

## Cleansed to Serve With a Pure Heart

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

**Power Point:** Jesus wants to cleanse our hearts of any attitudes of superiority, competition, wrong motives and hidden agenda in order to prepare us to be effective ministers. By washing the feet of His disciples He teaches us that greatness comes through serving.

1. John 13: 1 - 19 ~ Secure people aren't into titles, they are into towels. Even when in a leadership role they know that they are called to serve people.

- What were the things the Apostle's learned from Jesus washing their feet?
- Where do you think a person's security comes from?

2. Luke 22:24-30 ~ Competition in the church leads to division. We aren't called to compete but to complement, serve and add to one another.

- Share ways that you complement or serve the people in your family or at work?

3. John 12:4 – 6; Matthew 26:14 - 15 ~ Team ministry is working in our specific field of giftedness together with others to accomplish one common objective.

- What are the effects that a bad team member can have on a team?
- What are the qualities of a good team player? How can one become a better team player?

**Application:** Allow God to cleanse you of all kinds of attitudes that can cause damage to marriage, family, friendships or relationships at work and model a serving attitude and put others first in your relationships.

## Cleansed to serve with a pure heart

Sunday March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010

The discourse or talks that take place from John 13-17 at the dinner table by Jesus are his final words that prepare his key followers for their mission.

Jesus knows that His time has come and in a few days he will die and the baton of spreading the gospel will be passed to the first leaders of the church and, being aware of this, He does three things; He cleanses them for ministry (Ch 13), prepares and empowers them to serve (Ch 15 and 16) and prays for their success (Ch 17).

On the next few Sundays leading to Passion Week we will focus on three subjects from John's account.

- Cleansed to serve with a pure heart
- Prepared to serve with fruitfulness and power
- Covered in Prayer to be successful in serving.

**Introduction:** We live in a world where ambition and drive are considered qualities of greatness. Many people use external measurements, how much money, material or power one has rather than inward character as measures of signs of prominence. It was no different in the times of Christ; power, position and community status determined a man image. Humility and service were not seen as qualities of strength but of weakness.

However, Jesus makes it a point to teach greatness through serving by doing something that was inconceivable in the minds of the disciples who by now were convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.

In this account Jesus not only washes their feet, He also cleanses their attitudes and hearts in preparation to be effective ministers. There are certain attitudes that unless changed, will keep us from being effective in ministry, whether in marriage, parenting, friendships or any place of influence we may find ourselves.

John 13:1-19

*John is writing this account looking back with full understanding at what had happened on that day and what it all meant. His gospel account was written around 80 or 90 AD. At the time of his writing Peter had already been martyred and the Jewish Temple had already been destroyed.*

John understood, after looking back on this event and account, that there were attitudes and motives that needed to be adjusted in the hearts of those men sitting at the dinner table if the church was going to continue the mission of spreading the Gospel of Christ to the nations of the world.

Washing the feet of the apostles was the greatest act of humiliation and service yet in it Jesus never once lost the majesty or even awareness of his divinity. He did it fully conscious of whom He was and that all things had been given into his hands.

Yet being who he was he took off his garment and took up a towel.

WOW! Imagine the look on the face of the Apostles when they saw Jesus, of whom they had a high esteem and of whom they saw as their superior, take off his garment and take up a towel to wash their feet.

Without actually cleansing their feet, only by a shocking example, the cleansing had begun!

What was the first negative attitude they were cleansed from?

**They were cleansed from the secular attitude of superiority and arrogance.**

They learned that one could serve in a supervisory role and not have a spirit of superiority, arrogance or conceit.

Sometimes power and position can get to people's head and they begin to see themselves as better than those who are under them.

**Illustration:** The reality TV series "Undercover Boss" has been a smash hit for the ABC network, because it's about CEO's of large companies leaving their ivory towers to go undercover and find out what everyday life is like for entry level workers and front-line managers. This means they have to roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty.

By the end of the show the leader is usually humbled, broken and appreciative for the people who are responsible for making their company a success.

**Principle:** Secure people aren't into titles they are into towels. Even when in a leadership role they know that they are called to serve people.

**They were cleansed from a competitive spirit (Verses 13-17)**

**Biblical Illustration:** Luke writes in his gospel account that right after the dinner there was a dispute about who would be the greatest in heaven. (Luke 22:24-30).

As a church we still need this lesson on humility. As believers we are filled with the spirit of worldly competition fighting to be the greatest "# 1" looking to be served instead of serving. We seem to be increasing in knowledge of the word but decreasing when it comes to extending grace. Competition in the church leads to division. We aren't called to compete to be number one but to complement, serve and add to one another other.

**They were cleansed from team members who had wrong motives and hidden agendas**

John 13:10 Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash *his* feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." 11 For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean."

Team ministry is everyone working in their specific field of giftedness together with others to accomplish one common objective.

Judas had another objective and plan in mind and had to be cleansed or removed from the team.

His heart and motives were never right and Satan took advantage of it. He partook of the miracles, he partook of the spiritual feeding, he partook of the last supper but he never really was in partnership with Christ. (Verses 21-30)

He was a thief and he was greedy. (Verse 29)

John 12:4-6, Matthew 26:14-15

**Conclusion:** Jesus not only washes their feet to model serving he also cleanses their attitudes and hearts in preparation for effective ministry. The attitude of superiority and competition can damage a marriage, family, friendships or relationships at work. As believers we are called to model a serving attitude and to put others first. Partnership with Christ involves being a healthy team player.