

# THE BLESSING OF HUMILITY

*IF YOU KNOW THESE THINGS,  
BLESSED ARE YOU IF YOU DO THEM.  
(JOHN 13:17 ESV)*



JESUS TEACHES A MASTER CLASS  
IN SERVANTHOOD

**1. The Setting: This was “the Lord’s Supper” and took place on the night in which he was betrayed.**

- (Matthew 26:24–28 ESV) **The Son of Man goes as it is written of him**, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.” 25 Judas, who would betray him, answered, “Is it I, Rabbi?” He said to him, “You have said so.” 26 **Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread**, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “**Take, eat; this is my body.**” 27 **And he took a cup**, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, **28 for this is my blood of the covenant**, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.
- *This is the same event in Mark 14:21–24, Luke 22:19–22, 1 Corinthians 11:23–32.*

**2. Knowing that it was time for him to leave this world Jesus loved his disciples to the end by teaching them the blessing of serving one another, 13:1-5.**

- (John 13:1–5 ESV) Now before the Feast of the Passover, **when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.** 2 **During supper**, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him, 3 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**, 4 rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. 5 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.

It was at this supper the Lord instituted communion – “the Lord’s supper.”

- A. We are to serve one another as Christ served us.
- B. Jesus loved his own to the end by teaching them this necessary lesson in humility,
- C. The blessing of this lesson would be vital to their spiritual growth and service.
- D. The foot washing was a demonstration of the mind of Christ in regard to the humility (and sometimes humiliation) of obedience.

This act of foot washing in their culture was not

merely a demonstration of gentle humility but an act of humiliation for the lowest servant. We should note that someone in the group should have already done this, so we can imagine the embarrassment this caused when the Lord took it upon himself to wash their feet.

- (Philippians 2:5–8 ESV) Have **this mind** among yourselves, **which is yours in Christ Jesus**, 6 **who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.**

E. Jesus knew that his time was limited—that he would soon be going back to God via the cross and consequent resurrection.

F. We also have a limited time on earth and the Apostle Paul exhorts us to make the best use of our time.

- (Ephesians 5:15–21 ESV) Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, 16 **making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.** 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, **but be filled with the Spirit**, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, 20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 **submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.**

The foremost motivation of the evil days should be the great opportunity to be wise stewards of our time and serve the Lord in such a time as this.

- i. We are to carefully examine how we live so that we live as wise people and not fools.
  - ii. We will then understand what the will of the Lord is.
  - iii. The “outside influence” in our lives will be the filling of the Spirit, not alcohol or other “medications.”
  - iv. We will be a worshipping, thankful people.
  - v. We will submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.
- G. Teaching his disciples to serve one another in this dark world was an expression of his love.

### 3. The lesson that Jesus teaches on servanthood continues to yield deeper, richer blessings as our understanding increases, 13:6-11.

- (John 13:6–11 ESV) He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, do you wash my feet?” 7 Jesus answered him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.” 8 Peter said to him, “You shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me.” 9 Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!” 10 Jesus said to him, “The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you.” 11 For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, “Not all of you are clean.”

A. Obey the biblical instruction and our understanding follows and increases as a fruitful result.

B. Christ makes a distinction between the washing of feet (maintenance) and bathing (salvation which makes a person completely clean.)

C. Christ explains to Peter that this washing was necessary to maintain fellowship with God.

D. The Apostle John gives further insight.

- (1 John 1:7–10 ESV) But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

### 4. Jesus finished and then revealed his intent and purpose—they were to live in humility toward one another, 13:12-16.

- (John 13:12–16 ESV) When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you?” 13 You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. 16 Truly,

truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

A. Jesus reviewed and expanded the lesson using himself as the outstanding example of true humility.

B. If Jesus is Lord and Teacher and practices humility toward his disciples, then how can we not practice humility toward one another.

C. We need to pay much closer attention to this—one of the last and most important lessons Jesus taught in his limited time left on earth.

D. In emphasizing a life of humility Jesus reveals our need for this emphasis—our sinful, human pride.

E. To defeat our pride in our relationships with one another we must practice the discipline of laying down our lives for one another.

- (John 15:12–13 ESV) This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

- (Philippians 2:3–4 ESV) Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

F. The person who doesn’t accept the Lord’s teaching on humility is completely unaware that he is on the wide path of destruction.

- i. He exalts himself as a servant who is greater than his master and as a messenger who is greater than the one who sent him.
- ii. He is thoroughly defeated by his pride and is blind to his self-exaltation.

### 5. The blessing is in the doing, 13:17-20.

- (John 13:17–20 ESV) If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. 18 I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, ‘He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.’ 19 I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he. 20 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.”

A. The underlying, foundational truth in this text is that living a life of humility brings God’s blessing.

B. “*These things*” are the practical, concrete examples that form the discipline of living a life of humility—e.g. the act of washing the feet of your peers.

C. Knowing “*these things*” is a qualifier—the first step toward the blessing.

Know – οἶδα [oida] – to know or be aware of a fact or a specific piece of information; to get knowledge of, understand; to have knowledge or information about.

D. This lesson is about victory over our pride.

E. If you know “*these things*” regarding the teaching of a life of humility, you are blessed if you do them.

Blessed– μακάριος [makarios]– to be blessed, happy; characterized by happiness and being highly favored (as by divine grace).

F. Doing these things completes the circuit and the person receives the blessing of God.

G. The blessing is a life of humility characterized by happiness and a keen awareness of being highly favored by God.

**CONCLUSION: WHAT CHARACTERIZES YOUR LIFE? DO PEOPLE SEE JOY AND GRACE IN YOU?**

That a person's life is not characterized by joy and a sense of the favor of God in his life is a strong indicator that he remains captive to his pride.

Do people see the fruit of the Spirit in your life?

- (Galatians 5:22–23a ESV) **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control.**

Do they see a person clothed in humility and bathed in the grace of God?

- (1 Peter 5:5b ESV) **Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”**
- (James 4:6 ESV) But **he gives more grace.** Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud but **gives grace to the humble.**”

Do they see a doer of the word who is blessed in his doing?

- (James 1:22, 25 ESV) But **be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ... the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.**

Do they see someone who lives in and delights in God's word?

- (Psalm 1:1–2 ESV) **Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.**

Do they see someone whose sin is forgiven?

- (Psalm 32:1–2 ESV) **Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.**

Do they see someone who takes refuge in God?

- (Psalm 34:8 ESV) Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! **Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!**

Do they see a tree planted by the water?

- (Jeremiah 17:7–8 ESV) **Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. 8 He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.**



HE IS LIKE A TREE PLANTED BY STREAMS OF WATER THAT YIELDS ITS FRUIT IN ITS SEASON, AND ITS LEAF DOES NOT WITHER. IN ALL THAT HE DOES, HE PROSPERS.

(PSALM 1:3 ESV)