

## DAILY CLEANSING IN CHRIST

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### JOHN 13:1-20

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?"

Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this." Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean." So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. 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 should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

"I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.' Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

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This setting we know, from comparing them to the synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is in the upper room where Jesus had His last supper with His disciples. Synoptic by the way is from the word synopsis which is then a summary of accounts and for the gospels it is the summary of accounts of the life and ministry, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. The book of John is different from the synoptics in that there are no parables in the book of John and for

our passage of Scripture it does not mention the last supper with Jesus and His disciples as does the synoptics. This account by John though begins with the mentioning of what happens after their last supper together.

One may, as many have before, question why John did not include the last supper in this story. Yet we have to look beyond the mere human element of what God is revealing to us as His plan and purpose. In what John said was the reason for his writing this gospel account, "but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (**John 20:31**) it would seem to be practically impossible for someone to read through the book of John and not come to the understanding of who John is purporting Jesus to be. While it seems as though John clearly spells it out for us we still have the Holy Spirit that reveals to us the truth that is in the Word so that we may believe. Just as when Jesus asked His disciples who they thought He was and "Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered and said to him, "**Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.**" (**Matthew 16:16-17**) As John begins his gospel stating, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." (John 1:1-5) "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (**John 1:14**)

The other consideration for us is to have the understanding that we will not fully know all there is to know about the Word of God, or at least not without a bit of effort in study and research. Sort of how last week I was asked the difference between alleluiah and hallelujah. I said if I had to guess, it is just a difference in the transliteration from one language to another. So, I found that hallelujah is from the word hallel, which means to praise, and then Jah short for Yahweh. Then allulua is a Latin transliteration of the word. With that being said though, we can trust that the Word of God will accomplish what is intended by the Word of God. What I'm getting at is, if we believe that the Holy Bible as we call it is the Word of God, the inspired Word of God and not just the words that came from the minds of men, then we can have understanding that if God led Matthew, Mark, and Luke to record the Last Supper event then it can certainly have been the case that the Word of God (being Jesus) did not lead John to write that same story. Incidentally, John is the only one to record the story of Jesus washing the disciple's feet. Another possible bit of influence certainly is in the heart and mind of the writer. While God definitely spoke His Word to His prophets to

record verbatim His Word from time to time, but in narrative accounts we can also see the heart and personality of the writer. John, is self-described as the one Jesus loved, who rested on the bosom of Jesus. We have to believe and know that, despite much vehement opposition from the enemy of the Word, that as the Apostle Paul wrote to his spiritual son Timothy, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**) Another way of putting that is that the Word of God ministers and transforms us by His Word. That does not mean that all translations are the same of course. Yet in this day and age, while some passages of Scripture may still baffle the experts, by and large, we are without excuse as to what the Word is telling us. All accounts of the gospels and the epistles of the Apostles speak of not only Jesus dying on the cross for our sins but then raising from the grave on the third day and that we may have blessed and eternal life in Christ Jesus! It is also clear I think to all of us that as Paul says in **Romans 10:9-10**, "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Notice there are two elements to believing on Christ in that passage, well actually three. First is believing that Jesus, the Christ, died on the cross, then second that He rose from the dead. The third element is tied to John saying what was the reason for his writing the gospel, "that believing you may have life in His name." We are believing unto salvation. Yes, we are saved but we are being saved. Jesus is taking us through this obstacle course called life, from one obstacle to the next. Once again, as Paul said, Jesus is our Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption, so let he/she who glories, glory in the Lord! (**1 Corinthians 1:30-31**) Therefore as Paul also tells us, "For you were bought at a [great] price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (**1 Corinthians 6:20**)

We haven't gotten to our passage of Scripture yet in John 13 because we have to look at this passage of Scripture in context to the Scripture around it, which includes what is before it as well as after it. A common technique among false teachers is to take Scripture out of context. After all, even Satan quoted Scripture (out of context). I believe that it is first of all important to lay the foundation for a passage of Scripture. That foundation of course is Jesus the Christ the Son of God. We want to be as Jesus said, "like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock." (**Luke 6:48**) "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my

salvation, my stronghold." (**Psalm 18:2**) So, just John had said, once again, that he had written this gospel account "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." That life begins for us in believing in Jesus as the Christ the Son of God. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (**John 3:16-17**) We know then, that our life in Christ Jesus begins in that moment of conversion, that being born of the spirit, being born-again as Jesus put it. It is the receiving of Christ into our hearts, the receiving of the Holy Spirit, which IS the Spirit of Christ, which is the Spirit of God. As Jesus stated, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." (**John 14:23**) What Jesus is talking about is the born-again experience, the being born of the Spirit, becoming a new creation in Christ. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (**2 Corinthians 5:17**) Isn't it beautiful how the Word begins to paint a marvelous and beautiful picture as we put the pieces together?

Believing on Christ Jesus is where the new life in Him BEGINS. While the offering of bulls and goats in the New Testament was just an image of the perfect sacrifice to come through Christ Jesus it was also inferior in that it could not ultimately cleanse anyone and make them pure from their sins against God. But Jesus! "For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (**Hebrews 9:13-15**) By the blood of Jesus we are cleansed of all unrighteousness. As the Apostle John tells us in **1 John 1:9**, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." That leads us right into our passage of Scripture.

As was mentioned this account does not speak of the Last Supper Jesus had with His disciples which had taken place prior to or at the part where this story begins. Jesus took the bread and said to 'eat this... in remembrance of Me', and He took the wine cup and said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you." That alone should speak to anyone considering whether it is ok to get drunk with wine, or any other intoxicant for that matter. As Peter stated, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (**1 Peter 5:8**) We are to live sober-minded as was the example that Jesus gave us and gives us in this story. While the eating of the bread and the drinking of the

wine was to be done with remembrance of Jesus, what it symbolizes is similar to what Jesus was getting at in this story in John 13.

