

The Cleansing of Christ

Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC

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June 28, 2026

Text: John 13:1-31

Purpose: To help the congregation see that Jesus comes to His disciples to cleanse them from their self-righteousness, the accumulation of the daily dirt of sin, from pride, and from evil plans.



Some farmers were standing around shooting the breeze one day when the topic came around to animals and their distinguishing traits.

The group agreed that the dog was probably the most loyal animal and the mule was undoubtedly the most stubborn.

Farmer Jones piped in, "You know, I believe probably the friendliest animal in all God's creation is the goose."



The others wanted to know how he arrived at such a conclusion.

"Well," explained Farmer Jones, "I was out standing in my corn the other day, and a whole flock of 'em came by overhead. And, do you know, every single one of 'em honked and waved!"¹



I want us today to begin to draw pictures with our minds. You have heard stories told so vividly that it was as if you were there as it was told.

This morning, I want to paint for you a picture in words, you are responsible for providing the paint for the canvas of your mind.

Over the past few months, we have seen Jesus through the eyes of the Apostle John, the Beloved Disciple. We have seen Jesus walking from city to city, teaching the eager, encouraging the faithful, scolding the skeptics, healing the hurting, feeding the hungry, not to mention, crossing barriers by talking with sinners, Samaritans, and women.

This man Jesus has kicked up so much dust in the region, that the ruling Priests, the Sanhedrin, have decided that this is one person that must be eliminated. Their positions as leaders are threatened. Their society has become shaken by the revolution that is being molded in the wake of One that claims to be equal to God.

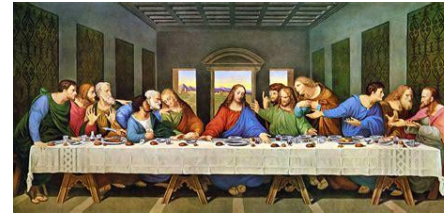


The passage of scripture we have just read records the events of Thursday evening after sundown, the night before Passover, which begins on Friday evening at

sundown. In just 24 hours, Jesus will share the Last Supper with His disciples, be betrayed by Judas, arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, accused of several “crimes” before several Roman officials, whipped almost to the point of death, and then at the third hour of the day, 9:00 a.m. on

Friday morning, Jesus will be nailed on a cross to die for the sins of the world.

Two weeks ago, we talked about how Jesus knew His hour had come. He knew He wanted to give some final instructions. He knew that Judas’ heart was not pure. He knew the pride and arrogance of these twelve men He had chosen to follow Him.



Many of you have seen Leonardo DeVinci’s Last Supper scene. In that we see twelve men in a frozen pose as they sit at a table

interacting with one another. Over the years, I have preached about the interaction among the disciples that night. There is a phrase in that Last Supper meeting where the disciples asked themselves this question about who would betray Jesus. They said, “Is it I?” In that sermon, I was trying to illustrate that the twelve men knew their hearts and they all were questioning if it was possible that one of them could be the one that would betray Jesus. If we are honest with ourselves, we may even have thought the same thing if we would have been there.

On one end of the table, we have Simon Peter and his brother Andrew who we often call the bringer. Then we have James and John who are the sons of Zebedee, Matthew the tax collector, Phillip, and Bartholomew. There is also Thomas the doubter, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot who is a hot-headed blood thirsty revolutionary, all for armed rebellion against Rome. Also, at the table we have Thaddaeus, (who is called Judas the son of James in

Luke 6). And lastly, we have Judas Iscariot the son of Simon.

I. Cleansing from the Dirt of Self-Seeking Power

As they entered the room, I am sure Jesus knew these men needed cleansing. The first area of cleansing was in their attitude of self-seeking power. The only cure for this was an object lesson of servanthood and humility. Jesus would take care of their cleansing with this one act of service.



These men had come into Jerusalem knowing that the Pharisees were looking for Jesus. He had just raised Lazarus from the dead. There was a bounty on His head. They all knew that. Even Thomas said; *“let us go with Him so we will die with Him.”* They were all boastful, self seeking, anxious, nervous, and invincible. One of the disciple’s mothers had asked Jesus if her sons could sit on the right hand or the left hand of Jesus when he came into his kingdom. Everyone wanted to be a part of success. They wanted the premium positions.

