

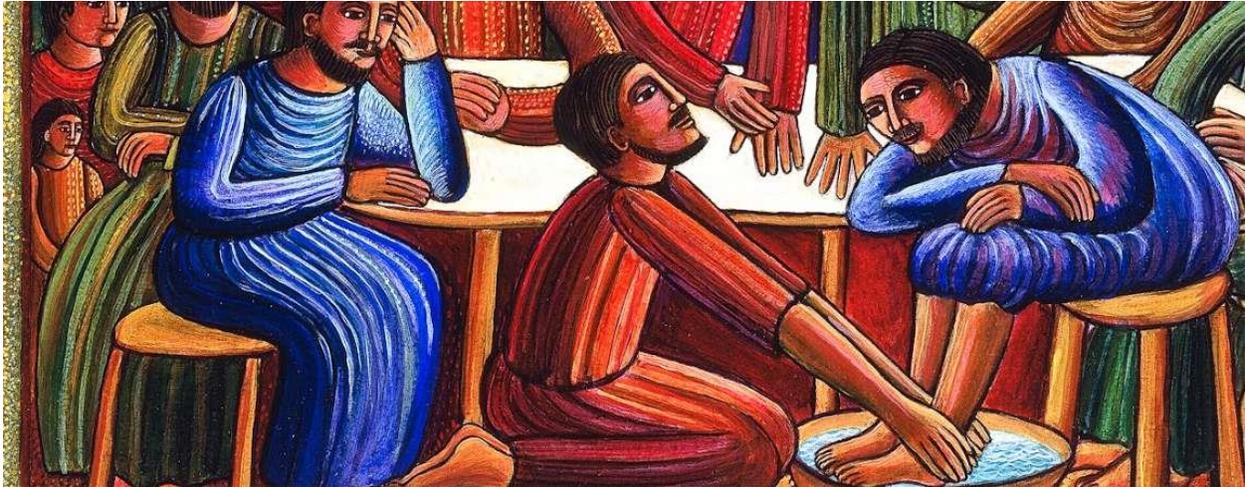


Jesus' Platform for Servanthood
John 13:1-17

Welcome back to our preaching series: **Jesus Headline News**, where we are exploring a DISCIPLE'S PUBLIC RECORD – the story we are writing with our lives. The phrase, "**Headline news**," is a metaphor to remind us that our public life tells a story to the world. Jesus' life story in Roman-occupied Palestine gave sightlines to God and His Kingdom! This is **WHO** and **WHAT** Jesus came to make known! Just as our series theme verse indicates:

**"You know me, and you know
where I come from. I am not here
on my own authority..."**
John 7:28 ESV

Today, we briefly explore the life of **SERVANTHOOD**. Pastor Rick Warren likes to use alliteration to describe God's purposes and activity in the world. One of his motto's is that you and I were "**SAVED TO SERVE!**" "**SELECTED to be SENT!**" "**RAISED UP to be RELEASED!**" All of those mean there is a divine **ASSIGNMENT to your ALLEVIATION** from sin! Ultimately, **EMBODIED ENGAGEMENT** and not **DISTANCED DETACHMENT**, is the whole point behind **DISCIPLESHIP** -- growing to become more like **JESUS CHRIST**. What is our **VISUAL CUE** for this life?



- Washing of the Feet by John August Swanson

<https://www.trinitywheaton.org/about-us/18-trinity/trinity-special/154-jesus-washes-the-disciples-feet>

Artist John August Swanson helps us out. If ever there was a message, a sign, a symbol of consecration for **selfless servanthood and ministry**, it was the **ceremonial washing of the disciple's feet** on the Passover feast evening. Embodied servanthood, humility, and sacrifice were all "platformed" via a basin, pitcher of water, and towel for wiping. **Earthly Kings have SCEPTORS –kingdom servants have TOWELS!** What's in your hands these days?

To be sure, these were not the usual implements of a Rabbi, but rather a household servant. Yet Jesus, readying to hand off his ministry to his disciples, showed them what he expected from their lives as servant leaders. Jesus shows himself to be the leader by what he did. Remember the Donald Miller quote from last week: **"Good writers SHOW rather than TELL."** Jesus did both.

