

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# The DEVO

FEBRUARY 10 - 14, 2020

Questions

FOR JESUS

SERMON SERIES

JANUARY 5 - FEBRUARY 23

# MONDAY

**John 13:1-17; Luke 22:24-30; Matthew 20:16**

This week's devo features Peter's question to Jesus on the eve before His crucifixion: "Are you going to wash my feet?" Let's open with some context.

"As the Lord enters the Upper Room with His disciples, it is a somber and crucial hour in His ministry. The shadow of the cross looms larger and darker over His pathway. The disciples are nervous and tense as they see the growing opposition of the authorities to Jesus and the evident plot to do away with Him. ... Jesus knew the time was short; His hour of departure was at hand. ... He was moved by an overwhelming sense of love for His disciples. ... [He knew also that] the devil, the enemy, is at work, closing in. ... Jesus took off His outer garments, leaving Himself with nothing but the loincloth of a slave, and began to wash the feet of the disciples. ... In those days it was customary for a servant to wash the feet of anyone entering a house from the dusty roads.

"... Luke [22 indicates that], as Jesus was about to institute the Lord's Supper, the disciples began to argue among themselves who was the greatest. This probably began as they debated who would sit next to Jesus. ... Jesus waited until they were all reclining around the table, no one having offered to do the foot washing. Without a word He rose, took off His garments (reducing Himself to the position of a slave), and, kneeling in front of each disciple in turn ... washed their feet and dried them with a towel. They were [humbled], stunned, and embarrassed." (Ray Stedman)

"Any of the disciples would have gladly washed Jesus' feet. But they could not wash His without having to be available to wash the others' feet, and that would have been an intolerable admission of inferiority among their fellow competitors for the top positions in the disciples' hierarchy. So, no one's feet got washed (until Jesus did it)!" (Jon Courson)

Where is Jesus calling you to "wash others' feet" in His name and for God's glory? Are you too lofty—prouder than God the Son Himself—to respond faithfully?

## QUESTIONS

Why might Jesus have felt some urgency to wash His disciples' feet?  
What activities and attitudes among the disciples made this action even more impactful?

## PRAYERS FOR POMONA HOPE

Pray for Pomona Hope, whose mission is to work towards transforming the city where all people can find a hope for the future.

# TUESDAY

**John 13:6-7; Acts 2:22-36**

Peter was the apostle with an advanced case of “foot-in-mouth” disease. In John 13 Peter initially resisted Jesus’ foot-washing, then misguidedly requested a greater cleansing. After Jesus earlier commended Peter for his Spirit-prompted “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*” answer responding to Jesus’ “*Who do you say that I am?*” (Matthew 16:15-16), Peter later foolishly rebuked Jesus as the Lord prophesied regarding His forthcoming crucifixion (Matthew 16:23).

Peter asked to make tents for Jesus, Moses and Elijah—as if these two were Christ’s peers—at the Mount of the Transfiguration. The Father then scolded Peter from above, “*This is my beloved Son ... listen to Him*” (Matthew 17:4-5) Ouch—a verbal reprimand issuing directly from heaven! This Apostle, in a “what’s in it for me?” mode, earlier whined to Jesus, “*We have left everything to follow You*” (Luke 18:28). Peter previously started sinking into the Sea of Galilee after attempting to join the Lord in walking upon the water (Matthew 14). Later, Peter denied Jesus three times near the false trials by the Jews and then fled (Matthew 26:69-75). Then he resumed a fisherman’s life before Jesus reinstated him (John 21).

So, when Jesus stated, “*What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand*” (John 13:6-7), He was talking to the right guy. Lest we be too tough on Peter, however, remember that he,

like the other disciples and first century Jews, expected an insurrectionist Messiah who would free Israel from Roman occupation. The apostles seemingly jockeyed for position accordingly—mistakenly anticipating Jesus’ future political ascent—hinted at in yesterday’s Luke 22 reading.

When did Peter and the others come to understand Jesus’ mission and ways more fully? Peter’s powerful sermon in Acts 2, given after the Holy Spirit had come upon them, portrays this formerly unsteady fisherman having become an effective witness for the Gospel.

