

Preparing Our Hearts

READ & PRAY THROUGH JOHN 13:1-17

JOHN 13:10-11: A TEST OF HEART CLEANSING - Christ gave His disciples to understand that the washing of their feet did not cleanse away their sin, but that **the cleansing of their heart was tested in this humble service**. If the heart was cleansed, this act was all that was essential to reveal the fact [5BC 1138.6]

JOHN 13:13-17: A DEDICATION TO SERVICE - The ordinance of feet washing is an ordinance of service. This is the lesson the Lord would have all learn and practice. **When this ordinance is rightly celebrated, the children of God are brought into holy relationship with each other, to help and bless each other.**

That His people might not be misled by the selfishness which dwells in the natural heart, and which strengthens by self-serving, Christ Himself set us an example of humility. **He would not leave this great subject in man's charge. Of so much consequence did He regard it that He Himself, One equal with God, washed the feet of His disciples** [John 13:13-17 quoted].

This ceremony means much to us. God would have us take the whole scene, not only the single act of outward cleansing. This lesson does not merely refer to the one act. It is to reveal the great truth that Christ is an example of what we through His grace are to be in our intercourse with each other. It shows that the entire life should be one of humble, faithful ministry.... **The ordinance of feet washing most forcibly illustrates the necessity of true humility.** While the disciples were contending for the highest place, in the promised kingdom, Christ girded Himself, and performed the office of a servant by washing the feet of those who called Him Lord. He, the pure, spotless Lamb of God, was presenting Himself as a sin-offering; and as He now ate the Passover with His disciples, He put an end to the sacrifices which for four thousand years had been offered. In the place of the national festival which the Jewish people had observed, He instituted a memorial service, in the ceremony of feet washing, and the sacramental supper, to be observed by His followers through all time and in every country. These should ever repeat Christ's act, that all may see that true service called for unselfish ministry (Manuscript 43, 1897). [5BC 1138.8-1139.1]

HEART PREPARATION FOR THE FOOT WASHING - As they come to this ordinance, the children of God should bring to remembrance the words of the Lord of life and glory: *"Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."* There is in man a disposition to esteem himself more highly than his brother, to work for self, to seek the highest place; and often this results in evil surmisings and bitterness of spirit. **The ordinance preceding the Lord's Supper is to clear away these misunderstandings, to bring man out of his selfishness, down from his stilts of self-exaltation, to the humility of heart that will lead him to serve his brother.**

The holy Watcher from heaven is present at this season to make it one of **soul searching, of conviction of sin, and of the blessed assurance of sins forgiven**. Christ in the fullness of His grace is there to change the current of the thoughts that have been running in selfish channels. The Holy Spirit quickens the sensibilities of those who follow the example of their Lord. As the Saviour's humiliation for us is remembered, thought links with thought; a chain of memories is called up, memories of God's great goodness and of the favor and tenderness of earthly friends. Blessings forgotten, mercies abused, kindnesses slighted, are called to mind. Roots of bitterness that have crowded out the precious plant of love are made manifest. Defects of character, neglect of duties, ingratitude to God, coldness toward our brethren, are called to remembrance. Sin is seen in the light in which God views it. Our thoughts are not thoughts of self-complacency, but of severe self-censure and humiliation. **The mind is energized to break down every barrier that has caused alienation. Evil thinking and evilspeaking are put away. Sins are confessed, they are forgiven. The**