

**TRINITY BIBLE CHURCH
MAUNDY THURSDAY – 2014
JOHN 13
APRIL 17, 2014
REV. ROY HERMAN**

GOOD EVENING AND WELCOME, TRINITY CHURCH AND GUESTS!

SOME 3500 YEARS AGO, AS RECORDED IN EXODUS CHAPTER 12, GOD COMMANDED HIS CHILDREN TO COMMEMORATE AND HONOR “THE PASSOVER” — “PESACH” AND IT WAS TO BE CELEBRATED, ANNUALLY. AND THIS COMMAND AND TRADITION HAS BEEN FOLLOWED EVER SINCE. IT IS THE PASSOVER DINNER AND SERVICE, COMMONLY CALLED THE PASSOVER SEDER!

IN MODERN TIMES, TRADITIONAL JEWISH FAMILIES, AS WAS MINE, CONDUCTED THE SEDER IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE HAGGADAH — THE PRAYER BOOK AND ORDER OF SERVICE. AFTER THE PRAYERS OVER THE FOOD AND THE PROCLAMATION AND INVITATION, THE FAMILY ELDER CALLS UPON THE YOUNGEST BOY TO ASK A QUESTION, FIRST IN HEBREW AND THEN ENGLISH — HE RECITES:

**MA NISHTANAH HA-LAILAH HA-ZEH MI-KOL HA-LEILOT?
WHY IS THIS NIGHT DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER NIGHTS?**

YES, THE PASSOVER NIGHT IS DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER NIGHTS! BUT TONIGHT, WE CELEBRATE MAUNDY THURSDAY, A VERY SPECIAL PASSOVER NIGHT — A ONE TIME EVENT THAT HOLDS GREAT SIGNIFICANCE FOR BORN-AGAIN BELIEVERS. IT IS WHAT WE CALL, THE LAST SUPPER!

TONIGHT, WE WILL RECOUNT THE EVENTS OF THIS NIGHT, AS PRESENTED IN JOHN CHAPTER 13 AND ANSWER THE QUESTION:

**MA NISHTANAH HA-LAILAH HA-ZEH MI-KOL HA-LEILOT?
WHY IS THIS NIGHT DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER NIGHTS?**

WHILE TIME DOES NOT ALLOW ME TO EXPOSIT THE ENTIRE TEXT, I WILL FOCUS ON VERSES 4-5 AND 12-17. BUT FIRST, LET ME SUMMARIZE ALL THE EVENTS OF THE “LAST SUPPER” THAT MAKE “THIS NIGHT DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER NIGHTS!”

VERSE 1: JESUS KNEW THAT HIS TIME HAS COME TO LEAVE THIS WORLD AND SHOWED HIS DISCIPLES THE FULL EXTEND OF HIS LOVE.

VERSE 3: JUDAS WAS PROMPTED BY THE DEVIL TO BETRAY JESUS.

VERSES 4-17: JESUS WASHES THE FEET OF HIS DISCIPLES, WHICH WE WILL DISCUSS FURTHER IN A MOMENT.

VERSES 18-20: JESUS DECLARES THAT JUDAS’ DECEIT FULFILLS THE SCRIPTURE AND THAT HE, JESUS, AGAIN PROCLAIMS THAT HE HAS BEEN SENT BY THE FATHER.

VERSES 21-30: JESUS IDENTIFIES JUDAS AS THE ONE WHO WILL BETRAY HIM.

VERSES 31-33: JESUS TELLS HIS DISCIPLES THAT HE IS GOING AND THAT THEY CANNOT COME WITH HIM.

VERSES 34-35: JESUS SAYS: “A NEW COMMAND I GIVE YOU: LOVE ONE ANOTHER. AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, SO YOU MUST LOVE ONE ANOTHER. BY THIS EVERYONE WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES, IF YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER.”

AND VERSES 36-38: PETER IS TOLD THAT HE WILL DISOWN JESUS THREE TIMES BEFORE THE ROOSTER CROWS.

BACK TO OUR KEY VERSES FOR TONIGHT, VERSES 4-5 AND 12-17!

JOHN RECALLS IN VERSES 4-5: (4) REFERRING TO JESUS, HE “GOT UP FROM SUPPER, AND LAID ASIDE HIS GARMENTS; AND TAKING A TOWEL, HE GIRDED HIMSELF. (5) THEN HE Poured WATER INTO THE BASIN, AND BEGAN TO WASH THE DISCIPLES’ FEET AND TO WIPE THEM WITH THE TOWEL WITH WHICH HE WAS GIRDED.”

