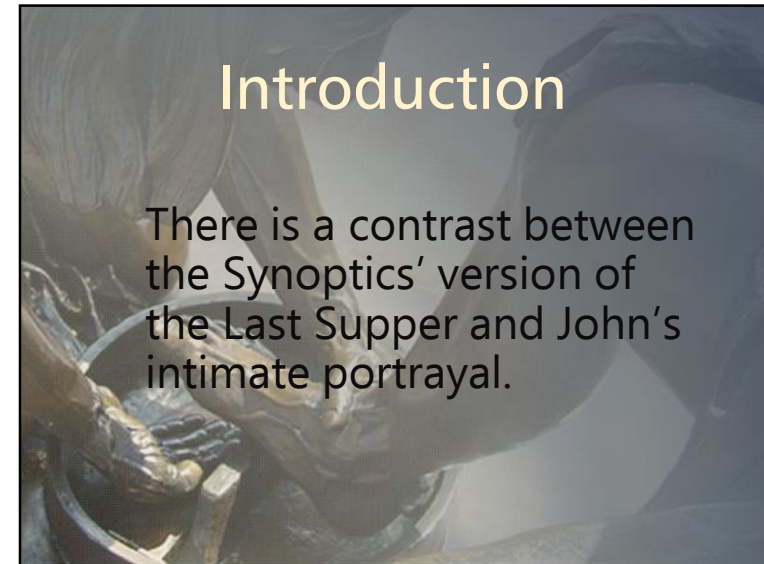


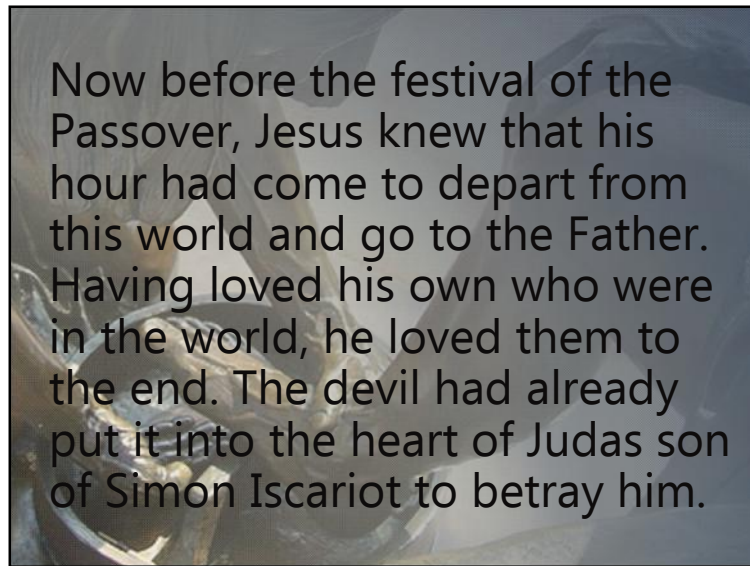
The symbol of the Towel

John 13:1-17

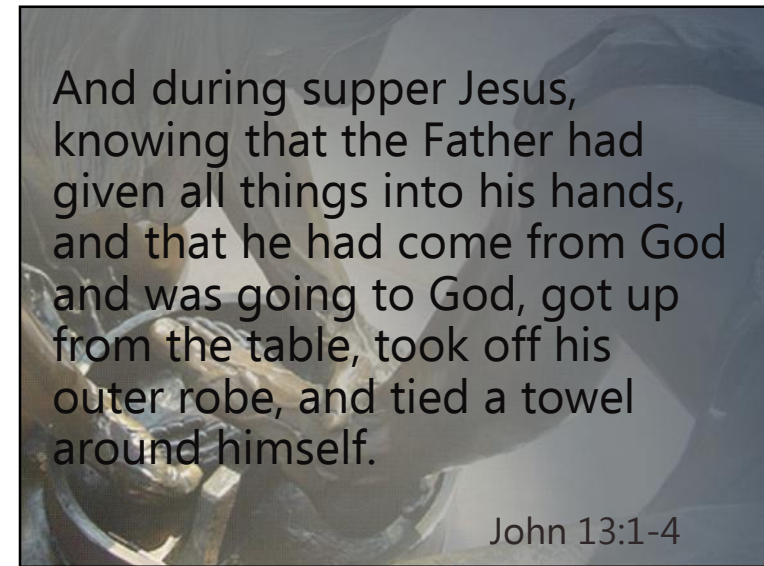


Introduction

There is a contrast between the Synoptics' version of the Last Supper and John's intimate portrayal.



Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him.



And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself.

