

John-29
“Don’t Forget Your Towel”
John 13:1-17 (NIV)

Hey Newsong!

I want to take a moment and welcome our first-time guests and those that are watching us online!

We’re in the Gospel of John...

We’ve been in the Gospel of John...

We’ll be in the Gospel of John for most of this year!

If you’re just joining us, welcome to the party!
John was one of Jesus’ closest friends, He lived with Jesus, He heard the sermons, He saw the miracles...and 90% of John’s Gospel is unique...

He shares things that Matthew, Mark & Luke don't share...

One key word that keeps coming up in John's Gospel is the word "Believe"

Pastor and author Skip Heitzig says that out of the 879 verses in the Gospel of John, the word "believe" is used almost 100 times!

Series Verse

31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name-Jn 20:30–31 (NIV)

Right from the beginning...John wants us to believe that Jesus is the Word made Flesh...

He's God the Son...

And He's been doing miraculous signs to prove Who He is...

He turns water into wine...

He heals an official's son with a word...

He heals a man who was disabled for 38 years...

He feeds 5,000 people with a little boy's lunch...

He walks on the water...think of waterskiing without the boat and skis!

He heals a man who was blind from birth...

He raises His friend Lazarus from the dead...

Jesus is saying things that only God can say...

And He's doing things that only God can do...

And it's all so that we can believe in Him!

The first 12 chapters of the Book of John cover about 3 years of Jesus' public ministry...John 13-18 covers Jesus' last hours before He goes to the cross...

As we begin chapter 13 we find Jesus in an upper room with His disciples...Chapters 13-17 are known as "The Upper Room Discourse"

Matthew, Mark & Luke all record what's known as "The Last Supper." Their focus is during the Passover Meal...

Jesus broke bread and poured the wine and said "This is My body...broken for you... This is My blood...poured out for you...Do this in remembrance of Me..."

This is why we have the ordinance of Communion...it's a time to remember what Jesus did for us on the cross...

John doesn't mention this in His Gospel...His focus is on the conversations that took place that night...

As we study John's eye-witness testimony, we're going to see that Jesus, knowing that His time was short...had a lot to say to His disciples...

How much does Jesus have to say? If you have a red-letter Bible...(a Bible that highlights the words of Jesus in red) you'll see that chapters 13-17 are all red...

Jesus is like a coach talking to the team before the big game...He's giving them instructions...

He's giving them the game plan...He's using every minute He has left to instruct, inspire and encourage His disciples...

And what I want you to remember today, is that although Jesus is talking directly to His twelve disciples...

He's speaking to you and I as well...The word disciple means follower...So if you consider yourself a follower of Jesus...

These are Jesus' words to you today!

John 13:1-17 (NIV)

Pray

Before we get into this today I want you to notice what Jesus says in verses 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
-Jn 13:14–15 (NIV)

Some churches take these words of Jesus and believe that Jesus was commanding foot-washing to be a regular ordinance in the church...like water baptism and communion...

With that in mind I'm going to ask that everyone please take off your shoes...I hope you've all had a pedi recently...Ushers please bring in the water basins... this is going to take awhile...

Don't panic...Please leave your shoes on!
We're not one of those churches that believe
footwashing is an ordinance...

Now for the record, there's nothing wrong with
footwashing ceremonies...but we don't believe
it's an ordinance like water baptism and
communion...Why?

Because we don't see the practice repeated in
the early church...

So what was Jesus saying to us when He said,
*"I have set you an example that you should do
as I have done?"*

Jesus is saying that He wants His followers to
serve others...

Saved People should **SERVE** People

I want you to grasp this...

Jesus has hours left before He goes to the cross...He's going to get into some deep theological teaching about the Person of the Holy Spirit...

His unity with the Father...and the importance of His disciples staying connected to Him...abiding in Him...

But before He gets into all of that He wants to make sure that they understand...they are to follow His example and serve others...

Saved People Serve People

Here at Newsong Church...we have four core values...we say them every week...
We believe that every person can...

Know God

Find Freedom

Discover Purpose

Make A Difference

This idea of serving others is found in the last two...

Discover your Purpose

You'll learn more about this in our Growth Track

But all of us have something that we're good at...we're born with natural talents and abilities...but we're also born-again with spiritual gifts...

Once we realize that we have a divine purpose...we can start to use our gifts, talents and abilities to serve one another for the glory of God...

Now we can "Make A Difference"...

We can impact the lives of others with our God-given abilities...

Let me show you how important this is by looking at our Mission Statement...

“We exist to reach people who are far-away from God and help them become fully-devoted followers of Jesus, one step at a time”

Think About This...

We can't accomplish our mission as a local church unless we are willing to serve others...

Back to our text...

Jesus knows that after He's resurrected...He's going to tell His disciples to

“Go into all the world and make disciples”

In order to accomplish that...they're going to need to follow His example and be willing to serve others...

Saved People Serve People...

It's what we do...It's who we are...

Hands that **SERVE** reveal a heart that **LOVES**
like Jesus

***13 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-Jn 13:1 (NIV)***

I can only imagine what was going through
Jesus' mind as He was sitting having dinner
with His disciples...