THEN IN VERSES 12-17, JOHN WRITES: (12) “SO WHEN HE HAD WASHED THEIR FEET, AND TAKEN HIS GARMENTS AND RECLINED AT THE TABLE AGAIN, HE SAID TO THEM, “DO YOU KNOW WHAT I HAVE DONE TO YOU? (13) YOU CALL ME TEACHER AND LORD; AND YOU ARE RIGHT, FOR SO I AM. (14) IF I THEN, THE LORD AND THE TEACHER, WASHED YOUR FEET, YOU ALSO OUGHT TO WASH ONE ANOTHER’S FEET. (15) FOR I GAVE YOU AN EXAMPLE THAT YOU ALSO SHOULD DO AS I DID TO YOU. (16) TRULY, TRULY, I SAY TO YOU, A SLAVE IS NOT GREATER THAN HIS MASTER, NOR IS ONE WHO IS SENT GREATER THAN THE ONE WHO SENT HIM. (17) IF YOU KNOW THESE THINGS, YOU ARE BLESSED IF YOU DO THEM.”

THE DISCIPLES WERE UNDOUBTEDLY SHOCKED AND AMAZED WHEN JESUS TOOK UP THE BASIN AND THE TOWEL AND BEGAN TO WASH THEIR FEET. AFTER ALL, HE WAS THEIR MASTER — HE WAS THEIR LORD — HE WAS THEIR RABBI! YOU SEE, FOOT WASHING WAS NOT SOMETHING THAT PEOPLE OF STATURE DID — IT WAS SOMETHING THAT SERVANTS DID!

WE KNOW THAT IN THE DAYS OF JESUS, FOOT WASHING WAS DONE BY THE SERVANTS OF ONE’S HOUSEHOLD, AND IT WASN’T EXACTLY A GLAMOROUS JOB. PEOPLE’S FEET GOT REALLY DRY AND DIRTY AND CALLOUSED AND CRACKED WHEN THEY WALK AROUND FOR MILES WEARING SANDALS. TO HAVE A GUEST’S FEET WASHED WAS AN ACT OF HOSPITALITY AND CARE. AND FOR THE ONE WHO ACTUALLY WASHED THE FEET, IT WAS AN ACT OF SERVITUDE AND HUMILITY. NO WONDER SIMON PETER TOLD JESUS, “YOU WILL NEVER WASH MY FEET.” NOT JESUS — NOT HIS MASTER — NOT EVER! STILL, THERE JESUS WAS WITH HIS WASH BASIN AND HIS TOWEL KNEELING IN FRONT OF THEM AND ONE BY ONE WASHING THEIR FEET, CALLUSES AND ALL.

WHEN HE WAS DONE, HE TOLD THEM WHY. HE SAID, “I’M SETTING AN EXAMPLE FOR YOU,”. “YOU ALSO SHOULD DO WHAT I HAVE DONE TO YOU.” IN THAT MOMENT, I WONDER IF THE DISCIPLES REALLY ‘GOT IT’. THEY HAD BEEN HAND-SELECTED BY JESUS FROM THE CROWDS. HE HAD CALLED THEM FROM THE SMELLY DREGS OF FARMS AND BOAT DOCKS AND GAVE NEW MEANINGS TO THEIR LIVES. WITH HIM, THEY WERE SOMETHING SPECIAL. HE HAD ELEVATED THEM ABOVE THE PLOW AND THE FISHING NET — OR SO IT SEEMED.

THE DISCIPLES WERE SPECIAL! JESUS, HOWEVER, DID NOT CALL THEM FROM THE CROWDS OF FARMERS AND FISHERMEN SO THAT THEY WOULD ENJOY A GREATER STATUS.

JESUS CALLED THEM TO SERVE, TO CARRY ON HIS MINISTRY OF LOVING PEOPLE AFTER HE DEPARTED. AND WE CAN ALMOST HEAR THE DISCIPLES ASKING, "WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE WE GOING TO DO?"

I THINK THAT JESUS' REAL MESSAGE TO HIS DISCIPLES WAS THAT HE WAS PREPARING THEM FOR A TIME WHEN HE WILL NO LONGER BE WITH THEM, AND THEY WILL BE THE ONES DOING MINISTRY. THEY WILL BE THE ONES STANDING IN FRONT OF THE CROWDS OF PEOPLE, STARING RIGHT INTO THE FACES OF SINNERS OF ALL SHAPES AND SIZES, ALL SUFFERING FROM THEIR OWN BROKENNESS AND LONGING TO BE WHOLE PEOPLE. THE DISCIPLES WITHOUT JESUS WILL HAVE PLENTY OF THOSE "WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE WE GOING TO DO?" MOMENTS! BUT THEN THEY WILL REMEMBER JESUS, WITH HIS WASH BASIN AND TOWEL. THEY WILL REMEMBER HIS EXAMPLE OF HOW HE EXPECTS THEM TO TREAT OTHER PEOPLE. IT'S LIKE HE'S SAYING, "SEE? IT'S SIMPLE. I'M SENDING YOU OUT INTO THE WORLD, INTO THOSE CROWDS OF PEOPLE FROM WHOM I CALLED YOU. YOUR JOB? JUST LOVE THEM!" JUST AS IT IS OURS!

