

# The Sunday School Lesson

A Ministry of the Burnt Swamp Baptist Association

## JESUS AS SERVANT

by Rev. Mike Cummings, pastor of Mt. Alry Baptist Church  
 Jn. 13:1-7, 12-15; Lk. 22:24-27  
 We are involved in a study of the person and work of Jesus. This week's lesson deals with the title "Servant" in relation to Jesus and emphasis is upon his example of service. Some background passages are helpful. Mt. 12:15-21 depicts Jesus as choosing to minister in a manner such that He did not call attention to himself for personal fame or glory. He never trampled anyone en route to becoming great among men, Isa. 42:1-4. Jn. 13:1-16 gives the description of the example of Jesus washing his disciples' feet.

This example carries both a human and a divine side. Divinely, the act reminds us of the spiritual cleansing of regeneration that lifts us from sin to salvation. Tit. 3:5. Humanly, the act was symbolic of what disciples ought to do for one another. The clue is that Jesus was illustrating service among the brethren. He elevates the role of servant by taking it upon himself, being both Lord and Christ, to wash the feet of his inferiors. In Phil. 2:5-8 we have a marvelous hymn of the early church which portrays the Saviour as the supreme example of self-denial and servanthood. Though He was as much God as the Father, Jesus did not count Himself too good to become a servant. He served to His own end by

humbling himself unto death, which counted as the greatest service. Rom. 5:6-11.  
 Lk. 22:24-27. Look at these few observations. The disciples became involved in a jealous dispute about who should be considered the most important one. Jesus showed that the natural way of men was to label those in authority as important people. However, God's ways are not man's ways. Isa. 55:8. The most important man among men is he who waits on others as if he were a servant. Jesus said that He had chosen that way.  
 v. 24—"Strife" suggests an obstinate, stubborn rivalry. The argument was an eager contention. The debate was heated possibly because of the disciples' wrong understanding of the kingdom they hoped Christ would bring about. In Acts 1:6, even on Christ's last day with them, they looked for him to establish a kingdom here that would give them a place of prominence over men.  
 v. 25—"Exercise lordship" is one word in the scripture

language. It means to "be or act as a lord," including all the legal rights involved. It refers to the wise use of power that some men have in this world. However, in God's economy of life, He knows that every man is subject to some kind of lord and is never a free lord. Only God is a free lord. Therefore, the worldly opinion that says that some men are great because they have power does not contain the whole truth about greatness. "Benefactor" was a title reserved for some Greek kings.  
 v. 26—"But" is a simple connective suggesting here a very strong contradiction of the previous verse. Jesus here reverses the human side of greatness and rank stated in v. 25. "Younger" reminds us that in those days, age had some bearing on what status or rank you carried. They are opposite of the "greatest" or "chief."  
 v. 27—"He that sitteth at meat..." Jesus has an effective yet simple way of using pictures from everyday life to teach his most potent truths.

He recalls here the custom of Jewish hospitality in which the honored guest who is reclining at the dinner table very comfortable. In making the guest comfortable, the servant or woman of the house waits on him to bring him whatever he calls for. Naturally, this servant is lowly. The guest is more worthy. When Jesus asks the question about who is the greater, he does not wait for their obvious answer. But his words are sharp and powerful. "but I am among you as He that serveth." That statement should have changed their minds and their manners. Greatness could be in the lowliest service. Jesus illustrated His point more vividly in the event we are about to study; the washing of the disciples' feet. Jn. 13:1-7, 12-15.  
 v. 1—"Feast of the Passover" refers to the last of these passover celebrations that Jesus participated in. Remember that at age 12, he was already acquainted with this highest festival of re-

demption. Lk. 2:41-52. "Hour" refers to the moment of human suffering which God had set in which He would go to the cross. We are at a turning point in the life of Jesus and in the gospel of John. It is apparent from this point on, the theme of the suffering and death of Jesus is a major thrust in this gospel. It is for this purpose that Jesus came. Mk. 10:45.  
 v. 2—"The supper" may or may not have been the passover meal itself. Likely, it was not. It was however the famous Last Supper we have come to know as the occasion for the Lord's Supper. "Betray" reminds us that the madness of Jesus' fate had already been set in motion, and He knew it.  
 v. 3—"Jesus knowing" comforts me since it is good to know that Jesus is not deceived about his end which is coming. He knew it and so did his Father in heaven. Acts 2:23 and Jn. 10:17-18.  
 v. 4-5-The things necessary for washing feet were all available, but notice that no slave is there. Lk. 22:11. It

