



# Washing the Disciples' Feet

## Lesson Overview

1. Knowing Our Time of Death
2. Watch a Video

Watch John 13:1-38 at [bit.ly/GCEDGospelOfJohn](http://bit.ly/GCEDGospelOfJohn) from 1hr 51min 14sec to 2hr 00min 8sec (8min 54sec).

3. Discuss

Choose questions for discussion.

### New Church Concept The Love of Self

If you wish to be led by the Divine Providence use prudence as a servant does who faithfully dispenses the goods of his or her master.... Prudence itself appears to people as their own; and it is believed to be their own so long as they keep shut up within them the deadliest enemy of God and the Divine Providence, the love of self. This dwells in the interiors of every person from birth; if you do not recognize it...it dwells securely, and guards the door lest the person should open it, and it should thus be cast out by the Lord. People open this door by shunning, as of themselves, evils as sins, with the acknowledgment that they do so from the Lord. This is the prudence with which the Divine Providence acts as one. *Divine Providence* 210

## FaithBuilder 3 | Lesson 23 | Gospel of John

### Knowing Our Time of Death

1. Human experience tells us we will die. Can a person know with certainty how and when this will happen?
2. How could knowing when you will die change your life?
3. What would you do differently if you knew you were going to die tomorrow?
4. Jesus knew He would die as a young man and predicted how He would die. When He shared this with His disciples, they struggled to believe it. Did knowing this change Jesus' life? Or His ministry? Support your answer.

### Watch a Video

Watch John 13:1-38, Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet, from *The Life of Jesus . English . Official Full HD Movie*, at [bit.ly/GCEDGospelOfJohn](http://bit.ly/GCEDGospelOfJohn). (Enter link in the web browser bar at the top of your screen.) **Start at 1hr 51min 14sec. Watch to 2hr 00min 8sec; 8min 54sec.**

### Discuss

Choose questions for discussion.

1. What personal qualities should a leader have? Give an example of someone who is a great leader—either someone you know personally, or someone you have heard about. What makes that person a great leader?
2. What aspect of leadership did Jesus' act of washing His disciples' feet teach the disciples?
3. Can a person be a leader if they do not want to serve to others?
4. Why would the disciples have been shocked that the Lord, their King, knelt to wash their feet? Have you been surprised by an act of service you didn't expect? Have you surprised someone with an unexpected act of service?
5. How does Jesus' act illustrate the saying, "actions speak louder than words?" Would *telling* His disciples to serve others have conveyed the same message?
6. How is "walking the walk" different from "talking the talk?"
7. Can people be saved without putting into practice the true ideas they know?
8. By the act of washing the disciples' feet Jesus showed unconditional love. He washed Judas' feet even though He knew what was in Judas' heart. What does this say about how we are to treat people from all walks of life?
9. Why did Peter resist the Lord washing his feet?

10. We don't practice foot washing today, but there are ways in which we can "wash away" others' faults. For example, we can hear words of anger but overlook them; we can see errors but not judge on account of them. What are some practical ways in which we can participate in the process of helping a person become cleaner?
11. Who is greater? The person whose feet are being washed? Or the person washing their feet?
12. As the meal ended we learned "the devil" had been put into "the heart of Judas Iscariot...to betray Him." (John 13:2). Later we learned Satan had "entered" Judas. "The devil" and "Satan" enter us too. The devil is the *evil desires that enter our hearts* and Satan is the *false ideas that enter our minds*. What control do we have over evil desires that enter our hearts? How does this change once we decide to justify our evil desires or act on them?
13. Have you ever felt bitter or resentful about how something worked out or didn't work out for you? This part of us is like Judas betraying the Lord.
14. Jesus tells His disciples He is "going to the Father." How did Jesus' relationship with His Father change during Jesus' life on earth?
15. By the end of His life on earth Jesus conquered the forces of hell that had attacked Him, and became completely Divine. Our process of regeneration is similar to Jesus' process of glorification—but with key differences. He conquered all evil and became Divine. Can we ever become completely perfect—either here on earth or in heaven?
16. Jesus said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." How is this different from loving our neighbor as our self in the Ten Commandments?

### Summary taken from *The Gospel of John* by Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman

(unpublished manuscript)

Washing someone's feet represents the unwillingness to overlook faults. We may notice that someone's feet are dirty, but we do not condemn them; we may see someone is in error but we do not judge them. We simply participate in the process of helping them get washed up, no matter how far they may have strayed, and no matter what kind of unclean paths they may have trodden.

If is different, however, when Jesus washes our feet. Note the words, "Unless I wash your feet." Representatively, this means that we must go directly to God and examine ourselves in the light of His Word. We need to see for ourselves whether a contemplated action is motivated by a sincere desire to serve others, or whether it is motivated by selfish concerns. When we do this consistently, examining our motives in the light of the Word, we get to the point where we act from His love. It is at this point that we can act—to let God guide our footsteps into the ways of peace. This is why Jesus says, "unless I wash your feet, you have no part in Me." Our "feet" correspond to the outermost actions of our lives—the part of us that touches the earth on a regular basis.

To wash the feet was an office of charity, as meaning not to reflect on the evils of another; and it was also an office of humility, as meaning to cleanse another from evils as from impurities. *Arcana Coelestia* 3147.8

Those who love their neighbor observe what is good, and if they see anything evil and false, they excuse it, and if they can, try to amend it in the person.... They scarcely see the evil of another, but observe all the person's goods and truths, and put a good interpretation on what is evil and false. Such are the angels, which they have from the Lord, who bends all evil into good. *Arcana Coelestia* 1079

The phrase 'to wash' signifies to be purified from evils and falsities, which is to be regenerated, therefore 'he that has bathed' signifies he that has been purified or regenerated in respect to the spiritual, which is the good of love and the truth of doctrine. These must first be received in the memory and understanding, that is, must be acknowledged. '*Needs not save to wash his feet'* signifies that it is the natural or external which must be purified or regenerated. This is done by a life according to the precepts of love and faith, that is, according to the goods and truths and doctrine from the Word. To the extent that this is done, the person is purified or regenerated; for to live according to the goods and truths of doctrine from the Word is to will them and so to do them, which is the same as to be affected by them and to love them.... This is why it is said that then 'the whole man is clean.' *Arcana Coelestia* 666