FROM THE TEXT, IT IS VERY CLEAR THAT JESUS AND HIS WORDS GAVE TO HIS DISCIPLES AND, JUST AS IMPORTANTLY, TO US, A STANDARD TO LIVE BY.

WHEN JESUS STOOPED TO WASH HIS DISCIPLES' FEET HE SHOWED US SEVERAL IMPORTANT TRUTHS ABOUT SERVING OTHERS AND THE PRIORITY OF SERVING OTHERS!

LISTEN, WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU KNEW YOU WOULD DIE IN ABOUT 12 HOURS? WOULD YOU WANT TO BE ALONE IN PRAYER OR RECORD SOME FINAL THOUGHTS? WOULD YOU SPEND TIME WITH THOSE YOU LOVED? WHAT WOULD YOU WANT TO EMPHASIZE? WOULD YOU SHARE RECIPES OR GARDENING TIPS? OR WOULD YOU FOCUS ON WHAT'S IMPORTANT — THE GOSPEL?

VERSE 1 SAYS THAT JESUS KNEW THAT THE TIME HAD COME FOR HIM TO LEAVE THIS WORLD AND SO HE TOOK OFF HIS CLOAK PUT A TOWEL AROUND HIS WAIST AND WASHED THE DIRTY FEET OF HIS DISCIPLES. WHO'S GOING TO WASTE TIME ON THAT WHEN THE END IS SO NEAR? JESUS! WHY? BECAUSE HE WANTED TO SHOW THEM JUST HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO HUMBLY SERVE ONE ANOTHER.

PHILIPPIANS 2:3-8 TELLS US THAT WE SHOULD "DO NOTHING OUT OF SELFISH AMBITION OR VAIN CONCEIT, BUT IN HUMILITY CONSIDER OTHERS BETTER THAN YOURSELVES. EACH OF YOU SHOULD LOOK NOT ONLY TO YOUR OWN INTERESTS, BUT ALSO TO THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS. YOUR ATTITUDE SHOULD BE THE SAME AS THAT OF CHRIST JESUS: WHO, BEING IN VERY NATURE GOD, DID NOT CONSIDER EQUALITY WITH GOD SOMETHING TO BE GRASPED, BUT MADE HIMSELF NOTHING, TAKING THE VERY NATURE OF A SERVANT, BEING MADE IN HUMAN LIKENESS. AND BEING FOUND IN APPEARANCE AS A MAN, HE HUMBLIED HIMSELF..."

WHY DID HE HUMBLE HIMSELF? TO DEMONSTRATE THE FULL EXTENT OF HIS LOVE, TO THEM AND TO US. JESUS BY HIS ACTIONS SHOWED US THAT NOTHING INDICATES LOVE MORE CLEARLY THAN HUMBLE SERVICE TO OTHERS.

AND NOTICE THAT EVEN THOUGH JUDAS HAD ALREADY DECIDED THAT HE WOULD BETRAY THE LORD, JESUS KNOWING WHAT JUDAS WAS GOING TO DO, STILL WASHED HIS FEET — AS THE HUMBLE DEMONSTRATION OF HIS LOVE FOR JUDAS.

WHILE THE OTHERS DID NOT KNOW, AT THAT TIME, WHAT JUDAS WAS GOING TO DO, I WOULD SUSPECT THAT ONCE THEY FOUND OUT THAT JUDAS WAS THE BETRAYER, THEY WERE CONFUSED, BUT AMAZED THAT STILL, JESUS CLEANSED HIS FEET ALONG WITH THE OTHERS!

I HOPE WE CAN LEARN FROM THIS EXPRESSION OF SERVITUDE THAT OUR LOVE AND SERVICE TO OTHERS SHOULD NOT END AT THE CHAPEL DOOR, OR THAT WE HAVE NO RESPONSIBILITY TO LOVE AND SERVE THOSE WHO DON'T RECIPROCATE OUR EFFORTS. WE ARE CALLED TO BE CHRIST-LIKE AND DO WHAT JESUS DID, EVEN THOUGH IT IS DIFFICULT! BACK IN THE EIGHTIES, MAC DAVIS, THE SINGER-SONGWRITER, SAID IT ALL WHEN HE SANG, "OH LORD IT'S HARD TO BE HUMBLE, BUT I'M DOING THE BEST THAT I CAN!" IT IS HARD, ISN'T IT! BUT ARE WE DOING THE BEST THAT WE CAN?

