

John: 13.1-17-31-35

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ²The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, ⁴got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. ⁵Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. ⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." ⁸Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." ¹¹For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean." ¹²After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. ¹⁴So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. ¹⁷If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

³¹When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³²If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot

come.’ 34I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. 35By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Sermon

Followers of an ancient Greek philosopher guru, a rabbi, or a zen master, share one thing in common. They are learning to live like their master lives and to embody the master’s teachings.

Jesus invites his followers into a life that Emerson Powery describes as driven by love. We began the Lenten season by talking about the heart as the centre of intention and choosing. Love involves choosing. Consider that Jesus serves Judas, knowing the treachery that lurks in the heart of the one who kept the common purse.

Simon Peter’s motivations aren’t entirely pure either. As a disciple, Peter often gets part of the picture and then jumps to conclusions that don’t really fit. When Jesus washes his feet, Peter gets it right that a master is acting like a servant. Then he goes a bit off the rails. Peter tries to make the foot washing about something else (remember this is the guy who suggested building booths on the mountainside when Jesus was transfigured). Peter says wash “all of me”. This isn’t an expression of need but of ambition- Peter is asking a form of baptism that would identify him one who would be at Jesus’ right hand.

The teacher reminds us that we do what we do because we love. The mission statement at St. Matthew’s begins with the words, “in response to God’s love.” In response to God’s love we strive to act as Jesus acts, to care about what Jesus cares about.

Jesus washes feet because he loves his people—Jesus does what’s needed.

Before people could eat together, feet that walked dusty roads and near open sewers needed to be washed...Far from a power play or political ploy, Jesus sees to the health and safety of his people.

We can follow Jesus's ethic of love. There are lots of ways we serve that are like washing feet. We see what's needed. We look after the daily needs of others for food, clean water, safe lodging, medicine, and necessities to make it day to day.

In a few minutes Dianne is going to lead us in a meditation about serving... we will reflect on how we are the hands and feet of Jesus in the world now. You will receive lotion to put on (we're seeing to your health and safety by having you self administer). We will reflect together on the ways we serve others and that might remind us of the ways others have cared for us.

This meditation validates your serving and sets our intentions to continue in the ways of Jesus. We serve because that's what Jesus does. We love because that's what Jesus does.

We can't live whole lives of love and service from our own strength or goodness alone. As the writer of first John reminds us, we love because God loved us first.