**Livin’ the Life**

**Following Jesus’ Example**

**John 13:1-17**

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We are our sermon series in the gospel of John, Livin’ the Life, looking at the life of Jesus and the life he promises us. Today’s passage is John 13:1-17, Following Jesus’ Example. In John 13 -17 Jesus is with his disciples on night before his death, preparing his disciples for his departure as they will represent him after his death. John 13:1-17 can be divided into three sections, vs 1 summarizes the event, Jesus’ love for his disciples; vs 2-11 describe Jesus’ loving example of sacrificially serving his disciples; and vs 12-17 describe Jesus’ challenging the disciples to serve one another in the same way.

**Jesus’ Loves His Own (1)**

The *first verse gives us a summary* of what the rest of the passage describes. Jesus knew his death was imminent. He is leaving this world and returning to the Father by way of the cross. What Satan thought would usurp the plan of God is the very means by which God’s plan is accomplished and salvation is secured for those who trust Christ. Having loved his own who were in the world, Jesus loved them to the end (1). Jesus’ life and ministry have been directed to his own, showing them a special revealing and saving and forgiving love. This love is distinct from God’s universal and general love for the world. This is a particular and special love, like the love a husband has for his wife. His own are the twelve disciples, but includes the larger community of disciples, and us today. So, everything we see today about Jesus’ love for his own applies to you, if you have put your faith in Christ. Jesus’ love is displayed in serving his own. *So lets look at Jesus example.*

**Jesus’ example (2-11)**

John tells us that during supper, Satan had put it in Judas’ heart to betray Jesus and then turns our attention to Jesus’ status. Jesus knew that God the Father had given all things into his hands, he had come from God and is going back to God (2-3). He came from God describes Jesus’ incarnation and going back to God describes Jesus’ exaltation after his resurrection. Given all things into his hands tell us that Jesus has all power and authority. He came from the throne of God and is going back to that throne. There is no higher status than Jesus’. As God he deserves to be honored and served. I think the contrast between Judas and Jesus is to remind us that everything is going according to plan. Jesus could have stopped the greatest evil in history at any point he wanted but did not because it was the plan of God. And though no one has a higher status than Jesus, he breaks with the ways of the world and the social customs of the day by getting up from the table, taking off his outer garments, grabbing a towel, and tying it to his waist. Then he pours water into a basin and proceeds to wash his disciple’s feet (4-5). He is showing his love to his disciples by taking on the ordinary role of a lowly household servant and washing his disciples’ feet. A superior never washed the feet of inferiors. Jewish slaves did not even wash feet, only Gentiles slaves did. Yet Jesus, God in the flesh, infinitely great and glorious did not see it below himself to serve his disciples this way.

When Jesus comes to Peter, he is embarrassed that he is serving Peter this way and asks Jesus, you wash my feet (6)? Jesus tells Peter that although he may not understand what Jesus is doing now but will after Jesus’ resurrection (7). Peter responds that he will never allow Jesus to wash his feet but Jesus responds, if I do not wash you, then you have no share with me. At this, Peter wants Jesus to wash his hands and feet and head (8-9)! Jesus goes on to explain, if you have bathed, you do not need to be washed again, except for your feet, but are completely clean already. But not all the disciples are clean, because he knew Judas was going to betray him (10-11). If Jesus does not wash you, then you have no share with him, that is, you are not his own. This is why Peter wants Jesus to wash all of him but he is already completely clean. To be washed and clean you must let Jesus serve you by letting him clean you from your sin and give you eternal life. You become spiritually clean by coming to faith in Jesus and letting him forgive your sin and give you eternal life. But Judas is not clean, he is not one of Jesus’ own.

**Jesus Challenges His Disciples (12-17)**

When Jesus finished washing his disciple’s feet, he sat back down and asked them, do you understand what I have done to you (12)? You call me Teacher and Lord and you are right for so I am. If then I your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them (13-17). In other words, if I am the highest ranking person in the world, the great I AM, God, who deserves to be honored and served yet I serve you in the lowliest way possible, you should do the same. If I lovingly and sacrificially serve you then as my followers, my representatives, you also should lovingly and sacrificially serve others (Mat 10:43-45). In the same way I am not above lowly serving of others, neither are you (16). One way we follow Jesus is sacrificially serving others.

Jesus says it is not just knowing this but doing this that is important. Discipleship is not just about learning biblical truths, it is about us obeying those truths. Jesus told his disciples to make disciples by teaching them to obey everything I commanded you. He tells us to serve others joyfully. The word “blessed” means glad, happy, or joyful. In other words, Jesus is saying that if you realize what I am saying, if you understand who I am, and how high I am, and what a privilege it is to be called to follow and represent me, then bend down low to serve with me, and you will be glad. You will find that the deepest joys in life are not when people think much of you, but when you help them by serving them.

Life Group Questions:

1. What is the passage about?
2. How did Jesus love his own disciples to the end?
3. How is Jesus’ love for his own different than Jesus’ love for world (Jn 3:16)?
4. How are we cleaned and washed by Jesus?
5. What is so unique about Jesus serving his disciples by washing their feet (Jesus deserves to be served yet chooses to serve)?
6. Why are we to follow Jesus’ example?
7. How are you following Jesus’ example?

How do you struggle following Jesus’ example? Can you tell us about a time you struggled?