

A TOWEL IN MY HAND

¹ *It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.*

² *The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, 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." (John 13:1-7)*

It seems that people are always in a hurry!

- This same spirit of world comes into the church.
- We are so busy.
- We always have things to do, places to go and people to see.
- If we are not careful, we become self-preoccupied and self-focused and have very little time for God.

It takes **time** to walk with God!

The First Commitment as a Christian...is Worship!

- Abel worshiped by faith! He gave the best he had.
- The first thing is to be a **Worshiper!**
- All that happens in life is our worshipful response to God and God's revelation.
- There is no difference between worship and life...
- Both are the same thing... the fulfillment of God's law.

The Second Commitment as a Christian is Our Walk

- Enoch walked with God by faith.

- We cannot walk with a God that we don't worship!
- Some people try to step past worshiping into walking with God.
- We cannot do this; it's an impossibility!
- This is a degenerate inward-turned faith that thinks first of self rather than God.
- Enoch walked with God. That's awesome!
- We have to walk with God! That's life changing!
- Our walk with God is marked by a creative balance between truth and love.

The Third Commitment as a Christian is Our Work

- Noah *worked* with God!
- In order to work with God we have to worship and walk by faith.
- Noah worked for 120 years!
- Noah completed the arc because he committed himself to worship and walk with God.

This is the progression.

- Worshiping
- Walking
- Working with God
- You cannot do the one until you have the other.
- We are by nature a selfish people who come to receive.
- But the progression will lead us to a new dimension whereby we come to give instead of take.

Jesus had the hardest time teaching this to his disciples.

- He taught them many things.
- He did many miracles.
- But much of the disciples learning was just being with Him and watching Him interact with others.

John writes that Jesus broke bread with the disciples.

- In their culture you did not just eat with whomever.
- You only ate with those with whom were in covenant relationship.

⁴“so he got up from the meal”

The time of self-gratification is over.

The time of “Me” being blessed is over!

“Dinner is over”

- **You have to know when to give blessings to some things.**
- **You have to know when to forget about some things in your life.**
- Jesus shows us that life isn't about our likes, dislikes, and preferences.
- We come to see that there is a better way, and Jesus shows it to us.
- And Paul reminds us, “*It is more blessed to give than to receive*” (Acts 20:35)

We've got to Give up to Go On!!!

- (v. 4) Then He took off his outer clothing.
- What was on him He took off?

- **There are some things on you that you need to take off!**

This Reminds us of the Priest's garments.

- He could wear it all for a while, but
- in the Holy of Holies he had to take it all off.
- In the presence of God we have to humble ourselves.
- We can always tell if people are going to get blessed, by how they come to the altar.
- **Humbly, with humility**

If you are going to work for God you must understand...

- You cannot work for Him with your own agenda.
- You cannot work for Him with your own pride.
- You cannot work for Him with your own glory.
- You MUST put on the linen Ephod of Priesthood.
- You must become a servant.

⁴Then He wrapped a towel around his waist

- Anyone can wash the feet of someone who loves them.

But Jesus clothed Himself to serve someone who

- who doubted his authenticity.
- who was going to betray Him.
- who would deny Him.

Can we be disciplined enough to serve all types of people?

- Or is it just the ones we like?
- The gospel breaks down differences between class, race and sex.
- The gospel empowers people to be concerned for each other and for the world.
- Let's not commit the sins of the past.
- Let's not discriminate based on the color of someone's skin.
- Let's not discriminate based on where someone lives or what they smell like.
- Let's be the church Jesus died for and care for those who everyone else has forgotten.
- Let's trust God to empower us to fulfill his Word in us!

(Isaiah 40:31 NIV)

³¹ but those who hope in the LORD
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:31 NIV)

- God is not going to let us be overcome with work.
- He's not!!!
- They that serve the Lord "will soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary."
- **When we consider our work here, the "We Care Campaign" for instance, let's not become the**

Depressed prophet....Elijah who hid in a Cave
depressed...almost giving up.

God has something for us to do!!!

God said, “Elijah, I want you to go anoint

- Hazael to be king over Syria.
- Jehu to be king over Israel.
- Elisha to be the prophet in your stead.”

So anytime you’re in a cave situation and you want to get out...

You have to take off your outer clothes and wrap a towel around your waist

If you make up your mind to get out of the cave...

- you have to put your fears aside
- you have to forget about some things in your life
- you have to worship, walk and work for God.

- You may need to make some quick decisions.
- Elisha had to sacrifice the oxen.
- He had to burn his plowing equipment (1 Kings 9:21).

He left the family business to do whatever he could for the ministry.

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- Start fires
- cook meals
- wash feet
- wash clothes
- but it didn’t matter.....He was following God!

There came a point where Elijah asked Elisha what He wanted.

- He said a “*double portion of your spirit*” (2 Kings 2:9).

Elijah said you asked a hard thing.

- A calling from God doesn’t come easy!
- It takes prayer.
- It takes fasting.
- It takes dedication.

- It takes having a relationship with God every day.

WE can fulfill our church's ministry:

- **If you'll walk with me through Gilgal.**
- If you'll walk with me through Nineveh.
- If you'll walk with me around Jericho.

- If you'll walk with me all the way to Jerusalem.
- If you'll walk with me and cross the Jordan.
- If you'll walk with me through "We Care Campaign"
 - When people wonder if this is possible...
 - When our direction is somewhat difficult to chart...
 - When it looks like our task is insurmountable...

- If we see what Elijah saw when he was taken up (2 Kings 2:10)...

- If we possess a godly vision of ourselves and our calling,

- We can worship, walk and work with God!

- God is not satisfied with us walking around without a towel.
 - For some of us it's service.
 - For others it's teaching.
 - For others it's giving financially.
 - For others it's helping someone.

Jesus said, "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. (John 13:14) NIV

He wants to use you!

- There's a family you can reach.
- There's a soul you can win.
- There's a burden you can lift off the ministry.
- There's a need you can carry in prayer.
- **There's a towel in your hand.**

Supper for some of you is over.

- **Now it's time to go to work.**
- **It's time to serve.**

Some of you have a ministry of helps

- **but someone offended you...now you no longer serve.**

Some have a ministry of giving...

- **But something has happened.**
- **“Your blessing was in your Giving”**
- **“Every time you gave, He gave back to you”**

If you get into the place where you're supposed to be, God's grace will fall on you!

- **Don't be held hostage by the desires and self-interest our consumer culture.**
- **Take a towel and wrap it around your waist and be freed from yourself.**
- **Where is your towel?**