II. Cleansing from the Dirt of Daily Walk.

Jesus knew these men needed to be cleansed. They did not realize that they needed the kind of cleansing Jesus was providing. The kind of cleansing was one that only came from Christ. The cleansing came as Jesus washed their dirty feet.



The hosts of the meal had prepared the room for these thirteen men, but they did not provide household servants to attend to their needs during their meal. The men came bounding into the room, jockeying for position. John the beloved sat on one side while the money changer, Judas Iscariot, sat on the other side. In verse two of this text, it says, *“And the supper being ended...”* A proper reading of the Greek would indicate, *“And during supper...”* Jesus got up, took off his outer flowing robe, wrapped a servant’s robe around his waist, took the bowl of water and started at one end of that table.

All eyes were on Jesus. They were so focused on eating a meal, that they all failed to recognize the need to wash their feet. They had traveled those dusty roads and now their feet were dirty from only wearing sandals. Jesus began to clean their feet. I am sure you could hear a pin drop in the room. Imagine the thoughts: *“Here is our master, washing our feet. No you can’t do that. You should not be doing that. We should have washed each other’s feet, not you washing our feet.”* They all thought it, but did not speak it out loud. That is until Jesus got to Peter.



They had walked that day and were in need of the cleansing of daily dirt. How many of us can identify with the sin of daily dirt? As we go through life, we stray, we err, we mis-speak, we commit sins of omission (the things we fail to do) and sins of commission (the things we actually do).

When we have walked through life, we need to come back to Jesus and ask as He taught us,



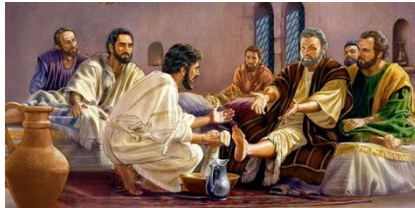
*Give us this day,
our daily bread and
Forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.*

These debts are not just a one-time sin; it implies that we daily sin. We need to realize that we need to come to Him daily for forgiveness, just as we come to Him for our daily bread.

I don't believe Jesus was trying to institute a new ordinance for the Church to do. I believe he was trying to initiate an attitude of the heart. An attitude of one's willingness to come to Jesus daily, seek Him first when we sin, and walk in the way of service to others.

III. Cleansing from Dirty Pride

But there was another area of cleansing that needed to be addressed as well. That is the area of Pride. All of us are guilty of this pride issue. C.S. Lewis describes pride as the one sin that no one can escape. In our poverty, we brag. In our wealth, we brag. In our service, even to God, we brag. When Jesus came to cleanse Peter, we encounter this conversation:



Peter said, *“No Lord, you shall not wash my feet. You are too precious to me.”*

Jesus replied, *“Yes Peter. I have to wash your feet. If I don't wash them, then you will have no part of me.”*

Shook up and dazed, the quick speaking Peter replied, *“Well, if washing my feet identifies me with you, then I want everyone to know that I am ALL the way with you. Then wash my hands and my head! It's as if the prideful Peter was saying, “Look at me! See how dedicated I am.”*

Jesus replied, *“He who has bathed, only needs to wash his feet. You have already taken a bath. You have already taken care of the big area of uncleanness. You only need to have your feet taken care of. You, Peter, are clean. But there is one among you that is not clean.”*



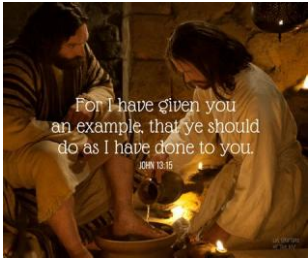
Peter sat down and allowed Jesus to clean his feet.

IV. Cleansing of Dirty Planning



We don't know the exact order of the cleansing of the feet of the disciples, but I am sure when He came to Judas Iscariot, Jesus knew of the plans of betrayal. Jesus desired that Judas repent, turn back to Jesus, and confess his plans of evil. Yet, the yielding of Judas to Satan's plans was already put into motion.

After setting the bowl of muddy water to the side, placing His outer robe back on, Jesus returned to the seat of honor.



Jesus said, “*Do you know what I have done? You call me Lord and teacher, having washed your feet; you wash one another’s feet. I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.*”

Each of us is called to encourage one another and lift one another up to a higher standard of conduct. All of us can lapse back into self-seeking, self-pride, unconfessed daily sin, or even dirty planning. We need the fellowship of one another to keep us cleansed before a world that is watching our actions.