He knows that within hours Judas is going to
betray Him...

He knows that Peter will deny Him...

He knows that they will all abandon Him...

Yet John, inspired by the Holy Spirit tells us that Jesus loved them until the end...in other words It was a love that would never run out...

It's an unconditional, sacrificial kind of love...The Greek word is **ag-ap-ah'-o** it's the kind of love that God has for us...

Jesus doesn't just say He loves His disciples He shows them through serving them...all of them...even Judas...

He grabs a towel and He serves...

Serving is love in action...

It's one thing to say that you love someone...it's another to show that you love someone by serving them...

Sister Carol & Sister Mary

Despite their deteriorating physical health...they faithfully taught PC & I the basic fundamentals of our faith...They were tough...but they oozed with the love of Jesus!

It didn't matter if they were in pain...Or if they were tired...They set it aside and picked up their towel...

They were willing to put their love into action...they were going to use their gifts and talents to serve like Jesus...

Hands that serve reveal a heart that loves like Jesus!

Hands that serve reveal a Heart that's **HUMBLE** like Jesus

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;

4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 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.-Jn 13:2–5 (NIV)

Now I can only imagine the look on the disciples faces as Jesus gets up from the dinner table...

Takes off his outer clothing...wraps a towel around His waist and starts washing the feet of His disciples and drying them off with the towel!

Jesus has all power and all authority and what does He do with it? He serves others...

Usually people with power and authority are served by others...they don't serve others...

The President of the United States doesn't have to drive his own car...or fly his own plane...

King Charles doesn't have to clean his own bathroom in Buckingham Palace...They've got paid staff for that...

Why is Jesus doing this? Why is the Creator washing the feet of His creation?

Washing feet? Now you have to remember that in the first century people walked a lot. They didn't have Ugg's...

The roads were dusty and dirty...mud puddles and animal poo all over the place...No matter how hard you try to keep your feet clean they were bound to get dirty...

So foot washing was the job of the lowest servant in the house...

And never ever in this culture would you see a person of great importance wash the feet of someone who was considered less important...

This is why Peter said...You're not washing my feet! It was unthinkable for the Master to wash the feet of His students...

So why is Jesus doing this?

We get a hint...when we remember something that Jesus said in Mark's Gospel...

45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."-Mk 10:45 (NLT)

Jesus was a servant leader...and His disciples weren't catching the vision...

In fact, Luke tells us that the disciples were arguing about which one was the greatest that very night...

24 Then they began to argue among themselves about who would be the greatest among them. 25 Jesus told them, “In this world the kings and great men lord it over their people, yet they are called ‘friends of the people.’ 26 But among you it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant. 27 Who is more important, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves? The one who sits at the table, of course. But not here! For I am among you as one who serves.-Lk 22:24–27 (NLT)

Jesus is giving us a living parable of what a humble servant looks like...

They all get to the upper room...and apparently because it was a borrowed space...there was no servant to wash their feet...

The disciples kind of look around at each other like...Hey that's not my job...
And so nobody does it...So Jesus decides to use it as a teaching moment...
He is arguably the Greatest Person in the room!

Yet He humbles Himself...He stoops down and serves us...This is a picture of what Jesus did for all of us!

The Apostle Paul writes...

6 Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. 7 Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, 8 he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.-Php 2:6–8 (NLT)

Jesus...God in the Flesh...leaves Heaven and stoops down to save sinful humanity! He washes us clean with His blood!

I'm thankful for the servant leaders that we have in our church...every single leader we have are people of the towel!

I'm glad that we have a Dream Team that doesn't have a "it's not my job" mentality...

In fact, last week we were really short staffed because of vacations and things, and we didn't have enough volunteers to cover one of our most important ministries...Kidsong

Our Kidsong Director Vivian started asking for help and people who were serving on other teams, not only did their job..but went above and beyond and helped out in Kidsong!

I've been in ministry a long time...That's not always the case...Some teams are only concerned about their team...

What in Church? Listen...

I've worked with all kinds of leaders...not all of them are servant leaders...some of them are self-serve leaders...

They don't empower people, they use people... They don't lead with a towel...they lead with a whip...It's all about power, control and personal gain...

You expect to find those kinds of leaders in the world...but not in the church!

We're a church that believes in equipping and sending...God has blessed us to help train men and women who are called into full-time ministry...

I don't know exactly why God uses me in this way...I don't think I'm the most qualified...but He keeps sending people our way...

Those of you who feel the call to ministry please hear me...I have a test I do with everyone...it's simple really...

Before I see if you can teach...I want to see if you can sweep...Before you get the mic...I want to see if you can handle the towel...

It doesn't matter how gifted or talented you are...I don't care if you know Greek & Hebrew at this church. If serving *is beneath you then leadership is beyond you...*

We take classes on how to be great leaders but there's not that many classes on how to be a great servant...

Yet Jesus models for us what it looks like to be great in the Kingdom...It looks like humbly serving others...

