



small groups

Discussion Guide



Our Pride

John 13:1-17

Ice Breaker

(5 minutes)

Discuss

- Have you ever taken part in a foot-washing service? How did you feel?
 - Would you rather wash someone's feet or have yours washed?
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Lesson Review

(40 minutes)

Read John 13:1-17

Barry shared three pieces of context for this story that would have influenced the way the disciples heard Jesus.

1. This happened during the time of Passover when Jews celebrate their deliverance from oppression in Egypt. And Israel was, once again, oppressed by Roman occupation.
2. John wrote in verse 1 that “the hour had come.” Though we don’t know whether Jesus used this language with the disciples that night, they certainly sensed that things were reaching a crescendo. Something big was about to happen.
3. In verse 3, John wrote that the Father had put all things under Jesus’ power.

These clues would have had the disciples (and early Jewish readers who didn’t understand the nature of Jesus’ kingdom) expecting Jesus to lead an exodus like Moses led, to overthrow the Romans and set up a government of God.

So with that backdrop – with those expectations – what Jesus did next was scandalous. He dressed himself like a slave (one not delivered from oppression) and did something that was considered too lowly even for a Jewish servant. He washed the disciples’ feet, which were the dirtiest and most dishonored part of them.

Think of the irony: the expected deliverer from oppression takes on the garments of the oppressed. The one they expected to be king behaved like a servant. The one with all the power identified with the powerless. This was counterintuitive, subversive, and ironic.

Barry said that this was to give us a model of humility and service.

How we wish Jesus had only taken up his cross and died for our sin, a divine robot born only in order to die for us, a savior for whom salvation meant only a washing away of our sins. Sadly – for our compromised and accommodated Christianity – Jesus told us that following him would result in a cross for us, too, a cross that we were to take up daily and drag after him, not only talking as he talked but also walking the way he walked.

– William Willimon

Discuss

- Is Jesus calling you to behave in a way that is counterintuitive, subversive or ironic?
- How?

In verse 8, Peter insists that Jesus will never wash his feet. Barry said there were probably two reasons for this:

1. Peter recognized he was unworthy of such treatment by Jesus.

Read Luke 5:5-8

Peter's pride or shame may have kept him from embracing this act of grace, but if he had continued to resist, it also would have prevented him from receiving grace. Barry said, "Jesus doesn't love us because we are clean. He loves us in order to make us clean." So Peter keeping his shoes on is Peter preventing God from doing what God does.

2. Peter saw foot-washing as beneath Jesus

Barry speculated that this may have been the final straw that pushed Judas to betrayal. And yet, even though both of them knew that Judas would betray, Jesus washed Judas' feet.

Discuss

- What parts of your life are you reluctant to expose to Jesus?

Finally, Barry derived two principles from this story:

1. Jesus seeks to subvert any sense of superiority that still has hold in our hearts.
2. The fundamental posture of an authentic follower of Jesus is the posture of kneeling-love

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross!

– *Philippians 2:5-8*

Discuss

- To whom do you feel superior?
- Whom do you kneeling-love?
- What would it look like if your answers to those two questions was the same?

Application

(15 minutes)

Barry gave us the application this week:

1. Pray this prayer every day: “Lord Jesus, God of kneeling-love, overcome my ego and help me to serve.”
2. Watch for him to answer by providing opportunities to practice humble service in our families, neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, church, and world.

Discuss

- Are you praying that prayer this week?
- What opportunities has God shown you?