

Jesus Looking at His Own Cross

A Walk with John

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John 8:1-11

John 13:1-11

We are on a journey towards Calvary. We look at the cross on which Jesus was crucified from the perspective of different authors. We started with Isaiah, Paul, Luke, and today we continue with John.

In reality, we are looking at events that happened before the trial and crucifixion of our Lord. Events that we may tend to think have nothing to do with the cross. We will take two stories.

First Story: (John 8:1-11)

Jesus demonstrates his grace toward a woman caught in adultery.

Jesus was at the Temple teaching. He was in the courtyard of the Temple. The Scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery. How in the world did they catch her? Most likely this woman was well known! These people were not exactly interested in condemning this woman; they were actually planning a trap to put Jesus in a tough situation. What do I mean?

-According to the Law of Moses, the woman and the man had to be put to death because they were caught in the act of adultery (Leviticus 20:10) (Deuteronomy-22:22). One can observe that they only brought the woman. That says something...

-Remember they were all under the Roman authorities. **According to the Romans**, only Romans were in charge of executions.

They wanted to see how Jesus was going to respond. If he agreed to put this woman to death, he would be in trouble with the Romans. If he rescued this woman from execution, he would be considered against Moses and the Law.

A well-planned trap.

Jesus listened to them then he bent down and wrote on the ground. We don't know what he wrote. Dr. Kenneth Bailey's interpretation is what I want to bring forth. Bailey says Jesus wrote in Hebrew or Aramaic the word *Hamouth*, which means: **DEATH.** תְּמוּת .

So far the story is not unusual. Jesus knew the Law of Moses and that was the verdict according to the Law. Jesus is saying to the crowd, "This is the verdict and you want me to be in trouble with the Roman authorities, fine." The method of execution in the Law was stoning. So he said, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." In other words, **"Gentlemen, who will be the one to join me to go to jail?"** Only the Romans could carry out executions. You all know what happened next. One by one the men left.

Where is the cross in this event?

The woman was observing all this. She saw how **Jesus humiliated** these people in their courtyard, in their Temple. She knew that this was not the end. They would come again to take Jesus down.

Jesus' response (which I will put in my own words) is very important "Where are the ones who condemned you? Where are those who rejected you?" "They are gone," answers the woman. **"I will not condemn you either. Yet, I also do not agree with your lifestyle. Go and do not sin."**

As in last Sunday's sermon, we see Jesus absorbing the hatred of the people towards this woman. We see him absorbing our guilt, our shame. This is **leading Jesus towards the cross** which the ultimate expression of his costly love towards us.

We have seen how Jesus demonstrated his costly love and grace toward the woman. Those kinds of actions annoyed the Pharisees. No wonder they crucified our Lord.

Second Story: (John 13:1-11)

Our next scene is in the upper room, where Jesus is having supper with his disciples. It was the **Passover meal**. Let us look at the events as recorded by his disciple John.

“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.” (John 13:1 NIV)

Three themes: Jesus knew the hour had arrived; he will depart to the Father; and he loves them very much- it also means that he had the ultimate expression of love towards them. (**know, depart, love**)

Again the same themes repeat:

“**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**,
rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a
towel, tied it around his waist. 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.” (John 13:3-5 NIV)

The same themes: (**know, depart, love**) **Jesus knew; will depart to the Father; loves them by demonstrating (washing the feet).**

Talking about feet in the Middle Eastern context is something very low and degrading. You can insult someone if you say, “My shoes are better than you.” You will never show the bottom of your feet to anyone; that is a big insult. What a shameful act was done by an Iraqi reporter a few years ago towards the President in Iraq. A man threw his shoes at him. His intention was not just hurting the President physically, but also to disgrace him.

Jesus gave the example of **useless salt**, where it **will be dumped** on the ground and **people will walk over it**. That is very bad.

We have another verse in Psalms (Psalm 41:6)

“**Even my close friend, whom I trusted,**
he who shared my bread,
has lifted up his heel against me.”

That was Judas who betrayed his Lord.

Jesus is humbly accepting the role of servant to wash the feet of his disciples.
One of my favorite passages is in Philippians 2:6-8 NIV

**“Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
but made himself nothing, (literally, He emptied himself)
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross!”**

I am giving you all these examples just to show how meaningful it was what Jesus did to his disciples- taking off his garment, putting on the garment of the humility, and becoming like a servant. Remember, washing the feet of the guests was the duty of the slave.

This is not just a simple humble act by Jesus. This is much more than that.

Do you see how the roles are changed? The leader, the king, became a servant. The disciples were seated in the chair of nobility.

We find this in the Messianic Banquet at the end times when the roles will be changed:

“Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, **he will dress himself for service** and **have them recline at table**, and **he will come and serve them**. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” (Luke 12:35-40)

Jesus is acting this **end- times banquet**, which will happen when the Messiah returns. Jesus is preparing his disciples and us today for what will come in the future.

Peter did not allow Jesus to wash his feet.

“‘Lord, do you wash my feet?’ Jesus answered him, ‘What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.’ ”(6-7)

Do you see what is happening? Jesus is not just washing the feet of the disciples. It is not just a good gesture of humility; it is more than that. **Jesus is the Messiah.**

He is the one who came to this earth to bring the Good News of salvation. **The ultimate love and servanthood were demonstrated the next day on the cross.** After the resurrection, we are all given the chance of a new life in anticipation of the Messianic Banquet when He comes back as a King.

We have entered the “end times” where we continue bearing the cross and enjoying the victory of our Lord over the death and sin in our lives.

Meanwhile, we are waiting with our “lamps burning” (Luke 12:35) ready for His return anytime. When he returns, he will wash our feet again. Can you see the whole picture?

Meanwhile, we will **continue washing each other’s feet.** Jesus said: “You also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.” (14-15)

So what?

Allow Jesus to wash your “feet”. Allow Jesus to wash the “dirty” areas of your life. The prostitute woman came to be stoned, yet left allowing Jesus to “wash” her old life. “Go and do not sin” was the command. We all need to allow Jesus to wash our feet, otherwise we do not have any connection with him.

I will leave you with this question: What does it mean in your life to wash each other’s feet?

Amen