

# The Gospel of John

## The Setting

Here in the upper streets of Jerusalem, Jesus is with his disciples as they are reclined to partake in a dinner together. In typical Jewish style, they were laid back with the upper portions of their body being above the frame of the table, and their legs extended past the table. Common traditions would imply that each who arrived, would wash their hands, recline to eat appetizers, and then proceed to gather to music, deep conversation, or a teaching. In any case what was not common was the actions Jesus would commit.



## The Foot Washing

As uncommon as washing the feet of others is today, it was probably more frowned upon during this time in history. There was a tradition that sometimes servants who were in this position would have washed feet such as exemplified in Genesis 18:4, or 1 Samuel 24:41. However both of these circumstances are expected from individuals who were already viewed as lower in status. Surely, a teacher, a future king, or savior wouldn't wash the dusty feet of his traveling disciples? This of course is exactly what Jesus does! Rising from the table, he removed himself from a position of authority as they all would have been sitting in an order of authority as a measure of honor and submission. As Jesus stands he furthers this removal of from common culture by taking off his outer garment which in 2nd century Judaism, implied another form of submission. (This chapter potentially alludes or foreshadows the suffering servant in Isaiah 53) In Judaism it was not uncommon to seek after humility. For example there was a Rabbi named Judah ha-Nasi (in 290 AD) who many teachings and writings speak of his great humility. Specifically that he was so humble that he would help do

anything for others. Except for one thing, he would not relinquish his position. Jesus took all measures culturally and physically in this moment to exemplify humility for his friends.

*“Simon Peter said to him, ‘Lord do you wash my feet?’ ” (Vs. 7)*

Once again, Jesus’ actions are so unfamiliar that Peter begins to wrestle with why Jesus is doing this! However there is a motive behind what Jesus is wanting to convey. In Peter’s confusion, a moment of teaching is unveiled, a foreshadow of Christ’s quickly coming death. Jesus gives Peter three answers in verses 7, 8, and 10. Signifying that those who truly want to be made pure are not able to cleanse themselves. Only through total submission to Christ and his purchased sacrifice on the cross, are we able to be washed clean of our sins. This often hurts our pride and is the point of where religion grows to add more measures to being made clean. (Clothing rules, hair lengths, worship styles, etc.: Gal. 3, 4, 5 are all direct rebuttals to adding to the sacrifice of Jesus at the cross)

## John 14

As Pastor Jonathan stated within our teaching, this chapter is particularly important. There are many things that are precisely placed within this chapter that helps us understand Christ’s coming death, the giving of the Holy Spirit, and the confusion that his disciples had at this point. I believe that Pastor Jonathan’s overview of this chapter provides the most thorough overlook of the text. So I would encourage you to read over this chapter (maybe highlight the whole thing! As Pastor Jonathan stated) and if you have any questions in particular, send them to us and we can give you a response!

## The True Vine (Jn. 15)

This chapter begins with what arguably can be the theme of the whole chapter, that is to remain in God! Other translations opt to use abide in him. In both cases we see a New Testament continuation of Old Testament theology, that God is to be our “dwelling place.” (Ex 25:8; 29:45; Lev. 26:11-12; Ezek. 37:27-28; 43:9) This



analogy process begins with those who are not bearing fruit. In this case they are pruned or cut away. This is true for common gardening today, where refusing to prune an unfruitful branch results in weakening the strength of the other branches that are bearing fruit. However with scholarship we know that even in this verse of pruning, John does not use the common word for pruning but a word that implies cleansing! Jewish tradition would have used this word to mean an inward purification. This would mean that John was attempting through words, to bridge the gap of the reader and Christ's teaching. That God doesn't fruitlessly prune, but he cleanses inwardly in such a way that we can bear fruit in righteousness. (Ezra 3:20) Furthermore that we would bear fruit for God and his kingdom. ( Is. 27:6; Hos. 14:4-8) The remainder of the chapter closes with an exhortation to abide in the love of God and exemplify that to others. As well as a warning of the persecution that is promised to come as a result of following Jesus.

## Conclusion

These three chapters are arguably some of the most influential within scripture. The quickly coming death of Christ places an emphasis on the words that Christ communicated and wanted to communicate to us. In those moments, these are the words that we have been given. Words, that should encourage us to willingly lay aside our positions for the sake of serving others in humble and honorable submission. Words, that remind us that Jesus is the only path to living a life that is pleasing to God and that he would send us a helper as the Holy Spirit that would testify to The Truth. Lastly, we are given the words of Christ that are explicitly stated to remind us that God works completely for our growth and good. That he takes intent to cut away the fruitlessness of our lives and that we should be encouraged to continue even through persecution.

## Discussion Questions

1. What did you learn that can be applied from this week's text?
2. Why is it hard for us to submit to others?
3. How can we exemplify humility this week?

**1**  
**READ**  
John 13-15  
(Next week's Jn. 16-17)

**2**  
**REFLECT**  
What needs "pruning"  
in your life?

**3**  
**RESPOND**  
Ask the Lord to help cut  
away the dead things  
that are plaguing your  
life with fruitlessness.