John 13:1-4

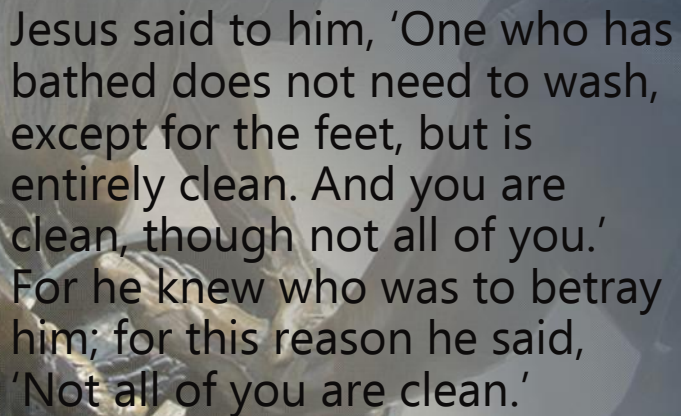
I. The Heart of Jesus

- a. A complete self-giving in love (v1) – the washing of feet as a demonstration of self emptying
- b. A spirit of self-emptying crystalized in the meal – Jesus as the sacrificial lamb

- c. Our culture wants a strong God; but we are presented here with a crucified God.

Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?'

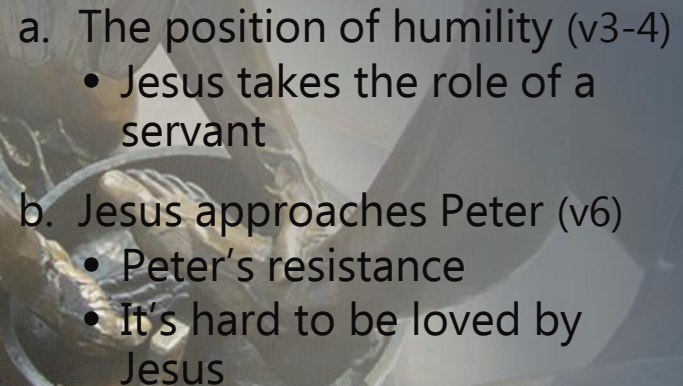
Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.' Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!'

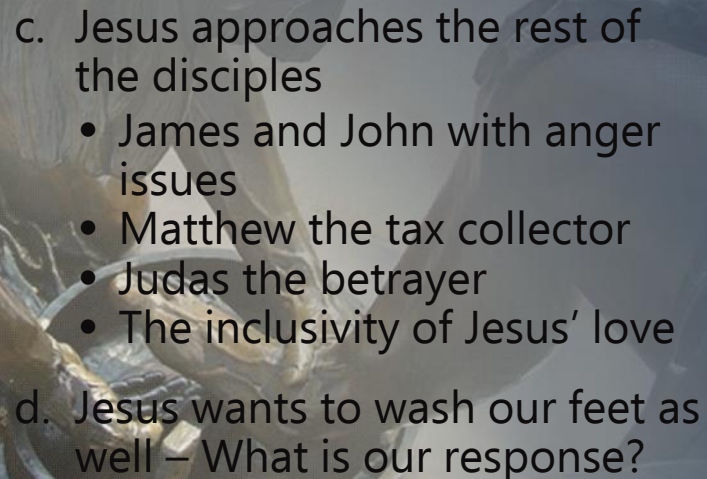


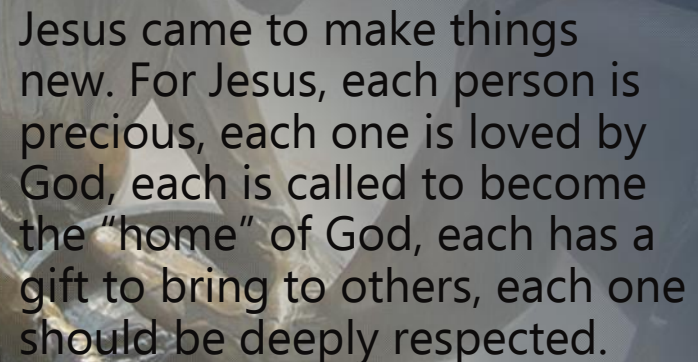
Jesus said to him, 'One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.' For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'

John 13:5-11

The Hands of Jesus

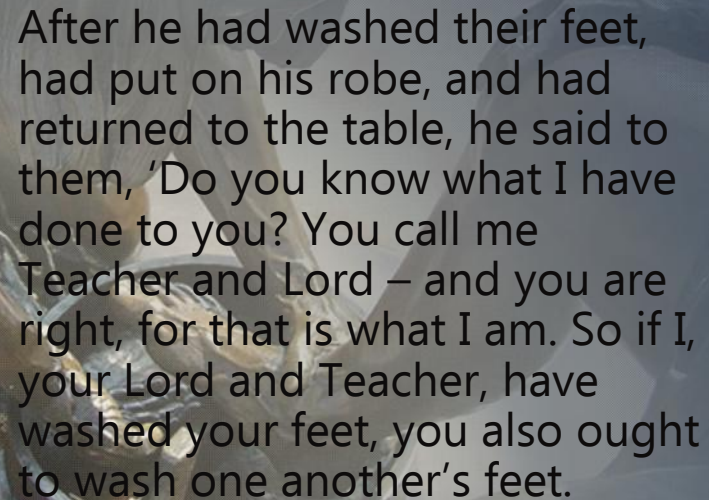
- 
- a. The position of humility (v3-4)
 - Jesus takes the role of a servant
 - b. Jesus approaches Peter (v6)
 - Peter's resistance
 - It's hard to be loved by Jesus

- 
- c. Jesus approaches the rest of the disciples
 - James and John with anger issues
 - Matthew the tax collector
 - Judas the betrayer
 - The inclusivity of Jesus' love
 - d. Jesus wants to wash our feet as well – What is our response?

