me now. With your help, I will learn from my mistakes. Through your love and grace, may my failures teach me to be faithful to you. Lord, I am truly sorry. "I have wondered away like a lost sheep; come and find me, for I have not forgotten you commands" (Psalm 119:176). Lord, thank you. Thank you for loving me. I love you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

One Year Bible Reading

July 5: 1 Chronicles 1:1-2:17, Acts 23:11-35, Psalm 3:1-8, Proverbs 18:14-15
July 6: 1 Chronicles 2:18-4:4, Acts 24:1-27, Psalm 4:1-8, Proverbs 18:16-18
July 7: 1 Chronicles 4:5-5:17, Acts 25:1-27, Psalm 5:1-12, Proverbs 18:19
July 8: 1 Chronicles 5:18-6:81, Acts 26:1-32, Psalm 6:1-10, Proverbs 18:20-21
July 9: 1 Chronicles 7:1-8:40, Acts 27:1-20, Psalm 7:1-17, Proverbs 18:22
July 10: 1 Chronicles 9:1-10:14, Acts 27:21-44, Psalm 8:1-9, Proverbs 18:23-24
July 11: 1 Chronicles 11:1-12:18, Acts 28:1-31, Psalm 9:1-12, Proverbs 19:1-3



Text: John 13

Two Principles so we may lead and love like Jesus:

1. The hour is _____ for Jesus _____ to wash the _____ of those they _____.
2. We lead like Jesus when we love the _____ and bring _____ in the _____ by _____.

PLAIN TRUTH:

_____ can be your _____
or it can _____ your faithfulness.

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