Peter’s example is most encouraging, as I am sometimes more brash and direct than discretion would advise. I have so much more to learn, as Peter did. “*Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth*” (Psalm 86:11).

## QUESTIONS

What gaffe came from Peter as Jesus approached him to wash his feet? Which of Peter’s other famous misunderstandings or blunders do you find most interesting?

## PRAYERS FOR POMONA HOPE

Pray for Pomona Hope’s Associate Student Body, a group of dedicated high school students who are committed to planning events throughout the year for Pomona Hope’s community as a way of bringing people together to share and encourage one another.

# WEDNESDAY

**John 13:8; Matthew 7:21-23; Hosea 8:2-4**

Jesus made a curious statement to Peter amidst their foot-washing dialog: *“If I do not wash you, you have no share with Me”* (John 13:8). Tomorrow we’ll discuss the ongoing meaning for Christians. For now, however, let’s consider this statement in light of today’s Matthew and Hosea readings.

There are two broad camps of those who appeal to Jesus—*“Lord, Lord”*—while not knowing the true Savior. I’m highly attuned to the first group, having been in it for 39 of my 64 years: *“almost Christians,”* nominal believers, *“Sunday Christians”* or *“Easter-Christmas Christians”* and/or those who are *“culturally Christian”* but haven’t surrendered to nor follow Christ.

*“There can be no doubt our Lord referred, in the first place, to a certain class of superficial externalists who said ‘Lord, Lord,’ and there their religion ended. ... [Some] who say ‘Lord, Lord,’ and yet are not saved, are those who regard religion as a very excellent thing for quieting their conscience, but who do not look upon it as a practical influence which is to affect their lives and to influence their conduct. ... [Another] is the Sunday Christian ... [those who] keep their piety folded up and put away with their best clothes, and they only give it an airing on [Sunday].”*  
(C.H. Spurgeon)

The second camp, unknowingly facing judgment, are self-labeled *“Christian”* groups that are actually cults. These defer to other authoritative sources along with the Bible, giving added religious texts *“equal to or greater than”* weight vis-à-vis true Scripture. They ignore the warning, *“Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it”* (Deuteronomy 12:32). Moreover, they deny the supreme deity of Christ; their *“Jesus”* is a created being who is *“my savior”* (while merely a man or lesser god) and *“one chosen by God”* (but less than God Himself). Jesus’ chilling warning to these: *“I never knew you; depart from Me”* (Matthew 7:23).

Whom do you know who might blindly cry, at times, *“Lord, Lord”* as apparent *“cultural Christians”* or cultists? How can you help them see abundant life and peace knowable only in God the Son?

## QUESTIONS

What types of people comprise the groups who might declare, *“Lord, Lord”* without truly knowing Jesus Christ? What are two of the distinctive features of *“cults”* vs. true Christianity?

## PRAYERS FOR POMONA HOPE

Pray for Pomona Hope’s staff, interns and volunteers. They are connecting regularly with the city’s students and families and creating relationships with those in challenging circumstances.

# THURSDAY

**John 13:6-11; Psalm 51:1-12**

One thing I've found useful in Bible study is learning more about the differences between Jewish writing styles—more “Eastern”—versus the “Western” styles familiar to most of us. Hebrew is a particularly concrete language with fewer abstractions than Greek and other Western languages. Ancient Jewish expression tended to focus more upon the senses and relationships rather than time sequences and concepts.

In washing His disciples' feet, Jesus clearly demonstrated His Servant's heart and provided an example. Conceptually, however, He also illustrated the believers' need for ongoing spiritual “washing,” the process called *sanctification*. Sanctification—setting something apart for proper use or “making it holy”—was known to Israel, going all of the way back to the Egyptian Exodus: “consecrate to Me every firstborn male” (Exodus 13:2). However, as with many things Jesus did and taught, Peter struggled—as I can also—to grasp the fullness of His methods and aims.