On the precipice of a sacred meal, with betrayal lurking nearby in the shadows, Jesus had one last lesson. It was an embodied demonstration; an interactive illustration and experience of the theology of the highest and greatest form of kingdom life. It was an evening of great honor and importance for every Rabbi – the Sacred Jewish Passover Feast. Prestige, honor, distinction and decorum were a Rabbi's fare on that special night. But Jesus had a different vision to portray to his followers.

Read John 13:1-17 NIV

Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

13 It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that **the hour had come** for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

2 The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to **betray** Jesus. **3 Jesus knew** that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; **4** so he got up from the meal, **took off his outer clothing**, and wrapped a towel around his waist. **5** After that, he poured water into a basin and began **to wash his disciples' feet**, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

8 "No," said Peter, "**you shall never** wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

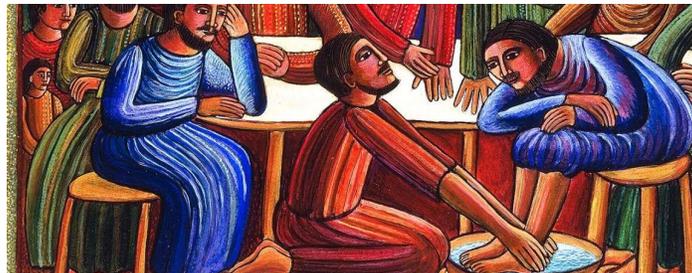
9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

10 Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." **11** For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. **"Do you understand what I have done for you?"** he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, **you also should wash** one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, **you will be blessed if you do them.**

Doing what no one expects of you, or from you. This was the surprise that Jesus offered his disciples that night. Stepping out of the lead, host role, vacating prominence and privilege, Jesus owned the deepest part of his identity: the Prophet Isaiah's HUMBLE, SUFFERING SERVANT.

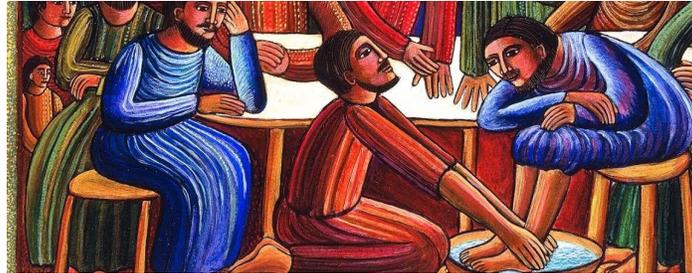
If **Baptism** is a sign of our inclusion (incorporation) into death, burial and resurrection of Jesus---If **Communion** is a sign of the rending of Christ's divine life for our forgiveness---If **Ordination** is the church setting apart representative leaders for spiritual guidance and prophetic teaching---then **FOOTWASHING** is Jesus calling us, and commissioning us, into **a life of Christ-like Servanthood!** The regular disciples would have considered the washing of one another's feet to be an admission of inferiority. Jesus considered it to be a gift to express love and renounce pride. Here are the takeaways from this moment:



"The hour had come" vs. 1

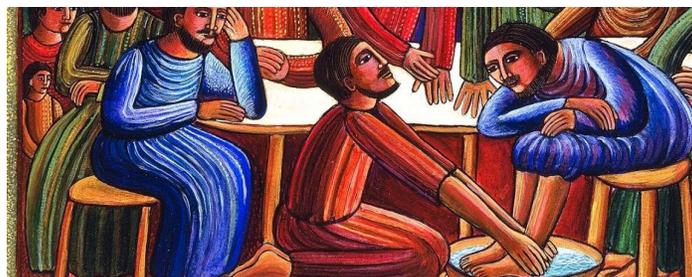
Some of the most difficult things we are called to do in life come at the most dreaded times. Selflessness, Servanthood, and Sacrifice never show up at

convenient, comfortable times. They are often called upon in moments of great contradiction and irony (like disputing disciples and treacherous betrayal).



