

John 12:44-13:17

⁴⁴ And Jesus cried out and said, "Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me.

44 If you want to believe in God, then you must believe in Jesus. To believe in Jesus is to believe in God. I again invite you to try to put these words in the mouth of any other human. The impact then becomes clear. Jesus perfectly represents God to us. The things that He did, the teachings He gave, the very life He lived, are revelations of the nature and character of God (Isaiah 43:12).

The world gives us its own powerless Jesus, "A man with good morals, who repeated all the good sayings of His day but came up with few original ones. He died because the system always attacks the peace-loving souls among us. But that certainly had nothing to do with saving our souls," they say. As we conclude this study, you will see the motivation behind their "great wisdom" and the real motivation behind Jesus' true actions as faithfully recorded in Scripture.

⁴⁵ And whoever sees me sees him who sent me.

45 In other words, see me, see God. Again, can you imagine anyone else in all of history saying that? No other sane person has made such an incredible claim. The Apostle Paul and the author of Hebrews both said the same thing about Jesus (Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3). They understood that Jesus is the exact representation of the invisible God. So, if you want to know God, if you want to understand His heart, His attitudes, and attributes, look at Jesus. Study His life. And for those misguided souls who think they are also god, I would suggest the reality check of comparing your life with His.

⁴⁶ I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

46 Mankind is in hopeless darkness without Jesus. We are stumbling around trying to justify our selfishness and calling it spirituality as we trip and fall on our face again and again (Proverbs 4:19). Even if you are walking in the light, you are affected by the multitudes that walk in darkness. Jesus is the only answer for spiritual darkness.

⁴⁷ If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸ The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.

47,48 There will be a day of accounting for all mankind. This is another Biblical truth that the world deplors. No wonder they do not want to credit this saying to Jesus. We will all stand before God's judgment seat (Romans 14:10). Either you accepted Jesus' words of light and life or you rejected them.

⁴⁹ For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment--what to say and what to speak.

49 Jesus did not just go around speaking off the top of His head like we do. He listened to the Father. Now look carefully at this verse. It is repeated a number of times in John's Gospel (John 5:30; 14:10; 17:8), but this is the only place where Jesus claimed He not only spoke what the Father told Him to speak, He even said it how the Father told Him to say it.

⁵⁰ And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me."

50 The Word of God leads to eternal life! How we speak is a matter of life and death. No wonder Jesus was so careful to listen to the Father. Solomon told us life and death are in the power of the tongue (Proverbs 18:21). What a difference there is in what we would say and what God would speak to individuals! If God commands us what to say, we can know it will lead to eternal life.

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. ² During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,

13:1,2 Jesus knew He was leaving the world; He was ready to show the disciples the full extent of His love; and the devil prompted Judas to betray Jesus. Just two comments on that: "He showed them the full extent of His love" (NIV). It could also be translated, "He loved them to the end" (ESV). If we take the first translation, what is John referring to as "the full extent of His love"? Is it this passage John is referring to or the cross? I do not see any reason not to include both translations and meanings.

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,

3 To get the full depth of what John is saying we need to examine it carefully. Jesus knew that His Father, God, had put all things under His power. Jesus could ask for or do anything. The Father trusts Jesus with such power because Jesus has so completely submitted Himself to the Father (John 5:19). He is one with the Father (John 10:30). They desire the same things. They act from the same heart. Jesus also knew that He had come from God and was about to return to God. What does Jesus really need to convey in these final hours?

⁴ rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist.

4 With ultimate power and knowledge of His eminent departure, Jesus took the role of a servant. We must understand that this is not just the lowest position of the Jews, but even a role considered too lowly for Jewish servants and was usually assigned to foreign slaves. There was no more humble position in that culture than the one who washed feet. The word for towel here is borrowed from Latin, *lention*. It was a towel that

a servant wore as his clothing for work. To wear a *lention* was to truly be clothed in humility.

⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

⁵ Often the guests would wash themselves before attending a meal. Once they arrived, only the dust from the road needed to be washed from their feet. There was no servant in this home to take care of this task, so Jesus stepped into the role of the lowest of servants. When you know you have the resources of heaven, you can give abundantly without fear of loss. Think about that (1 Corinthians 3:21-23)!

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."

^{6,7} When Jesus explained what He was doing, Peter would get the point. One of the other Gospels told us the disciples were arguing about who would be greatest in the coming Kingdom (Luke 22:24). Jesus had told them that was the wrong way to think as that the servant was greatest (Luke 12:26). They needed an illustration. Jesus was always serving them with the words of life, but they needed an illustration that drove the point home.

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."

⁸ Jesus often switched a physical conversation into a spiritual meaning. We all must be washed of our sins by the sacrifice of Jesus (1 John 1:7). If we do not, we have nothing to do with Him, for light cannot dwell with darkness (1 John 1:5).

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."

^{9,10} As we have seen so many times, Peter took Jesus literally instead of figuratively. Jesus switched back to the physical but with spiritual applications. Jesus makes us clean (John 15:3). We receive His righteousness, but our feet are still in contact with this world. We still get dirty with the wickedness that surrounds us. We need a daily "foot washing" so to speak.

¹¹ For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

¹¹ Have you experienced Jesus' cleansing of your heart? And if you are clean, do you need your feet washed today? Have you let the dirt of this world gather on you and like Peter been reluctant to go to Jesus?

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.

12,13 Most disciples called their master “rabbi” which means “teacher” but none would use the term “Adonai”. The world used it for earthly masters, but it was most often used as a term for God in the Jewish culture.

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.

14,15 Jesus is our example in everything. He was always an example. But here He specifically pointed out that He wanted them to take note of this as an example and follow it. The leaders in the church that Jesus established must be servants. The flock that follows Jesus must be servants.

16 Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

16 If your master and sender is a servant, what does that mean we should be? If He did not cling to His rights, should we (Philippians 2:6,7)? A proud Christian is an oxymoron. To be truly Christian is to be a humble servant!

17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

17 Now let us put both passages together and see what is behind Jesus’ motivations and the world’s denial of Jesus’ words. Jesus just said that if you see Him, you see God (verse 45). In the very next passage, Jesus took the lowliest position available and served His disciples. What were they seeing? What should we see? God, the greatest servant! Jesus asks us to be like Him because He shows us God!

I do not know what your picture of God is or how you derived it, but God is not someone who stands over every life with a stick just waiting for us to disobey so He can whack us. He is a servant who is right there to meet our needs, and our greatest needs are pretty dirty, like washing us clean of sin (Titus 3:5) by getting on a cross and taking on the sins of the world. You will never see a humbler servant than God. That does not mean He will not judge mankind, or that He does not deserve our service and obedience. It does mean He will judge us in righteousness and go out of His way to give us every opportunity to turn from evil. He alone can provide a just covering for our sins. You cannot imagine a more perfect and awesome God!

Questions

What do verses 44 and 45 teach us about the life of Jesus?

Why do people prefer to reject the idea of judgment?

What does verse 49 tell us about Jesus’ words?

What was Jesus cognizant of as the meal began?

What did He most want to teach His disciples?

Why was this a good way to teach the lesson?

What is the spiritual picture in the need to have our feet washed?

What does this tell us about our heavenly Father?