

One of the reasons we study the Word of God is to gain a greater understanding of God and our relationship to Him. The Puritan Richard Baxter said: "He is the best Christian who has the clearest knowledge of God in His attributes." The Word of God describes the invisible God through the life of Jesus. As we behold Him, we are changed. (2Corinthians 3:18) In the end of chapter 12, Jesus was teaching us that to see Him is to see God.

**Commented [notes1]:** 18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. 2 Cor 3:18 (NIV)

*44 Then Jesus cried out, "When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. If you want to believe in God, then you must believe in Jesus. To believe in Jesus is to believe in God. As I have done before, 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)*

**Commented [notes2]:** 12 I have revealed and saved and proclaimed-- I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "that I am God. Isaiah 43:12 (NIV)

There is an attempt today to redefine the life of Jesus, especially His words. Those who make that effort don't want to believe that Jesus said these things so in their great pride and arrogance they sit down together and decide what parts of the Gospel are authentic and which were added by those so called self-serving disciples who, by the way, were so self-serving that they died for their convictions. 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'll see the motivation behind their "great wisdom" and the real motivation behind Jesus' true actions as faithfully recorded in Scripture.

Jesus didn't leave us with any doubt about what He was saying. He said, *45 When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me.* 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.

**Commented [notes3]:** 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. Col 1:15 (NIV)

**Commented [notes4]:** 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. Heb 1:3 (NIV)

*46 I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.* Mankind is in hopeless darkness without Jesus. We are stumbling around trying to justify our selfishness and call it spirituality as we trip and fall on our face again and again. (Proverbs 4:19) The consequences of living in darkness are horrendous. You hear about it on the news; you come in contact with it in others lives, and you deal with it in your own. 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, the spiritual darkness of false religions and the religion of self.

**Commented [notes5]:** 19 But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble. Prov 4:19 (NIV)

*47 "As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. 48 There is a judge for the*

one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. There will be a day of accounting for all mankind. This is another Biblical truth that the world deplores. No wonder they don't 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. It's not just God saying, "You'd better do what I say!" It is the fact that His words are goodness and truth. To reject the words of Jesus, these written words we are reading and/or the voice of the Spirit of God speaking to the lost soul, is to reject goodness, righteousness, grace, mercy and truth. On Judgment Day many will be shown their rejection of all that is good and be judged. The fact that you don't like that or reject it doesn't mean it won't happen. (Acts 17:31) Jesus said it will happen. Is there anything about His life that would suggest you shouldn't believe Him?

<sup>49</sup> For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. Jesus didn't 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. His every nuance was straight from God. He so completely relied on the Father that He spoke what the Father told Him and *how* He told Him to say it. The next verse tells us why that was important for Him and for us.

<sup>50</sup> I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say. 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 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. May God give us an ear to hear the Spirit, the willingness to speak what He commands, and the faith to believe that will lead people to eternal life! (1John 5:13)

We need to be just as in tune in *how* we say things as we need to be for the particular words as well. How we say things can make a huge difference. I've heard people share the Word in such a condescending way that the person they were speaking to was repelled. When we say *what* the Spirit commands in *the way* He would have us say it, it will lead to eternal life.

I've never heard the end of John chapter 12 connected with the story in the beginning of 13, but I think it is a very important background for what we are about to learn. Verses 1 and 2 tell us it was just before Passover; 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*". It could also be translated, "*He loved them to the end*". 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 don't see any reason not to include both translations and meanings. He loved them to the end and showed the full extent of His love in serving them and in the cross. (John 15:13)

**Commented [notes6]:** 10 You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.  
Romans 14:10 (NIV)

**Commented [notes7]:** 31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."  
Acts 17:31 (NIV)

**Commented [notes8]:** 30 By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.  
John 5:30 (NIV)

**Commented [notes9]:** 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.  
John 14:10 (NIV)

**Commented [notes10]:** 8 For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.  
John 17:8 (NIV)

**Commented [notes11]:** 21 The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.  
Prov 18:21 (NIV)

**Commented [notes12]:** 13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.  
1 John 5:13 (NIV)

**Commented [notes13]:** 13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.  
John 15:13 (NIV)

Also "the Devil had already prompted Judas" literally means he dropped it into his heart/mind. Yes, the Devil can do that, and it is up to us to reject what he prompts.

<sup>3</sup> Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; To get the full depth of what John is saying we need to take this slowly. 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. When we come to the end of life, the things that really need to be said and done take priority. This is the end of the road. What does Jesus really need to convey in these final hours? He has all power to convey anything He wants. <sup>4</sup> so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.

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 usually given 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 the servant wore as his clothing for work. To wear a *lention* was to truly be clothed in humility. While other rabbi praised humility, they always did so only to a point. None but Jesus ever went to this extent.

<sup>5</sup> After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. 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. Apparently 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! (1Corinthians 3:21-23)

<sup>6</sup> He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

<sup>7</sup> Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." 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 wrongheaded thinking and that the servant was greatest, (Luke 12:26) but they needed an illustration. Jesus was always serving them with the words of life, but they needed an illustration that drove the point home.

