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Lent 2021

A New Rhythm: Part 8 – Service - NOTES

Anchor Texts:
John 13:1-17

-Common Christian Symbols Cup of Wine, the Bread, we may think of the crown of thorns,, we may think of the letters alpha and omega.

What about: a **towel**.

He, puts a towel around his waist, fills a bowl with water, and begins washing the feet of the disciples...

Lets look at verse 2 – During supper, when the devil has already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him...”

The first major power struggle here is the spiritual battle of the devil and Jesus

Yet there was also the struggle of power, this one more physical - between the people in the room

– Judas was a real flesh and blood man conspiring against Jesus of Nazareth, another real flesh and blood man Evidently

–Jesus also knew what was happening in Judas’ heart – for He comments concerning Judas that “not all of you are clean” – meaning he knew Judas was betraying him.

-There is also a second side to the human jockeying for power in the room –the rest of the disciples were having among themselves about who would be the greatest.

In Luke’s gospel, we read that Jesus said to the disciples “For who is greater, the one who reclines at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.” (22:27) We can confidently propose that Jesus says this in the context of having served the disciples as we just read in John 13.

So what does all of this jockeying for power have to do with serving?

We want to “get to the top of the pecking order” because we think at the top we will finally have FREEDOM.

Financial freedom

Free time

Freedom to choose what we want and do what we want

Freedom from other people's expectations and demands

The book of common prayer "O God... whose service is perfect freedom"

Unlike our worldly expectations – true freedom, scripture contends, is found in service to the most high God.

Service sets us free from:

-the world's game of "climbing the ladder"

From the hollow pleasures of Promotion, pay raise, authority, pecking order

Are we going to live like chickens, or live like Christians?

-concerned with pecking order - authority, status, power OR

-concerned with service, sacrificial love, valuing others.

Christ's response in our anchor passage-

– NOT than defending his rightful position as Lord, and teacher

– NOT doing a miracle right then and there to prove that "all things" have been given into his hands

-Jesus instead practices humble service

self- righteous ways of serving:

self-righteous service is focused on "**the Big Deal**"

-It only looks for service on large-scale public ventures – it is motivated by publicity more than helping others.

Self-righteous service requires **external rewards**:

- It needs to know it's been seen, it needs recognition (with some proper religious modesty, of course!

Self-righteous service is highly concerned with **results**:

-specifically it requires a specific kind of response

-he is literally taking the form of a servant - like Paul points out in Phil 2:6-7.

Yet after rising, girding, filling, washing, drying, redressing, reclining again, Jesus *does* have something to say –look at Vv. 12-16

He's saying real authority comes with obligation and responsibility - not privilege and perks.

Should we wash one another's feet?

His love is the controlling idea here – and we see that his love for the disciples plays out through a real act of practical service, washing their dirty feet

-Jesus is commanding practical, humble service as a mark of discipleship, the answer then is that we obviously don't wash people's feet today as a practical way of serving each other, in our culture of shoes and socks washing someone else's feet is not necessary or even appreciated – real service will look different in our society. Though there is clearly power in a simple act of courtesy – since foot washing was a simple act of courtesy in Christ's culture of the day.

-But I will add, as a symbol and reminder, foot washing can be a good thing, even a powerful spiritual experience.

a few things in mind:

1. Service is done out of reverence for Christ and his example –
2. Real service is often unnoticed, demanding, and costs us something

Practical Ways of Serving

1. The service of guarding others

- a. Saving others from backbiting and gossip
 - i. Stopping or challenging falsehoods or slander about other people
 - ii. Titus 3:2 "speak evil of no one"

2. The service of courtesy:

- a. Small acts of service
 - i. Letting others go in front of you through a door or in line
 - ii. While these acts themselves aren't great moves for the gospel, they are

the little foundational elements that give you a voice in someone's life - they encourage the possibility of a real conversation with someone you know, or open up the possibility of meeting someone new, learning about them, and blessing them simply by sharing why you serve (and WHO you serve!) - or even letting God bless you through them!