

LOVING LIKE JESUS - moving towards the climax.

SLIDE 1 - 50 years ago Apollo 13 flew to the moon but an explosion occurred and they told their HQ, “we have a problem.” This struck me as a similar comment any one of the disciples could have said about the events in the upper room of John 13. **“All things were under Jesus’ power.”** (John 13:3)

SLIDE 2 - Jesus and his disciples were on their way to Jerusalem and it was going to be a shock. (John 12). A great crowd of the Jews had come to the Passover Feast (the memorial meal to God’s deliverance of the Jews out of slavery in Egypt) so they prepared to welcome him. On his way into the city, Jesus stopped and cried because many had rejected God and worshiped themselves and their own ideas. **“God is not willing that any should perish,”** so he prayed for God’s mercy and their repentance. He loved them but would they listen ? The crowd met him with palm branches calling him king. (Luke 19:41, 22:39-46, John 2:23-25, 2 Peter 3:9)

Jesus listened carefully to what the people were saying about life. The violent Roman army and knew what was going on. Some Jews tried to force him to be king of an army and drive the conquering Romans out of Israel. (John:6:15) Jesus would be handy in raising dead soldiers on the battlefield, since he had done that to Lazarus. He rode a donkey (not a war horse) to get across his message. As a **wise Messiah**, they wanted him to rule like victorious King David with a sword. But they got it all wrong. God would rule in love and do things his way as sovereign Lord. Jesus was training the disciples to love; mentioned 31 times in John 13-17. **“All things were in Jesus’ hands** and he showed the disciples **the full extent of his love.”** (John 3:1-3)

SLIDE 3 - Jesus had already arranged the house where they were going to celebrate the Passover. He said to Peter and John, “Go and prepare the meal for us that we may eat it.” He gave them the directions and they made preparations in an upper room. Jesus said to them all, “**I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.**” (Luke 22:15) But before they sat down to eat the meal, James and John began arguing with the other disciples as to **who was going to be the greatest** among them. They had been influenced by the world and thought Jesus was going to set up his kingdom. Jesus resolved this dispute by declaring “The leader is to be the one that serves...**I came not to be served but to serve.**” (Mark 10:45, Luke 22:24-27)

As the disciples sat down to eat the Passover meal **there was no slave to wash their hot, dry, dusty and smelly feet.** The disciples thought they were too important to do that task because only the lowest slave washed the feet of others. The water and towel were present but no one wanted to do the dirty work. They expected Jesus to take over the government and they would be his cabinet - prime minister, treasurer, defense minister, etc. Washing feet was too low a job for them. They were wrong but Jesus patiently loved them and was willing to forgive them. **Sadly they did not even offer to wash the Lord Jesus’ feet.** Were they arrogant? They had a major problem.

SLIDE 4 - Then to their horror, **King Jesus** rose, took off his robe, washed and wiped their feet with a towel. This was an illustration or parable of the glorious sacrificial love of Jesus. They were all embarrassed and **Peter protested but did nothing.** The drudgery of washing the feet of 12 men took a long time. Already for three years, Jesus had lived a life of LOVE before them and taught them the TRUTH. But they had their own agenda and did not listen. So Jesus would have to teach them again. He had told them that he were going to be crucified but they dismissed his prophetic words. Jesus was patient and persisted. He told them he was going to rise from the grave but it just went over their heads. They had a major problem, Was it called ‘blocked ears’? (John 13:4-11, Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:34)

SLIDE 5 - Jesus questioned them, **“Do you understand what I have done for you?”** (John 13:12) This is not just a matter of water and a towel but was a concrete word from God, revealing his greater-than-the-universe love. It is a symbol of God’s supreme love that was to take place within the next 24 hours on the cross. The disciples did not grasp the importance of what he had done. They seemed to be worshiping their idea of an earthly kingdom with ambitions of grandeur. Where did Jesus fit into this? Were they using him for their personal goal of glory? Jesus patiently loved them. **“I am your Lord and Teacher.”** It seems they wanted to be lord. But God had created them to glorify him and they were not facing reality. They were just thinking of the small kingdom of Israel when God had the whole world in mind. Jesus commanded them, **“Do as I have done unto you.”** Jesus promised that if they obeyed him, their lives would be flooded with joyous blessing. (John 13:12-17, Isaiah 43:7, 21)

SLIDE 6 - While they were eating this tasty roast lamb meal with spices, Jesus dropped **a bomb shell**. He said, “The betrayer who shares my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.” (Psalm 41:9) This quotation of the Bible, hit the disciples like a bolt of lightning and left them paralysed. Jesus said, **“I am telling you now ... so that you will know I AM.** (the Son of God - John 8:58-59)” He had lovingly washed Judas’ feet and offered him forgiveness by grace, symbolized in the bread and the cup. Jesus had lovingly seated him in a **place of honour** on his left hand side as official treasurer. Now the **Son of God demonstrated the depth of his love** for Judas by giving to him a choice piece of the meal. Instead of responding to Jesus’ love, Judas preferred money and **“Satan entered into him.”** He rose, opened the door and went out into the dark night. It was spiritually dark in Judas’ heart. (John 13:18-29)

After this dark moment, Peter said, **“I will lay down my life for you.”** He had no idea how weak he was. Jesus questioned, “Will you really lay down you life for me? I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, **you will deny me three times... Do not let you hearts be troubled, trust in God and trust also in me.”** (READ - John 13:36-14:1) They had a leadership problem. It fact we note that James and John were rebuked by Jesus over their ambition, then Judas the treasurer betrayed Jesus and Peter is about to disown him. Later when Peter wrote the Gospel of Mark, he dictated these words to John Mark - **“Everyone deserted Jesus and fled.”** (Mark 14:50) All Jesus’ office bearers blew it, all the disciples fled and yet Jesus patiently goes on loving them. **Is this the end of Christ’s mission - it looked like a total failure.**

Jesus came to do God's will and is **POSITIVE**, refused to give up and forgives them. His long suffering is eternal and he will not boot anyone out. (Philippians 1:6, John 6:37)

SLIDE 7 - "I give you a new commandment that you love one another as I have loved you." (John 13:12-17, 34) Jesus is looking into the future not at their past and present failures. The disciples had just seen the Almighty Creator King of the universe bow before them and in humble love served them just like the lowest slave. Now Jesus told them to wash each others' feet just as he had done to them. They were to forgive their failed leaders - Peter, James and John. **They had a lot to learn and we never stop learning.** Jesus had just promised them super abundant blessing and joy if they did what he had told them. Their future love is vitally important because their world wide mission depends upon it. **"Everyone will know you are my disciples if you love one another."** Love is a witness. This simple washing of feet was a loving illustration of the coming cross. It was sacrificial servant-type love for God and others. This is evangelism. (John 13:34-35, Luke 22:24)

SLIDE 8 - The horrible crucifixion occurred during which the women did not desert Jesus. As he bore the sin of the world, he screamed in agony at the wrath of God and his separation from his eternal Father God, who was too holy to even look at sin. Jesus died our hell and **his world-wide mission hit rock bottom.** It appeared that he was a failure. The remnants of his disciples were a terrified band of men hiding behind locked doors. **Jesus then rose from the grave and everything changed.** They saw things differently and were empowered by the Holy Spirit. If Jesus could conquer death, resolve sin and conquer the evil world. He said, **"Be at peace - I have overcome the world."** (John 16:33) These forgiven men then went out into the world and did the impossible, planting a fellowship of the family of God. This grew in the most barren soil and kept on reproducing.

SLIDE 9 - Wash one another's feet.