Yet, Jesus was not finished with Judas Iscariot. I am sure no one names their child Judas anymore. Today we think of a person named Judas as an evil person. About a hundred years before the birth of Jesus, there was a revolution which led to the autonomy of the nation of Israel. This was known as the Maccabean Revolt led by Judas Macabees. He became the hero of independence for this small nation. Hundreds of mothers named their children Judas because he was a hero to the nation. Even two of Jesus’ disciples were named Judas. – Judas Iscariot and Judas, son of James.

Jesus was still in command of the situations before him. He was Master of Ceremonies of His own drama. Back in Matthew 5:18, we read that Jesus said that not one “*jot or tittle*” of the law would go by unfulfilled. There was a passage in Psalm 41:9 that says, “*He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.*” Jesus planned to fulfill this as they reclined at the table.

As Jesus was reclining at the table on his left elbow, He reaches with His right hand and dips a piece of bread and hands it to Judas, who is probably on His left side. This was given as a sign of honor in most instances. The host passes a portion of the bread to his guest. The reason we have this account recorded in the Book of John is that the one that was laying just in front of Jesus was John the beloved disciple who wrote the Book of John. Jesus could speak directly into John’s ear without anyone else hearing him.



Jesus knew his hour was almost here. As Jesus hands Judas the bread, he quietly speaks, “*Whatever you do, do quickly.*” Of the commentators I have read said that God does things slowly and perfectly. Whatever Satan does, he does quickly with destruction as its purpose.



Over the years, I have thought about this man Judas Iscariot. Did Judas try to force Jesus’ hand and to declare His power over the Pharisees? Did Judas want the money and the inside connection at the same time? Had Satan seduced Judas to believe that it was God’s will to do this? Many people have succumbed to the thought that what they were doing was “God’s will” when in fact they were being lied to by Satan. Some men and women have justified adultery as acceptable. Some have promoted sin as giving God a greater opportunity to show His Grace. We must be very careful not to fall into the very same lie that Judas fell for – because the destruction is great!

If you look at Judas, Jesus gave Judas numerous opportunities to repent and accept the truth. God always gives us an opportunity of escape. Children in school are taught that if they ever catch on fire, they are to do what? STOP, DROP, AND ROLL. Judas could have escaped if he would have done a similar thing. If we are to escape the fire of judgment, we must be willing to STOP, DROP, and PRAY.

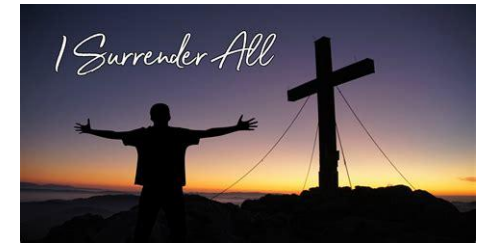


Judas failed to do that. In verse 31 we read, *“Having received the piece of bread, he (Judas) went out immediately. And it was night.”*

Passover is always celebrated on the night of a full moon. It falls on the 15th day of the month of Nissa (as we read in Exodus). I am sure the light of the moon enabled Judas to complete his plans of betrayal under a well-lit night. I am sure later that evening the disciples went to the Garden of Gethsemane by the light of the silvery moon. The guards grabbed Jesus after the betrayer’s kiss and led Him away to His trial, torture, and crucifixion. But Jesus said, *“It was night.”*

Oh, what a great night it is for a person that is far from God. Oh, what great dark dread is weighing upon the person that has never come to God for that whole cleansing act of forgiveness. Oh, what a night of confusion it must be when we choose to walk in pride, self-righteousness, sin, and wicked plans. God has given us a way of escape, but only if we submit ourselves to Him to be cleansed.

What area of your life do you need to submit to God and ask Him to cleanse?
Is it your lack of initially coming to God for forgiveness?



Is it your pride that is standing in the way?

Do you need a time of cleansing from those sins that so easily beset you?

Do you have a self-satisfied, self-righteous attitude that needs cleansing? It is said that those that sin little sense they have little need for forgiveness. It is true, but you still need to come to Christ and ask him to cleanse you.

This past week I have been personally challenged to place my walk with God first in my life. I need to lay down those things that interfere with my relationship with God. It has become my desire to seek the things of God every day.



LET US PRAY

Notes:

¹Mickey’s Funnies, A Goose Funny, June 16, 2026