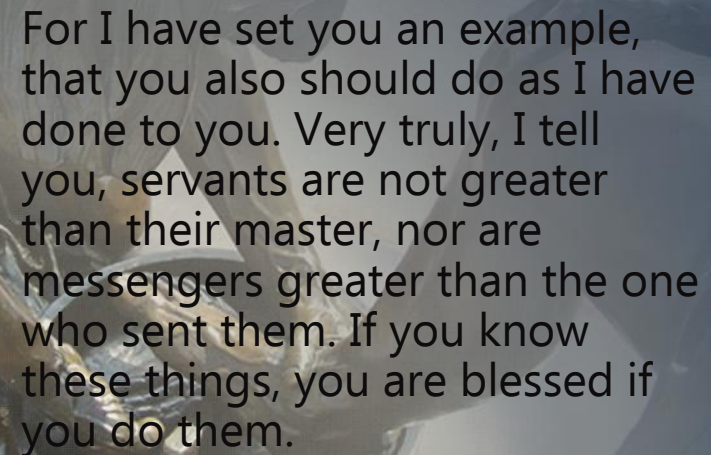


Jesus came to make things new. For Jesus, each person is precious, each one is loved by God, each is called to become the "home" of God, each has a gift to bring to others, each one should be deeply respected.

Jean Vanier



After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord – and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.



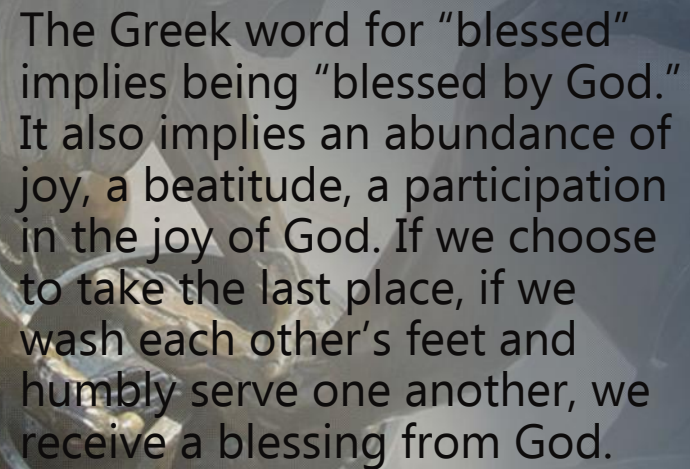
For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

John 13:12-17

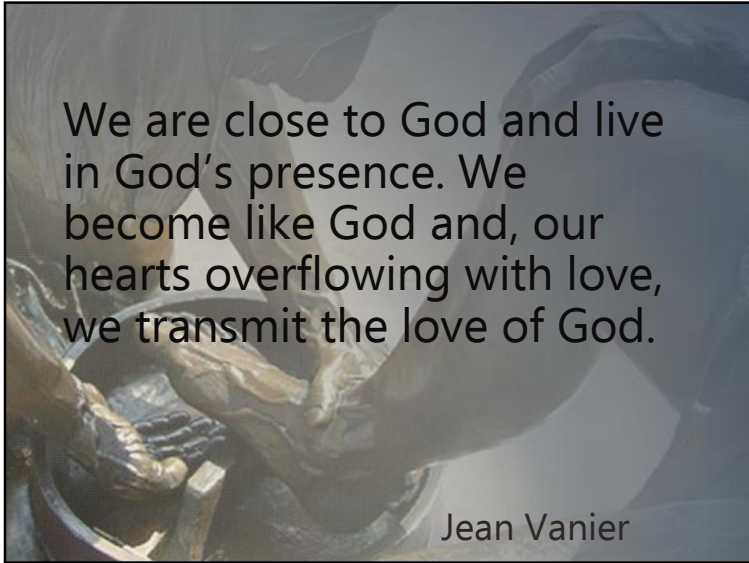
III. Jesus and the Symbol of the Towel

- Jesus' question – "Do you know what I have done to you?" (v12)
 - Jesus' great action of love on our behalf
 - Are we receptive and aware of this great love?

- Jesus' exhortation to follow his example with a spirit of humility and service (v14-15)
- Jesus' beatitude – "If you know these things you are blessed if you do them" (v17)
 - Jesus blesses us in our obedience of serving others



The Greek word for "blessed" implies being "blessed by God." It also implies an abundance of joy, a beatitude, a participation in the joy of God. If we choose to take the last place, if we wash each other's feet and humbly serve one another, we receive a blessing from God.



We are close to God and live in God's presence. We become like God and, our hearts overflowing with love, we transmit the love of God.

Jean Vanier