

The Confidence to Serve

John 13:1-30

Bethany Assembly of God

4.7.2024

Central Proposition: Jesus gives you the confidence to serve.

Introduction

Over the last month, we studied the Lord's Prayer and celebrated Easter. I hope that the mini-series on prayer was a blessing to your prayer life and not only helped you to understand prayer but is helping you to practice prayer. Today we return to the book of John, chapter 13. The confidence to serve is reinforced in this story through two traits of God.

1. His love lets you serve. See John 13:2-4; Leviticus 25:39.

The first trait is love: Jesus' love lets you serve. Washing another person's feet is a distasteful job and puts you in the demeaning position of kneeling before them. What Jesus does here is more than lower Himself to the status of a servant; He humbled himself to the status of a slave to do a demeaning job that no one else in the room would have dreamed of doing. And in such, He gives us an analogy for His own incarnation and an example of how we ought to love. It's clear that Jesus washing their feet was not just an act of service but, especially in the context of that last Passover meal, was a symbol of the ultimate act of service when He died on the cross to pay for our sins so that we might be forgiven and cleansed. When we repent, Jesus still cleanses us through that same act of love on the cross. Sacrificial service to others – putting their interests before your own, humbling yourself to promote them and honor them, blessing rather than cursing – is possible because of Christ's own love for us.

2. His sovereign control reassures.

Throughout this passage, we see that Jesus was not only aware that one of His own disciples would betray Him, He also knew who, when, and how. Jesus knew what was going to happen, yet He didn't try to stop it. He had come to die for our sin. More than that, Jesus continued to love and serve even His betrayer.

Jesus didn't just leave us an example of serving others, even our enemies, He demonstrated why we can do this with confidence: He is in control. You may be shocked and surprised by betrayal, evil, injustice, but Jesus is not shocked. Evil cannot surprise Jesus. Serving like Jesus is only possible because we know evil does not take Jesus by surprise and because we see that through Judas God accomplished His plan of redemption. When we trust God enough to believe that He will work all things together for good for those who love Him, we are able to participate in the self-sacrificial service of Jesus that brings God's love into our world.

A note about today's passage: As you read the Gospels, you will see that Matthew, Mark, and Luke all identify the Last Supper Jesus ate with His disciples as the Passover meal. However, some believe that the Gospel of John indicates that Jesus was crucified as the lambs for the Passover meal were being slaughtered. If that was the case, then Jesus could not have eaten the Passover meal with His disciples, since the Passover lamb for that meal wouldn't have been slaughtered yet. Multiple solutions have been offered to this apparent discrepancy, but I think that the best solution is that there is no real discrepancy. Let me plug our podcast

“The Leftovers” right here, because we’ll deal with this topic in greater depth there. The Leftovers is an extension of the teaching and preaching ministry here at Bethany and every week, I dig a little deeper into the message from the previous Sunday along with a guest from our Pastoral staff. You can find it on our website.