



First Baptist Church Selmer

BODY TO BELIEVER • AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY • JOHN 13:1-15 • 8/7/2022

MAIN POINT

Believers grow more spiritually when they are rooted in an authentic community with other believers.

INTRODUCTION

Use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Who is someone that has shaped your outlook on life?

Tell the group one thing (or things) that you learned from them that have shaped you into who you are today.

This month we will focus on the Core Values of FBC Selmer. These same core values are seen beyond the church walls and can be seen in how Jesus ministered to others.

Who can name the four Core Values of FBC Selmer? What about the fifth?

Our core values are Authentic Community, Biblical Discipleship, Personal Ministry, Intentional Outreach, and Christ-centered Worship. The first four are the ones that we will focus on this month in our small group time.

Core values are vital in keeping the direction of a body of believers unified on mission but truthfully, they embody much more than who we are as a church. Core values are equally vital in the life of a believer.

Where else have you found community outside of the local church?

Why does community matter?

Is a community that is authentic important? Why or why not?

Community can be found outside of the church walls, but there should be no place on earth that is more authentic and more unified than what is found within a local body of believers. Let's look today at the value of authentic community. Jesus developed an authentic community around himself and encourages us to do the same with one another.

UNDERSTANDING

Use this section to read the Bible together and talk about it.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 13:1

1 "Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." (ESV)

What would you want to do if you knew that you only had a few hours left to live?

What type of emotions do you think were running through Jesus' mind knowing that His death was approaching?

Who does this passage refer to as "his own"?

Many of you probably remember a song by Tim McGraw called "Live Like You Were Dying." The song was released in 2004 and was about a man in his early 40s that received a terminal diagnosis. At that moment, his perspective on life completely changed. Things that once seemed important were not anymore. Things that seemed he would have a lifetime to perfect suddenly became his top priorities.

Jesus was well aware that his time on earth was short and the legacy that would be left behind was of utmost importance. Not only did Jesus love the disciples while he was on earth but his investment in their lives extended well beyond his earthly ministry. Jesus brought the disciples together and lived in authentic community with them. One that would continue to encourage, challenge, and unify them until their deaths but also set an example of what life among followers of Jesus should look like for each of us.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 13:2-5.

2 *“During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him, 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands and that he had come from God and was going back to God, 4 rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. 5 Then he poured into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.” (ESV)*

The act of foot-washing was only performed by the lowliest of servants. According to Jewish tradition, even Jewish slaves did not perform the act of foot-washing if Gentile slaves were available. On rare occasions, a wife may wash her husband's feet, children wash their father's feet, or a disciple wash their master's feet but never would the role be reversed. Jesus washing the disciples' feet was one of the most bizarre occurrences that the disciples had personally witnessed to this point.

What do you think this meant to the disciples for Jesus to wash their feet?

Do you think community in this group was strengthened through the act of foot-washing?

John records in these verses that Jesus knew that one of the disciples sitting at the table was going to betray him, yet, Jesus washed his feet just like he did the others.

How difficult would it have been to wash the feet of the one that was about to betray you?

Could you have done what Jesus did?

John also mentions something very important about the strength that Jesus displayed while washing the feet of the disciples. Despite what was happening around the table, Jesus knew that His purpose and God's plan were bigger than the betrayal. Jesus' confidence wasn't manmade or self-sustained, it was divine. Jesus had all things placed in his hands, yet He chose to pick up a towel and water basin.

How can we remain confident in our lives even when walking through extremely difficult situations? With difficult people?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 13:6-11

6 *“He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, ‘Lord, do you wash my feet?’ 7 Jesus answered him, ‘What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.’ 8 Peter said to*

him, 'You shall never wash my feet.' Jesus answered him, 'If I do not wash you, you have no share with me.' 9 Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!' 10 Jesus said to him, 'The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you.' 11 For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'" (ESV)

Why did Peter try to refuse Jesus?

Peter typically was the disciple to speak up before the others. What was Jesus' response to Peter's attempt to refuse his foot washing?

Part of the blessings of living in authentic community with one another is the ability to share freely while also speaking the truth in love. Peter was known to speak before his heart and mind had processed what was being said. Jesus had allowed Peter to say things throughout their time together but Jesus also corrected him. It was not done out of humiliation but from a heart of love. Jesus loved Peter and the other disciples and dedicated his earthly ministry to their growth.