THEN VERSE 4 SAYS: THAT "JESUS LAID ASIDE HIS GARMENTS." IN MY MIND, IT WAS MORE THAN HIS CLOTHES THAT HE LAID ASIDE — HE LAID ASIDE HIS MAJESTY! HE WAS AND IS GOD, BUT HE BECAME NOTHING — TO HUMBLE HIMSELF — TO POINT OUT THE IMPORTANCE OF LOVING AND SERVING OTHERS.

MARK 10:25 REMINDS US THAT: "FOR EVEN THE SON OF MAN DID NOT COME TO BE SERVED, BUT TO SERVE, AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE A RANSOM FOR MANY."

HE TOTALLY UNDERSTOOD WHO HE WAS — HE DIDN'T HAVE AN IDENTITY CRISIS! NOR SHOULD WE — WE, WHO ARE CHILDREN OF GOD!

IT TAKES AN UNDERSTANDING OF OUR IDENTITY TO BE ABLE TO HUMBLE OURSELVES. THE WORLD TELLS US THAT WE NEED TO MAKE OURSELVES LOOK GOOD IN FRONT OF OTHERS, THAT WE NEED TO EXALT OURSELVES, BUT JESUS SAID THAT "WHOEVER EXALTS HIMSELF SHALL BE HUMBLER; AND WHOEVER HUMBLER HIMSELF SHALL BE EXALTED. (MATTHEW 23:12)."

UNDERSTAND, BROTHERS AND SISTERS THAT IF WE DON'T UNDERSTAND WHO WE ARE IN JESUS, WE WILL BE UNWILLING TO HUMBLE OURSELVES — UNTIL THE LORD HIMSELF, HUMBLER US.

IN THE EXCHANGE WITH PETER, IN VERSES 6-9, JESUS' ALSO MAKES IT PERFECTLY CLEAR ABOUT OUR NEED TO BE SERVED BY HIM.

(6) SO HE CAME TO SIMON PETER. HE SAID TO HIM, "LORD, DO YOU WASH MY FEET?" (7) JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID TO HIM, "WHAT I DO YOU DO NOT REALIZE NOW, BUT YOU WILL UNDERSTAND HEREAFTER." (8) PETER SAID TO HIM, "NEVER SHALL YOU WASH MY FEET!" JESUS ANSWERED HIM, "IF I DO NOT WASH YOU, YOU HAVE NO PART WITH ME." (9) SIMON PETER SAID TO HIM, "LORD, THEN WASH NOT ONLY MY FEET, BUT ALSO MY HANDS AND MY HEAD."

EVEN THOUGH PETER SEEMED TO SHOW GENUINE HUMILITY, IN SOME WAY, IT MAY HAVE BEEN FALSE HUMILITY. HE MAY HAVE BEEN EMBARRASSED THAT HE HADN'T THOUGHT OF WASHING JESUS' FEET BEFORE JESUS' OFFER TO WASH HIS FEET! BUT WHEN JESUS MAKES IT CLEAR THAT BEING SERVED BY HIM IS ONE OF THE CONDITIONS OF HAVING A RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM, PETER HAS A CHANGE OF HEART.

I THINK THERE IS CLEARLY SOME SYMBOLISM HERE. JESUS IS NOT JUST SAYING THAT PETER MUST LET HIM WASH HIS FEET, BUT THE REFERENCE IS TO THE MORE THOROUGH WASHING THAT JESUS WILL PROVIDE FOR THE NEXT DAY, WHEN HIS BLOOD IS SHED FOR PETER'S SINS AND FOR OURS.

JUST LIKE PETER, IT IS PRIDE THAT OFTEN KEEPS US FROM LETTING JESUS CLEANSE US. WE WANT TO BE SELF SUFFICIENT. IT SHAMES US THAT THE SON OF GOD SHOULD HAVE HAD TO DIE FOR OUR SINS.

WE WANT SO BADLY TO BE CONSIDERED GOOD PEOPLE IN OUR OWN RIGHT, BY OUR OWN EFFORT. BUT BY OUR OWN EFFORT, WE EACH ARE WOEFULLY DIRTY AND UNFIT TO ENTER GOD'S HEAVENLY KINGDOM. TRULY UNLESS WE LET HIM CLEANSE US, WE HAVE NO PART WITH HIM.

