

“The Gift of Wet Feet!”

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We’ve all been hurt! Hurts are part of the human condition. We don’t like to be left out, we want to be included. Maybe you’ve had it happen to you that people are talking to each other, but when you walk into the room they stop. Or maybe everyone’s talking about what a good time they had together at an event and how they enjoyed themselves, but you weren’t invited!

It’s because of this hurt, whether it’s legitimate or not, that sometimes causes us to build up more hurt and resentment toward others. Because of this, our self-concept is crushed and we begin to let hurt and resentment cause us to respond negatively toward others and that puts us further out of the loop! How we respond can send a message of negativity to others and even to ourselves. When someone hurts us, we have a natural tendency to retaliate against who or what hurt us and want to get even! This happens because of our sin!

Open your Bibles to John 13. Retaliation has its appeal, but Jesus has a better idea! During His final teachings on what it was to be His disciple, Jesus had His Last Supper with them. In the middle of this meal, He got up and gave them a wonderful example. Look at verses 3-5, *“Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.”*

Washing feet wasn’t the job of the master, it was the job of the lowliest servant! But Jesus took that position and once again stooped down to show Who He truly was. He came to earth not to lord it over us, He came as a humble servant! At my last congregation, I had a message that would scroll across my computer screen whenever I was away from it. The message said, *“Remember the towel, the basin, the water, and the Spirit of the Servant Jesus.”* This message is very special to me and because of that, the office staff gave me this picture as I was leaving which now hangs in my office. With the Holy Spirit’s presence, I never want to forget Jesus’ example!

But Jesus didn’t just do it to set an example of Who He was, He also gave it as an example for us to follow as His disciples! Look at verses 14-15, *“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 also should do just as I have done to you.”*

Max says about this, *“Grace has happened to you. Look at your feet. They’re wet, grace soaked. Your toes and arches and heels have felt the cool basin of God’s grace. Jesus has washed the grime of your life.”*

It wasn’t just an example of being a servant and washing feet Jesus wanted to share, but it also was an example of forgiveness. Jesus washed all of the disciples’ feet including Judas, even though He knew that in a few short hours, Judas would betray Him to the Jewish leaders and He’d be led away to die!

Open to Matthew 18. It’s easy to forgive someone for a small mistake or error, but it’s another thing to forgive someone who’s wronged you or hurt you deeply. Peter was confused about this idea of forgiving so look what he asked and what Jesus’ answer was in verses 21-22, *“Then Peter came up and said to him, ‘Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.’”*

Jesus then told a story about a servant who was forgiven a humongous debt by his master, but how this same servant went out and wouldn’t forgive a fellow servant who owed him hardly anything and threw him in prison until the debt was paid. For all effects and purposes, this would be forever! After the master learned of this, look at his words in verses

32-33, *“Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’”* What Jesus was showing in all of this was that we should give grace because we’ve received grace!

Grace should shape our responses to hurt. To accept grace is to also accept the vow to give it! In how we act, we need to focus on God’s forgiveness not on the pain and hurt. Max put it this way, *“grace is not blind. It sees the hurt full well. But grace chooses to see God’s forgiveness even more.”* We need to look beyond the present situation and our own hurt and anger, and realize how Jesus has given Himself to forgive us. We need to go beyond ourselves and look for ways for us to follow His example and live a life full of forgiveness and grace!

Open to Hebrews 12. This isn’t always going to be easy! Satan’s working to destroy your life and your relationships! He doesn’t want you to be blessed and to be in a fellowship of believers! He wants bitterness to grow in your heart and let that bitterness control how you respond to others. Look at verses 14-15, *“Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled.”* You and I need to be carriers of the grace we’ve received to others!

As you go through life, are you holding on to a grudge against someone? Will you chose to forgive, or will you want the other person to suffer just like they made you suffer? Or will you follow Jesus’ example and forgive as He has forgiven you? Go ahead. Get your feet wet!

Max puts it this way, *“Sequence matters. Jesus washed first; you wash next. He demonstrates, you follow. He uses the towel then extends it to you, saying, “Now you do it. Walk across the floor of your upper room, and wash the feet of your Judas. Forgiveness may not happen all at once. But it can happen with you. After all, you have wet, grace soaked feet!”*