Is there someone (or a group) that you feel completely comfortable speaking with honestly?

What does it mean to you to have someone like that?

How is it possible to develop that type of authenticity with others?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 13:12-15

12 "When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, 'Do you understand what I have done to you? 13 You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.'" (ESV)

Why do you think it was important for Jesus to show the disciples what to do instead of just telling them?

What does it say about the importance of serving one another if this were the last thing Jesus would teach them?

It is likely that most of the disciples knew Jesus (or of Him) from a very early age but the disciples had been alongside him for years at this point. Still, when Jesus began to wash their feet, it was completely out of the ordinary.

What was the expectation that Jesus had for His disciples?

APPLICATION

Discuss how to apply what you have studied.

Does Jesus have the same expectations of us today in regards to serving one another?

How proud would Jesus be today with how well we treat and serve one another?

What can you (or your group) do in order to start living according to this standard with other believers?

PRAYER

God, help us to serve one another in the way that you have served us. Help us to not look at others without first seeing them as image-bearers of you and worthy of our love. Help us to serve all even those that we don't feel are deserving of it. Let our example of service shine a light into a dark world and show others who you are.

COMMENTARY

| JOHN 13:1-15

13:1. The time had come, and Jesus would soon leave this world. This term for “world” appears 185 times in the New Testament; 8 times in Matthew; 3 times in Mark, 3 in Luke; but 78 in the Gospel of John. The other two key words are time and love.

13:2. Judas typifies a society in rebellion against God, but the Lord’s treatment also demonstrates God’s grace and compassion with that society. Though the disciples never grasped Judas’ true nature until after the betrayal in the garden, Jesus knew it from the beginning. Yet He gave Judas every opportunity to turn from his wicked ways, repent, and follow his Lord. John pulled no punches in his description of the betrayer and his evil master. In a few more verses (v. 27) we read that “Satan entered into him.”

13:3–5. Verse 3 reminds us that Jesus was the omnipotent God. Jesus allowed the full scenario to play out as the errant disciple made choice after choice leading to his own death. Some interpreters take these words symbolically, making the water equal to the Word, the towel demonstrating righteousness, and so forth. That hardly seems necessary in light of the culture of the first century. An old proverb says, “Actions speak louder than words,” and the Lord’s willingness to wash the feet of His disciples, even Judas’s, reflects servant leadership at its best. People who are familiar with first-century culture will immediately recognize how socially inappropriate this behavior was. Never in Jewish, Greek, or Roman society would a superior wash the feet of inferiors.

13:6–7. Little discussions with Peter fill the synoptic Gospels, and John enjoys recording them as well. Shocked by the cultural reversal as he literally looked down at his Lord, Peter said in effect, “What’s going on here?” And Jesus replied, “You have no idea, but some day you will.” Presumably Jesus began the foot-washing with Peter, so he was the first to be shocked.

13:8–9. Peter was too humble to have his feet washed, but not too humble to command the Lord. As soon as Jesus emphasized that this symbolic act united the disciple with the Lord in some significant way, Peter took the full plunge. Let us not miss the practical theology of these verses. There is no place in the body of Christ for those who have not been cleansed by the Lord. Washing in this symbolic context cannot refer to baptism, but the atoning cleansing of sin.

13:10–11. Here we have a beautiful picture of forgiveness and one of the most important theological texts of the New Testament. How often does a person need to be saved? Once? Every time he or she sins? Just before death to make sure? These verses tell us that a person who has been completely cleansed once will only require regular washings after that. A full bathing depicts initial regeneration; the repeated washings symbolize forgiveness of ongoing sinful behavior.

13:12–14. The washing not only demonstrated humility and servanthood to the disciples, but also laid an experiential foundation for the teaching of verse 10. When the foot-washing ended, Jesus taught an important lesson about the relationship of believers—you also should wash one another’s feet. Jesus emphasized the words Teacher and Lord in contrast with the way they had behaved toward Him. The Lord reminded them that He washed their feet as their leader.

13:15. Throughout the New Testament, we learn the importance of example, never more so than when Jesus refers to Himself. But here we are not focused on some great spiritual reality or doctrinal truth; the passage deals with how we treat other people. Since Jesus loved His disciples and loves us in the same way, we need to do for others what He has done for us.