First we have John referring once again to Jesus' hour which Jesus had spoke of throughout His ministry. We get Jesus' first reference to His hour when His mother asked Him to do something about the wine being gone at the wedding in Cana of Galilee to which Jesus said, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come." (**John 2:4**) Jesus of course was speaking of the symbolic representation of His blood poured out for the atonement of our sins. What that says to me is that Jesus already knew He would be having that Last Supper with His disciples. Yet here we have in our story John telling us that His hour had come "that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end", and He still loves us! Jesus set for us the perfect example in how we are to be committed to God, through Christ from beginning to end. As Paul tells us, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (**Romans 12:1-2**) How is that you say? After all it was Jesus' sacrifice that paid the price for our sins against God. Amen, that is so true. Jesus not only claimed but proved His claim of saying, "I AM the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live" (**John 11:25**) and that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life and that no one can come to the Father except through Him (John 14:6) I will put ALL my eggs in that basket. Jesus not only rose the dead but rose Himself from the dead proving that He indeed is the Resurrection and the Life. Even though within a week Jesus was going to be humiliated and spit on and beaten and taunted and die on a cross He took time once again to be the Servant. That's some powerful love right there.

In our story, I think we all know, I hope, that Jesus was not making it a point for us to all be washing each others' feet. While many churches over time have had foot washing ceremonys, of which there is nothing wrong about that, yet the message to us should be clear about what Jesus was saying. There is really a double message that is represented in what Jesus was doing when He washed the disciples' feet. Both can be found in what Jesus replied as being the great commandment of God and the second which is like it. Jesus said, "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (**Mark 12:30-32**)

To clarify the second command of loving our neighbor as ourselves Jesus had said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another." (**John 13:34**) Being that living sacrifice that Paul spoke of is us loving God wholeheartedly and then also loving others as Christ has loved us and loves us. God is calling each of us to be His humble servants in the example of Christ. "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." (**John 15:13**) Jesus proved that, didn't He? John reiterated that in his epistle stating, "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (**1 John 3:16**) What that means then is God will begin chipping away at those walls of selfishness and pride, stubbornness and rebellion. For some He may just bring the whole wall down at once. For others it is a brick by brick process. I certainly don't know all the ways of God but I do know that He wants all of us, not just a corner chamber of our heart.

In that loving God with all that is in us, we find that while we have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus, there is still the sanctifying of our souls, the renewing of our minds and the cleansing out the impurities in our hearts. That doesn't come by some form of osmosis which is "a passive process and happens without any expenditure of energy."<sup>1</sup> It takes place for us as we stay connected to the vine (that's Jesus). Jesus would not have said, "Abide in Me" if that was naturally going to happen automatically. I can testify to what happens when I just do my own thing serving my own needs and selfish desires. For years I was miserable in that. What that means then is it also takes action on our part to continue to look unto Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith. That comes through piety, which we looked at last week as being "reverence for God or devout fulfillment of religious obligations"<sup>2</sup> and obedience. To clarify, we aren't trying to earn our salvation by works. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." (**Ephesians 2:8-9**) But then again, Jesus didn't just die on a cross for our sins so that we could be free to choose how we live. In believing on Christ and receiving Christ we are entering into a covenant relationship with God as His children as He is our Heavenly Father. And He isn't finished with us at the point of our conversion into the new birth in Christ. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (**Ephesians 2:10**) What are those good works? Loving God and loving others as Christ has loved us. We become a living testimony of what Christ has done for us as He can do for others.

Jesus told Peter that he doesn't need a full body washing by Jesus at that point because he was already clean. Jesus was speaking in

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1 Osmosis, <https://byjus.com/biology/osmosis/>

2 Random House, Webster's Dictionary, pg. 499 (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996)

spiritual terms. Perhaps it may have had a double meaning as Peter may have taken a bath earlier in the day but Jesus was always about and is always about His Father's business of building His eternal kingdom for the glory of God! The same is to be with us. Jesus is always about using each of us for building His eternal kingdom. It may not always seem like the grand and the glorious but if we are staying committed to Christ and sharing and showing the love and the gospel of Jesus Christ we can trust that Jesus is going to do what He wants to do for the glory of God. In what seems to me to be Jesus saying this in the humblest of ways He says, "a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."

What is Jesus saying in what He said about being blessed if you do them? Do what? Serving one another just as Jesus had done for us. This message is not about washing people's feet. Although, it certainly could be if a weary traveler arrives at your place of residence with their feet and sandals full of dust. While it truly is primarily out of the love that has been shown us as Jesus died on a cross for our sins so that we can be forgiven our sins, we are then showing the love of Jesus to others as Christ has loved us. The message should be that others will say, "I want what you have." You can then proudly proclaim that "it is Jesus the Christ the Son of God that I have and so too can you and that you can have eternal life in Him! Not only do we continue to go to Jesus because He is our Lord and Savior, our Rock, our Fortress our Refuge, and Shield, and the Horn of our salvation, and our Stronghold, although that should be more than enough, He is also our Wisdom, and Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption, and as Jesus stated, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5) We continue to go to our Precious Jesus for Him to root out the evil that lurks in our hearts, to clean us up to be showroom new. If we continue to put our trust in Jesus He promises us this: "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John 3:2) That my dear friends is a wonderful promise from God!

While we traverse this world there are many times where the dust and filth is going to cling to us and we have to ask Jesus to clean us up. In fact, He will reveal those things to us. The last thing Jesus says in our Scripture for today is this, "he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me." Let us therefore keep our eyes open for His divine encounters but let us keep looking unto Jesus. He is our all in all. Beloved of God, let us love one another. AMEN.