



Topic: Kingdom Leadership. Bible Scriptures: John 13:12-17.

Servant King

Picture this. God has become human. Still fully God yet fully human. He has journeyed together with those who chose to be His disciples. He continually poured all of Himself into them. He loves them with a pure unconditional love that shows them who He is. A love so great, so intimate, so personal.

He knows one will betray Him, one will deny Him, one will doubt Him and that many will desert Him. But nothing can change His unconditional love for them. Through journeying with them, they can know and experience His love and be transformed by Him.

He knows what He must endure for their sakes. So that they may believe He is sent from God the Father and receive eternal life through Him. He will carry the full force of human brokenness, depravity and shame. Suffer public humiliation, torture and pain. From a city that days earlier hailed Him as King, He will be cast out and left to die.

His Servant Heart

Jesus knows His time has come to leave this world and return to God the Father. He also knows the Father has given all things under His power. He knows He is God the Son. With one word He could destroy all those who oppose Him, yet He will give His life for them.

With all this before Him, Jesus turns His attentions towards those who are with Him. He will reveal to them not only His love, but the reality of His Kingdom.

His disciples still do not understand. They know He is the Christ, the anointed one sent from God to deliver them from the tyranny of humanity's darkness. Together with Him they have travelled far and wide.

They saw demons bow to His authority. Even the winds from the four corners of the earth obey Him. They witnessed the lame walk, the deaf hear, the blind see, the broken hearted healed, the oppressed and captives set free. Even outcasts restored and included into His community. They experienced the power of God flowing through them. For such is His Kingdom, power and glory.



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His Servant Action

It was time to share another meal together. This was always such a special moment of fellowship and communion for them. Yet nothing had prepared them for what was about to take place after this one.

In a city where cultural diversity lived in constant tension, the drama is about to unfold.

To the Jew humility was considered a worthy act, yet social status and position of power are not to be relinquished. The quest for knowledge and beauty by the Greek, determined that to participate in a task of a lower class is an offence. The Romans believed in privilege and power for self and would never give up either. In this environment, a complete violation of all accepted cultural boundaries is about to take place.

After the meal together He laid aside His garments and kneeled before them. One by one He placed their dirty feet into His holy hands. Gently pouring pure water over their hardened skin. With His own towel that girded His body, He wiped their feet dry. Even the feet of the one He knows will betray Him.

Stunned silence.

Pride Divides

Jesus kneels before Peter. He could not remain silent. With a mixture of emotions he questioned. Lord will you wash my feet? Jesus explains at this moment you do not understand, but after this you will. Peter still could not accept that His Lord, the one who he respects and reverences would stoop down before him and perform the task of a submissive servant.

So many emotions run through his body. A Lord does not do the work of a slave. Knowing his own unworthiness he could never allow such a thing.



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The greatest block in receiving from God is self. Self wants to achieve, earn and retain all honour and glory. Self also knows the evils of the heart. Self or the flesh has two sides. One is to believe they deserve everything or believe they are not worthy to receive anything.

Jesus responds, Peter if you do not allow me to wash your feet, you have no part of me.

If we refuse Jesus' sacrifice of Himself we deny the only pathway to freedom. We remain a slave to fear and self.

If we receive Jesus' sacrifice of Himself we are clean. Each day as we focus on the humble sacrificial love of God, we can open our hearts and minds to let Jesus wash our feet. Live in the reality of freedom from fear, pride, evil and self.

Life of Service

Peter was clean because he received the word that Jesus spoke as truth and life. Yet Peter battled with his own will. As a result of Jesus' response he realised that to remain in close relationship with Jesus, he must accept Jesus sacrificial gift.

Peter cries out, then not just my feet but also all of me!

So Jesus explained, Peter you are clean because of me. To be truly free you must receive my sacrificial servant love. So Jesus bowed down to where Peter was in his level of belief and washed his feet. Demonstrating a leader in the kingdom of God is the one who serves others.

After this Jesus explained further.

John 13:12-17 So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.



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Jesus begins to renew their minds with the reality of the character of God and His Kingdom.

As teacher and Lord, in practical humility, He became a servant. Using His position of power to benefit others.

The Servant King Makes a Way

After Peter denied Jesus three times and witnessed His sacrifice on the cross, Peter encountered the resurrected Christ. With joy he received the breakfast Jesus had just cooked for him. Through the cross Peter received Jesus' victory over pride and self-will. He was empowered to surrender it all to Jesus.

After Jesus' ascension back to the Father, the disciples received His power as witnesses to the world. They testified of who He is, what He has done and will do. The fullness of God dwells in them and His resurrection power flows through them for the benefit of others.

They could never forget the moment, when their Lord Jesus, just before He went into the darkness of the cross, girded Himself with a towel and washed their feet.

They too are servants sent by their master. Never greater than Jesus. Just as Jesus was sent by the Father. Never greater than He.

As Jesus was sent, so are we.