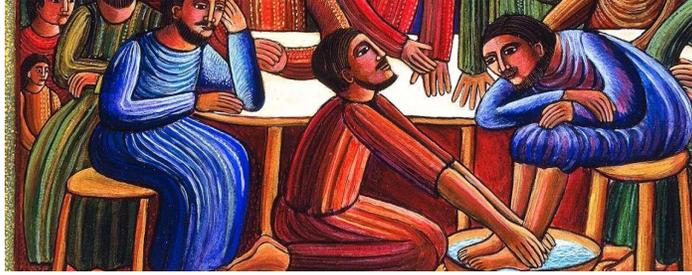
"Jesus knew..." vs. 3

So much of our life action is tied up in our **IDENTITY**. When you are comfortable and content in your own skin, your own story, your own purpose, you live from a position of empowered engagement. Jesus knew what he had, where he'd been, and where he was going! We live our **BEST LIFE STORY** when we live from **CLARITY** and **CERTAINTY**! Have you discovered your?



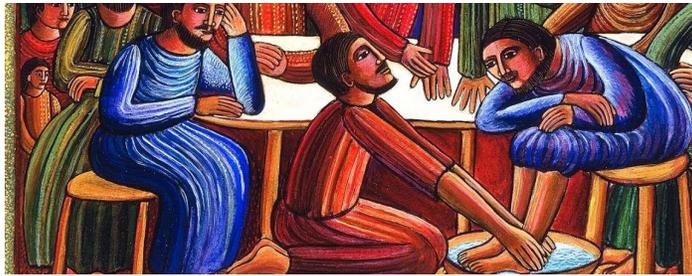
***"Took off his outer clothing...
to wash his disciples' feet" vs. 4***

Life in the kingdom of God is not as much about **VIRTUE** as it is about **VANTAGE POINT!** It's hard to **LOOK DOWN** on someone when you are kneeling before them. In fact, from that posture, we can only **LOOK UP** to them! We see their eyes and their humanity. To humble yourself before others is to model great internal strength; a spiritual resolve that my life, and life actions, are far more profound than my posture or position.



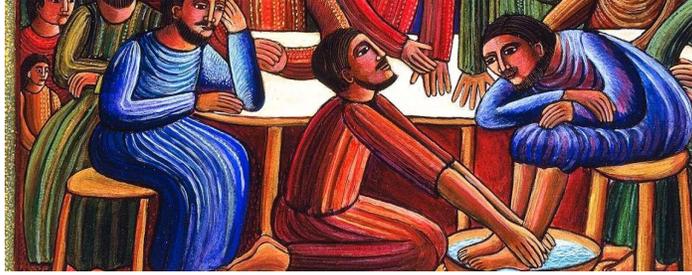
"No, ... you shall never..." vs.8

Seems that people always have commentary for what we do in our serving. Don't expect kingdom love, service, or sacrifice to be readily understood or accepted. Jesus didn't. The disciples were scandalized, not inspired. They may have felt shame and embarrassment. The truth is, think about this church, we cannot pass on to others what we first refuse to receive from Jesus.



"Do you understand what I have done for you?...you also should wash..." vs. 12, 14

The meaning we assign to life's experiences and lessons determines the level of integration of those things into our lives. If we are afraid or ashamed of dignifying and serving and befriending those we may perceive to be different or lower or other than us, we risk losing a chance to entertain angels or touching the feet of Jesus. Jesus life is the lens through which we must all look to apprehend kingdom truth for our own action.



***"...you will be blessed if you do them."
vs. 17***

To be blessed is to be centered in your life story and gratified by living it well. To be blessed is to be profoundly content and anchored in the satisfaction that comes from following the example of Jesus in your relationships with others. To be blessed is to be liberated from chain-of-command aspirations, and the bondage that comes from the need to in in charge and in control.

This coming Thursday evening, at 7 pm in the sanctuary, we will gather for a brief service of worship and foot and hand washing. We offer this as a sacred reminder of **WHO** you are called to be and **HOW**, you are called to live. It is heaven's consecration over your life, claiming you as an ambassador; a kingdom servant. We will offer washings for feet or for hands. We will offer hands on or no touch pouring. Whatever you are most comfortable with. Our evening will be a call to mutual love, just as Jesus ended that evening:

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."

John 13:34 ESV