

Hello friend, and welcome to *Hope for Today*. The program you're listening to is produced by Heralds of Hope. We're an international Gospel media ministry. Each week our Bible teaching broadcasts circle the globe in English and 22 other major languages. And why do we teach from the Bible? Because the Bible is the only source of lasting hope. It is God's Holy Word.

You know as well as I do that we can't rely on the words of men because men change. Think of all the unkept promises people make, maybe even specific promises to you personally. But God is unchanging, He keeps His promises. The Psalmist, David, said in Psalm 119:89, "*Forever, O Lord, Your Word is settled in Heaven.*" You and I can depend on God's Word.

Because God's Word is unchanging and reliable, we share this teaching with many people around the world in different languages in both audio and print. And we receive many testimonies of lives that have been transformed by the power of the Gospel. If this program touches your heart and life, we'd love to hear from you. Stay tuned, and I'll give you our contact information at the close of the program.

Now, here's Pastor J. Mark with today's teaching.

Many years ago, an Englishman affirmed, "Love is the greatest force in the world." But long before that the Apostle Paul wrote what has been called the greatest dissertation on love. It is recorded in I Corinthians 13. Paul concluded his dissertation with these words, "And now abides faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

A listener once wrote to me to tell me he had discovered a whole new body of literature when he read the New Testament. As he read the Gospels, he saw that Jesus is the True Love. The great golden text of the Bible is still true, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

I want to talk to you about **LOVE SYMBOLIZED** from John 13:1-11. This is probably one of the most misunderstood acts of Jesus.

1 Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

2 And supper being ended, the devil having now put 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 was come from God, and went to God.

4 He riseth from supper and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

5 After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

From this text we shall see the several **SITUATIONS** in which Jesus symbolized love.

The first Situation Jesus used a perfect setting: **The Occasion.**

It was the feast of the Passover. It was an important feast given to Israel by the Lord when they came out of Egypt in the time of Moses. It commemorated their Exodus from Egypt. It was to be kept perpetually. Actually, the observance of the Passover commemorated the salvation of the first-born son. In every family that carefully obeyed the instructions the first-born was delivered from death.

The Passover was observed in Jesus' day. In fact, He first observed the Passover in Jerusalem when He was twelve years of age. We read in the Gospel of Luke that Jesus went with

Joseph and Mary and others from Nazareth to Jerusalem to observe the Passover when He was twelve.

Now in John 13 Jesus is observing the Passover for the last time before He was crucified. As the occasion is introduced, John, by the Holy Spirit, states that Jesus loved His own which were in the world, and He loved them unto the end. I want to explain that for you. I noticed in my Greek New Testament that the phrase, to the end, is *eis tetos*. That means to the uttermost, to the end of love, as far as love could go.

So, He put water into a basin. It was a ceremonial washing when He would normally, as governor of the Passover, wash His hands. But He began to wash the disciples' feet. The occasion was the celebrating of the saving of the first-born from death in the bondage of Egypt.

Jesus went from one to another of His disciples reclining about the Passover meal, coming last to Peter.

The second Situation: **The Objection.**

Peter made a strong objection. He said, "You are not going to wash my feet." It was a washing procedure and Jesus was washing the disciples' feet, but Peter objected very strenuously when He came to him.

I think Peter must have been the last of the twelve disciples as Jesus had washed their feet. He very emphatically said, "You are not going to wash my feet." Then Jesus answered, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with me.

Now notice Peter's response. When he understood that the washing was absolutely necessary, then he said, "Not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." Yes, Peter then was very anxious that he should have complete fellowship with Jesus.

The objection was overridden. He had first said you'll never do it. Then he said to do it well, thoroughly, "Wash not only my feet, but also my head and my hands."

Then Jesus gave the third Situation: **The Orders.**

Here's the third situation. He said, "Once you have been bathed, or cleansed, all you need then is to wash the feet in order to be clean." The symbolism of this, of course, can be taken to the times in which Jesus lived. They had the central bath house in the village or the town. To prepare for the Sabbath Day, for example, the Jewish men would go to the bath house and bathe.

After they had walked home, they would wash their feet and then they would be clean. Jesus said, "Once you have been cleansed, then all you need to do is wash the feet."

I want you to notice that Jesus was here symbolizing real cleansing, the cleansing of His love. I just showed you from the first verse that Jesus loved His own unto the uttermost. And Jesus symbolized His love by washing their feet. Even the one who was not clean. He told Peter, "You are clean, but not all," because He knew which one was going to betray Him. So, He said, "You are not all clean."

This washing was not to cleanse the feet. It was to symbolize forgiving, cleansing love for them even to the uttermost. His love was enough to take them all in, forgive them all, varied as they were. Even the one who would betray Him, Jesus was willing to cleanse. Now that's what I call surpassing love.

Can you imagine, Jesus, the Son of God, washing your feet? You might say like Peter, "NO, that's not right, it's backwards. He's the Creator of all and He is washing the feet of His creation, a human! The creature, the human should be washing His feet." And, in a sense, you're right.

But let me tell you something; He did much more than wash the disciples' feet. He literally laid down His life for them on the cross. He died so they might have eternal life. But it wasn't just for them. He did it for you and me and all people, in the past, present, and future.

What Jesus was really demonstrating to us in this scene is how to serve those we love. And some Christ-followers today still follow the example Jesus gave in this text. When they commemorate the Lord's Table, they also wash the feet of their brother or sister as a way of saying, "I am here to serve you in any way I can. I am willing to even lay down my life for you."

And in doing this they remember the words of Jesus, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

But you will never be able to love others like that until you first learn to love Jesus. I urge you to accept His love today.

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And when you contact us, you can request our Bible Study Guide, *Hope Herald*. It follows these radio programs and will help you learn more about what we're studying from John's Gospel. So, ask for your free copy of *Hope Herald* today.

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Now, I urge you to tune in next week as Pastor J. Mark continues our study from John's Gospel. You won't want to miss it. And until then, keep looking to Jesus, He's our hope for today and for every day!