<sup>8</sup> "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." As Jesus often did, He switched a physical conversation into a spiritual meaning. We all must be washed of our sins by the sacrifice of Jesus. (1John 1:7) If we do not, we have nothing to do with Him, for light cannot dwell with darkness. (1John 1:5)

**Commented [notes14]:** 19 Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. John 5:19 (NIV)

**Commented [notes15]:** 30 I and the Father are one." John 10:30 (NIV)

**Commented [notes16]:** 1 Corinthians 3:21-23 (NIV) 21 So then, no more boasting about men! All things are yours, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future--all are yours, 23 and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

**Commented [notes17]:** 24 Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Luke 22:24 (NIV)

**Commented [notes18]:** 26 But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. Luke 22:26 (NIV)

**Commented [notes19]:** 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 1 John 1:7 (NIV)

**Commented [notes20]:** 1 John 1:5 (NIV) 5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

<sup>9</sup> "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" As we've seen so many times, Peter takes Jesus literally instead of figuratively. Jesus switches back to the physical but with spiritual applications. <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." 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. If scenes of lust were presented to us, we need them washed from our eyes and minds. If our ears heard conversations that were dark and evil, we need our ears washed, etc. We are clean for as the old hymn goes, "There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins; And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains." Nevertheless, we come daily to throne of God and confess our sins and find ourselves washed afresh by the one who washed His disciples feet. (1John 1:9)

**Commented [notes21]:** John 15:3 (NIV)  
3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

<sup>11</sup> For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean. There was an unsundered heart there, just as there probably is here this morning. Are you clean? Have you experienced Jesus' cleansing of your heart? And if you are clean, do you need your feet washed this morning? Have you let the dirt of this world gather on you and like Peter been reluctant to go to Jesus? In a minute I'll tell you why you shouldn't hesitate.

**Commented [notes22]:** 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.  
1 John 1:9 (NIV)

<sup>12</sup> When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. <sup>13</sup> "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 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. (exception in John 5:7; and by the Samaritan woman 4:11) Jesus was saying that the disciples held Him in highest esteem.

**Commented [notes23]:** 7 "Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me."  
John 5:7 (NIV)

<sup>14</sup> Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup> I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 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 to follow. The leaders in the church that Jesus established must be servants. The flock that follows Jesus must be servants.

**Commented [notes24]:** 11 "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?"  
John 4:11 (NIV)

This morning we are going to take this spiritual picture literally. We are going to take a moment for those who lead to wash the feet of those who have so often served them. In doing so we are saying we want to be like Jesus, servant leaders. We thank you for your service and recognize that it is Christ like!

<sup>16</sup> I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If your master and sender is a servant, what does that mean we should be? If He didn't 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!

**Commented [notes25]:** 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,  
7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.  
Phil 2:6-7 (NIV)

*17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.* Do you want to be truly blessed? Then be a humble servant. It's the ones that are always trying to guard their positions and power that are the grumps. The lowly have nothing to defend. I heard a great response once from a brother who was insulted. He responded, "You can't possibly insult me to depths of what I deserve. If there is anything good in me it is because of the grace and mercy of God." He's blessed. He is in the light. He isn't stumbling over an accusation.

Now let's 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 saw Him you saw 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 don't know what your picture of God is or how you derived it, but God is not someone who stands over every life with a baseball bat just waiting for us to disobey so He can whack us. He is the humble servant that is right there to meet your need, and most of our needs are pretty dirty, like washing us clean of sin. (Titus 3:5) Like getting on a cross and taking on the sins of the world. You will never see a more humble servant than God. That doesn't mean He will not judge mankind, or that He doesn't 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!

He washes you of your sins. He washes you with His Word and the regeneration of His Holy Spirit. He is constantly serving you. Do you see it? He arranges circumstances to draw you into the light, to encourage you, to comfort and direct you. He gives you a family of believers to be His hands that reach out to embrace you. There is nothing He wouldn't do to capture your heart, because He loves you.

The world doesn't want that kind of a God. They want to be their own god, proud, demanding, and self-serving. They don't think they need cleansing. They believe they are good just like they are. They value what God declares to be sin. To this servant God who would die to save them from their sin, they say, "No thank you!"

Let me close with Jesus' words of instruction to us from this passage. *14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.* What He wants of you is for you to be to others like He is to you. (Matthew 7:12) Will you consciously pass on His love? Will you serve your brothers and sisters and the lost that He brings your way? (Hebrews 13:16) Will you be to others a picture of His love and humble service? Will you pass on the grace, forgiveness, love and service that you have abundantly received? You now have a clearer knowledge of God and His attributes. Will it make you a better Christian?

**Commented [notes26]:** 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, Titus 3:5 (NIV)

**Commented [notes27]:** 12 So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. Matt 7:12 (NIV)

**Commented [notes28]:** 16 And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Heb 13:16 (NIV)