must have been at this very moment that the disciples began to dispute among themselves about who was greatest. Truly, the low assignment of washing feet was reserved for a slave or servant and not one of them. They needed not to have worried for Christ had prepared himself to wash their feet.  
 v. 6—"Simon Peter" may have been the first one or a later one in line, but he refuses Jesus' offer. "Dost thou wash my feet?" is a perfectly legitimate question since Peter recognizes his own unworthiness before One as great as his lord, Jesus. Jesus simply assures him that he will understand later. You become curious to find out what understanding Jesus was talking about.  
 vv. 12-15- We have given from the lips of Jesus half of what we are to understand about His washing Peter's feet. That is, these verses give us the human side. Simply put, footwashing is a noble and gracious act of humility, illustrating that men ought always to be willing to serve one another in every way. Anything good enough for me is not too good for you. Footwashing was a beautiful example of losing oneself in service to others. It was not meant to be an ordinance like baptism and the Lord's Supper, but it was an "example."  
 v. 15. The second half of the understanding of footwashing is the divine side. This side implies the spiritual cleansing that Christ brings. He is the Cleanser. He "laid aside his garments" of greatness and glory in order to gird himself with the garb of a servant.

That's right! Jesus looked like a servant that night, not a Saviour. But when you think about it, Jesus looked like a servant and not a Saviour on most occasions in his life. On his way to his judgement, when the crowd cried out for Barabbas, when Pilate scourged him, when they crowned him with thorns, when they smote him en route to Golgotha-in every way, Jesus looks more like a servant than a Saviour. If you search the latter portions of Isaiah, namely chapters 40-66, the Messiah would be a servant, a suffering servant.  
 It is proper that the footwashing event is told in the series of events leading to the Saviour's death. The foot washing even now is seen as a parable that is acted out which foreshadows what actually does happen to Jesus at the cross (Tasker). The foot washing shows the servant Jesus who will become the greatest in his lowliest service by dying at the cross. Jesus knows that the path of our redemption is a path of a servant. To make me free, He took the path of a servant. Mk. 10:45 and Phil. 2:5-8. So then, those who take Peter's attitude, that they want to do something for Jesus without allowing Jesus to cleanse them first, will be forbidden a place with Jesus. They can not have His fellowship with out accepting His service which is nothing other than his supreme service at the cross for us. The servant role was God's plan for Jesus. Isa. 53:2-5. It is that role that makes a Saviour out of God's servant. Finally, this unique servant/Saviour achieved ultimate greatness in Phil. 2:9-11. Read it some time.



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 -Journal, Washington, Ia.  
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 A hospital is a place where people who are run down wind up.  
 -Coast Guard Magazine.  
*Time For Thought*  
 When politicians agree, the angels may rejoice but the voters just wonder what's cooking.  
 -Globe, Boston.  
*True Words*  
 Committees have become so important that a subcommittee has to be appointed to do the work.  
 -Gazette, Augusta, Kan.  
*Right*  
 Democracy is a system under which a fellow who didn't vote can spend the rest of the year kicking about the candidates the other fellows elected.  
 -Wall Street Journal.

**Youth for Christ Church News**  
 by Violet Rose Wilkins  
 appreciated.  
 We will be having our monthly singing Sunday at 2:30 p.m. Everyone is invited.  
 Bro. Jesse Lowry presents his radio program every Sunday on WEWO at 2 p.m. You are cordially invited to tune in and worship the Lord with him.  
 If you don't have a Sunday School of your choice, we would love to invite you to attend ours. The Youth Class is studying Revelation. We will begin in Chapter One. Bro. Jesse is doing a wonderful job teaching this class.  
 Don't forget our youth services every Monday night at 7:30 p.m.  
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