IT TOOK SOME TIME FOR PETER TO FULLY UNDERSTAND WHAT HUMILITY WAS ALL ABOUT, BUT HE DID! IN CHAPTER 5 AND VERSES 5-6, OF HIS FIRST EPISTLE, PETER WROTE: "YOU YOUNGER MEN, LIKEWISE, BE SUBJECT TO YOUR ELDERS; AND ALL OF YOU, CLOTHE YOURSELVES WITH HUMILITY TOWARD ONE ANOTHER, FOR GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. THEREFORE HUMBLE YOURSELVES UNDER THE MIGHTY HAND OF GOD, THAT HE MAY EXALT YOU AT THE PROPER TIME."

AND WE ARE REWARDED WHEN WE ACT IN A HUMBLE WAY!

PROVERBS 29:23 REMINDS US THAT:

"A MAN'S PRIDE WILL BRING HIM LOW, BUT A HUMBLE SPIRIT WILL OBTAIN HONOR."

RETURNING TO OUR TEXT, IN VERSES 12-17, JESUS SETS THE EXAMPLE FOR US:

(12) "SO WHEN HE HAD WASHED THEIR FEET, AND TAKEN HIS GARMENTS AND RECLINED AT THE TABLE AGAIN, HE SAID TO THEM, "DO YOU KNOW WHAT I HAVE DONE TO YOU? (13) YOU CALL ME TEACHER AND LORD; AND YOU ARE RIGHT, FOR SO I AM. (14) IF I THEN, THE LORD AND THE TEACHER, WASHED YOUR FEET, YOU ALSO OUGHT TO WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET. (15) FOR I GAVE YOU AN EXAMPLE THAT YOU ALSO SHOULD DO AS I DID TO YOU. (16) TRULY, TRULY, I SAY TO YOU, A SLAVE IS NOT GREATER THAN HIS MASTER, NOR IS ONE WHO IS SENT GREATER THAN THE ONE WHO SENT HIM. (17) IF YOU KNOW THESE THINGS, YOU ARE BLESSED IF YOU DO THEM."

JESUS SAYS, IF I YOUR TEACHER, YOUR LORD, YOUR MASTER, FOUND IT NECESSARY TO SERVE YOU, THEN YOU SHOULD SERVE OTHERS. IN FACT, TO SERVE IS WHAT IT MEANS TO LEAD. WE CANNOT CALL OURSELVES FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST AND BE UNWILLING TO SERVE IN HUMBLE WAYS.

THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT WE DON'T HAVE INDIVIDUAL GIFTS AND PLACES OF SERVICE, BUT EACH OF US SHOULD BE WILLING TO HUMBLE OURSELVES, TO DEMONSTRATE OUR LOVE FOR THOSE WE SERVE.

YOU SEE FOOT WASHING IS NOT ABOUT FOOT WASHING, IT'S ABOUT SERVING OTHERS SACRIFICIALLY, HUMBLING OURSELVES WHEN WE DON'T HAVE TO — BECAUSE WE DON'T HAVE TO. IT SHOULD BE SOMETHING THAT WE WANT TO DO, NOT BEING COMPELLED TO DO! IT SHOULD BE OUR EXPRESSION OF THE LOVE OF JESUS!

IT'S BRINGING A MEAL TO A SHUT-IN OR PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION TO THOSE WHO CANNOT DRIVE. IT'S LISTENING TO A NEIGHBOR WHO NEEDS TO TALK WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE TIME TO LISTEN. AND SO ON AND SO ON! IT'S GIVING OURSELVES WHEN WE DON'T HAVE TO.

AND LASTLY, EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US MUST BE SENSITIVE TO THE COMMAND GIVEN TO US BY, YES, PETER, IN HIS FIRST LETTER IN CHAPTER 3 AND VERSE 8, WHEN HE SAYS:

“TO SUM UP, ALL OF YOU BE HARMONIOUS, SYMPATHETIC, BROTHERLY, KINDHEARTED, AND HUMBLE IN SPIRIT.”

AMEN AND AMEN!

FATHER GOD, WE THANK YOU FOR THIS NIGHT THAT WE MAY REMEMBER THE TEACHING OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR. I PRAY THAT YOU GIVE US, THROUGH YOUR HOLY SPIRIT, AN ATTITUDE OF HUMILITY AND SERVANT-HOOD SO THAT WE MAY SHOW YOUR LOVE TO THE WORLD AROUND US. HELP US, DEAR FATHER, TO LOVE OTHERS AS YOU HAVE LOVED US! THIS I PRAY IN THE NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES, CHRIST JESUS! AMEN!