Question to consider if you're not currently serving...if the God of the universe...the Creator of all things...Our Lord and our Savior can humble Himself and serve others...

Why can't you?

Well I'm too busy...Busier than God?

I only bring it up because that's the number one excuse I've heard over the years as to why people can't serve...

We have an amazing Dream Team made up of people at different stages in life...Here's the thing...everyone of them are busy!

Like extremely busy...

Busy with school, with work, with kids, busy with life...Traveling in from another state...some working all night long and then coming in to serve...You know what they're not too busy for? God!

They've learned how to prioritize their life...to put God first...and that includes serving others with humility like Jesus!

PM, how do I know if I'm serving like Jesus?
Pride wants to be seen...Humility doesn't
Pride stands up...Humility stoops low
Pride wants to be served...Humility serves
Pride focuses on self...Humility focuses on others...

During the American Revolution a man in civilian clothes rode past a group of soldiers repairing a small defensive barrier.

Their leader was shouting instructions, but making no attempt to help them. Asked why by the rider, he retorted with great dignity, "Sir, I am a corporal!"

The stranger apologized, dismounted, and proceeded to help the exhausted soldiers. The job done, he turned to the corporal and said, "Mr. Corporal, next time you have a job like this and not enough men to do it, go to your commander-in-chief, and I will come and help you again."

*It was none other than George Washington.
-Today in the Word 1991*

Humility isn't thinking of yourself less...
It's not thinking of yourself at all!

Jesus didn't lose His greatness when He picked up the towel...He exposed it!

In the same way...when we serve it reveals our heart that is being shaped by Jesus!

Ask yourself, is pride keeping me from serving?
Is it possible that pride is keeping me from being served by someone?
Am I willing to serve even if no one notices?

Hands that serve reveal a heart that's
BLESSED by Jesus

16 Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.-Jn 13:16–17 (NIV)

Serving others isn't easy...
Serving others takes time...
Serving others takes sacrifice...
Serving others takes obedience...
Serving others takes patience...
Serving others takes humility...

But there's something supernatural that happens in us...when we allow God to work through us!

When you've discovered your gifts and talents and you serve others with them for the glory of God...Jesus says you're blessed!

13 For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. 14 For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."-Gal 5:13-14 (NLT)

10 God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. 11 Do you have the gift of speaking?

Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.

-1 Pe 4:10–11 (NLT)

There's a blessing that comes when we serve...
There's a supernatural joy that we have...
We can't explain it...and the world doesn't understand it...

Your friends are like...

Wait a second...You go to church on your day off...you show up early...help to set up all of the equipment...and you do it all for FREE?

The world will never get it...

But when you serve others...You look like Jesus!

You want to grow spiritually? Start serving!
You want God to do a deep work in you? Start serving! You want to discover your purpose? Start serving!

Jesus didn't say you're blessed if you know about serving...He said you're blessed when you do it!

Here's the thing...

We have no idea how our willingness to serve others impacts eternity...

Maybe you're one of the many Dream Teamers that are behind the scenes and you're thinking am I really making a difference? Yes! Because you're willing to serve...others are able to come to church and experience Jesus!

And you never know how that act of service will impact a person...

As we close today, I want to tell you a true story...

The year was 1939 and traveling evangelist Mordecai Ham was holding a tent meeting in Charlotte NC...

The tent was packed and two teen-aged boys with nothing to do walked up to the tent to see what was going on...They looked around and saw that there were no seats...so they started to leave...

The greeter at the door ran after them, brought them back into the tent and found a couple of chairs...

During the altar call one of those boys walked up to the front of the tent and gave his life to Jesus...His name was Billy Graham!

Imagine if that greeter decided that he wasn't going to grab his towel that day...

Imagine if he was like...it's not my job to find chairs...I'm just a greeter not a seater...

No, instead he served like Jesus...and Billy Graham...one of the most powerful evangelists in modern times got saved!

Think about the moments in your life that brought the deepest joy to your heart...

More than likely they weren't when someone was waiting on you...but they were when God used you to make a difference in someone else's life!

That's the kind of blessing Jesus is talking about...We get to serve others like Jesus!

So for those of you who are currently serving we can't say thank you enough...We can't do what we do as a church without you!

Thank you for not forgetting your towel! I pray that the Lord continue to bless you and use you for His glory!

If you're here today, and you consider NSC your home...and you're not yet serving? What's stopping you?

I want to encourage you to pick up a towel...Stop by our Next Step table and sign up for the next Growth Track...or ask them how you can find a team...

I'm not going to lie...we need your help! We're not going to be able to reach the people God wants us to reach if we don't have people who are willing to pick up their towel!

So find someone to encourage today...help someone carry a burden this week...find a need and fill that need... That's where the blessing is!

What is the Holy Spirit Saying to You?

I want to talk to you today if you're here and you don't have a personal relationship with Jesus...

Jesus is the ultimate servant-leader!

He humbled Himself...

He went to the cross for our sins so that we can be forgiven by God...

Now He offers you the free gift of eternal life!

Will you let Jesus wash you clean today?

Altar Time