“Salvation is a one-time act of justification by faith, but the lifelong process of sanctification is one of washing from the stain of sin we experience as we walk through the world. ... When we come to Christ for the washing of our sins, we can be sure that it is permanent and complete. ... Our sin has been exchanged for the perfect righteousness

of Christ on the cross (2 Corinthians 5:21). ... [However] the continual washing of sanctification (enabling believers' growth into increasing Christ-likeness) is done by the [ongoing] power of the Holy Spirit.” (GotQuestions.org)

Jesus' foot-washing example was a lesson in servanthood, but also illustrated His followers' need for ongoing “cleansing” to experience God's best. We do so by “washing of water by the Word (of God)” (Ephesians 5:25)—Bible study and related reflection, thereby opening ourselves to the Holy Spirit's teaching. Prayer also enables sanctification; heartfelt repentance—asking for God's forgiveness—restores full relationship with Him. Just as surgeons use sanitary scalpels, we're most useful to God when we are “cleansed” and available.

How fully and frequently do you “wash” spiritually? How's your prayer life? Is your Bible study where it should be? If you answer, “Less than ideal,” ask the Spirit's help. His mercies are new every day!

## QUESTIONS

What was foot-washing illustrative of in the ongoing life of believers?  
What are some of the ways in which Christians are “washed” spiritually?

## PRAYERS FOR POMONA HOPE

Pray for Pomona Hope's after-school program, where staff and volunteers meet with students for homework assistance, arts, technology education, workshops, and college prep training.

# FRIDAY

**John 13:14-17; Mark 10:42-45; Philippians 2:5-9**

The more we know Scripture, the greater the danger of skipping over “buried treasures” within best-known passages. The story of Jesus washing feet at the Last Supper presents such risks. At one level, an apt summary indicates that “as [Jesus’] followers, we are to emulate Him, serving one another in lowliness of heart and mind, seeking to build one another up in humility and love. ... True greatness in His kingdom is attained by those with a servant’s heart.” (GotQuestions.org)

However, there may be something even deeper occurring in this event. Jesus’ washing feet transcended simply an excellent idea and example for us to follow. Perhaps in these few moments and actions, the serving Savior also illustrated the meaning of life, God’s purpose for us, and the secret to joy and abundant life.

Per the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.” So, the short answer to the sarcastic “What’s the meaning of life?” question is, simply, “Glorify God.” Such an answer, however, is gibberish to unbelievers and vague even to many Christians. The Harvest Crusade’s mission gets closer, stating more concretely: “Knowing God and making Him known.” Jesus, however, “put shoe leather” on this via His example, making it even more tangible: we please God most, experiencing truest joy, when we serve others

lovingly and sacrificially in His name. Why? Because God created us to be servants in loving relationship with Him; servanthood was likewise central to Jesus’ first coming mission.

If you google “serving” and “happiness,” links to sites with testimonies and other content regarding their interrelationship will appear. Many of these sites are very secular—e.g., Time.com, psychologytoday.com, YouTube.com, etc. Even worldly sources distant from Christianity grasp the fulfillment stemming from sacrificial service.

Read Jon Courson’s related quote: “Just as the branch that bears the most fruit bows the lowest, the one who’s really fruitful in the things of Jesus Christ will bow the lowest to serve others.” Ever feel low or self-pitying? Want to feel closer to God and His joy? Serve another lovingly in Jesus’ name. Then repeat. Then repeat again. And again.

## QUESTIONS

How was Jesus’ act of washing His disciples’ feet more than just “a good idea”? What does “glorifying God” mean to you? What’s the relationship between godly service and sustainable joy?

## PRAYERS FOR POMONA HOPE

Pray for the city of Pomona where many families are facing difficult circumstances every day, such as addiction, mental illness and unemployment.

## Sources

- Ray Stedman's quotes can be found at <https://www.raystedman.org/new-testament/john/servant-authority>
- Jon Courson's quotes are from *Jon Courson's APPLICATION COMMENTARY* (New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003).
- C.H. Spurgeon's quotes can be found at the Precept Austin site at [https://www.preceptaustin.org/matthew\\_721](https://www.preceptaustin.org/matthew_721)
- GotQuestions.org quotes are from <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-washing-feet.html>.
- The *Westminster Shorter Catechism* quote can be found at <http://www.apuritansmind.com/westminster-standards/shorter-catechism/>.
- The Harvest Crusade's mission statement is from <https://harvest.org/about/>

