

# Having a Servant Heart

Everything about the kingdom of God is completely the opposite to the world's view: love your enemies, bless those who persecute you, go the second mile, do not repay evil for evil, it is better to give than to receive, the first shall be last and the last first. In John 13:1-7 Jesus is teaching His disciples a very fundamental lesson about leadership by being a servant by washing their feet.

In those times it was customary for the household servant to wash the feet of the guests as the feet would be dusty from the journey. Jesus was the model servant. *13 It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world. It was time for him to go to the Father. Jesus loved his disciples who were in the world. So he now loved them to the very end.*

*2 They were having their evening meal. The devil had already tempted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. He had urged Judas to hand Jesus over to his enemies. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put everything under his power. He also knew he had come from God and was returning to God. 4 So he got up from the meal and took off his outer clothes. He wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a large bowl. Then he began to wash his disciples' feet. He dried them with the towel that was wrapped around him. 6 He came to Simon Peter. "Lord," Peter said to him, "are you going to wash my feet?" 7 Jesus replied, "You don't realize now what I am doing. But later you will understand."*

Jesus loved his disciples to the very end even when he knew that he would be betrayed by one, denied by another and deserted by all of them. Still Jesus chose to love them. I wonder how many of us would choose to love in this way? God knows us completely, He knows the sins we have committed in the past and he knows the sins we are yet to commit and He still loves us! How do we respond to such love? How can one reject such love?

Jesus is having a meal with his disciples... and he gets up from the meal.. v4 : Jesus takes off his coat, wraps a towel around his waist, pours water into a large bowl and begins to wash his disciples feet.

**Leadership Is Serving Others** - this isn't a comfortable passage for leaders. Jesus is teaching that to be a leader you must be a servant. I wonder how much serving we do in our homes, in our places of work, in the church? What is our attitude to work to serve in whatever capacity as is needed? How passionate are we about serving others? How willing are we to do the menial jobs, jobs not in our job description? How willing are we to sacrifice our time for the sake of serving another, how willing are we to go the second mile when it is needed?

Ask Yourself: Whom can I serve today? How can I serve today?

Jesus knew his time was up he was going to be crucified and he teaches his disciples this important lesson to make them understand that the fundamental principle of leading people is to be their servant and serve them.

Our church motto and style of leadership is SERVANT leadership with accountability. I hope as a congregation you have experienced servant heart and attitude in our leadership. For us heart means....

## HEART:

- Honour God;
- Excellence;
- Reaching out;
- Togetherness

**Serving Is Following Jesus As Our Example** - If God in the flesh is willing to serve in this way, we his followers must also be willing to serve Him in any way that glorifies God .

**1 Cor 10:31** tells us in our eating and drinking and in all that we do we should glorify God;

**Col 3:17** Do everything you say or do in the name of the Lord Jesus. Always give thanks to God the Father through Christ.

**Col 3:23** Work at everything you do with all your heart. Work as if you were working for the Lord, not for human masters.

I think the bible is teaching us very clearly that in all we do we should glorify God doing everything with all our heart which means with a right attitude, with a “I want to” not a “I have to” giving thanks to God, working for the Lord and not to please man. Work as if you were working for the Lord.

You might say that is a tall order. How on earth can I go about doing this?

Let me give you a tip... Train yourself to have this attitude that you are serving Jesus in everything you do and when you do this you will not get hurt or feel disappointed and down because you know that it isn't for man that you are doing what you are doing but to glorify God.

This is a great attitude to have. If you can bring yourself to a place of putting Jesus at the centre of everything you do then your world be a better place. Why? Because you won't hold grudges any more, you won't feel disappointed anymore when no body recognises what you have done, you won't feel hurt or offended when people speak badly about you or ignore you or even don't stop to say “Thank you”.

Do know how many people get offended because someone did not say “thank you” to them? You see this a lot when you are driving, somebody lets you turn or over take and you forget to give them a signal of acknowledgement of the good they have done.

Jesus told off the Pharisees for doing good and praying just to be seen in the market place, for loving the places of honour and having the best seats in the synagogue (Matt23).

Following Jesus is very different to following anyone else. Following Jesus breaks down barriers of racism, of prejudice, of social class and status, nationalism. In Jesus all are equal. People are clamouring for equality today and the bible talks about equality so much that if people followed Jesus we won't have inequality issues! Let me show you.

**Prov 22:2** The rich and the poor have a common bond, The LORD is the maker of them all.

**Gal 3:28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

**Rom 3:22-24** The 'God-setting-things-right' that we read about has become 'Jesus-setting-things-right' for us. And not only for us, but for everyone who believes in him. For there is no difference between us and them in this. Since we've compiled this long and sorry record as

*sinners (both us and them) and proved that we are utterly incapable of living the glorious lives God wills for us, God did it for us. Out of sheer generosity he put us in right standing with himself. A pure gift. He got us out of the mess we're in and restored us to where he always wanted us to be. And he did it by means of Jesus Christ.*

**Serving Is Being Jesus In The Flesh** - He took on the form of man, became a slave, made himself nothing...

**Philippian 2:6-8** *In his very nature he was God. Jesus was equal with God. But Jesus didn't take advantage of that fact. <sup>7</sup> Instead, he made himself nothing. He did this by taking on the nature of a servant. He was made just like human beings.*

<sup>8</sup> *He appeared as a man. He was humble and obeyed God completely. He did this even though it led to his death. Even worse, he died on a cross!*

**Q.** Do we look for reputation? Status? Recognition? Do we strive for this or are we happy to strive to be servants for the sake of Jesus reaching out to a lost and broken humanity?