

The Mind of Christ In the Christian – Part 4

INTRODUCTION

A. Last Of Series

1. Today's message is the last in our series on the Nature of Jesus.
2. Those who've been with us throughout this series know that really what we've been examining is the call to be a servant –
 - a. that in the Kingdom of God, greatness is not about being on top;
 - b. it's defined as being last, in being the servant of all.
3. I want to dive right into our text today so turn to Luke 22 . . .

B. Luke 22

1. If your bible has section headings you'll notice that this is at the end of Jesus' public ministry.
2. In fact, this is the last time He will be with the disciples prior to His arrest and crucifixion.
3. Look at vs. 7 & 8 -

⁷Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. ⁸And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat."

4. Jesus sent these two to go and get things ready for the Last Supper.
 - a. they went, found the room, secured the items for dinner and someone to cook for them
 - b. then returned to Jesus and the other disciples and led them to the room.
 - c. they sat, and enjoyed the Passover meal together.
5. Now look at v. 19 –

¹⁹And He took bread, gave thanks and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

²⁰Likewise He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup *is* the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."

- a. this took place at the end of the Passover meal –
 - b. Jesus instituted this rite of celebrating what we've come to call Communion.
6. I just want everyone to get the setting for what we're about to read.
7. This is the *Last Supper* – a solemn moment when Jesus will say some of the most astonishing and important things He's ever said to them.
8. So, now that we have the proper perspective on what's going on, let's look at v. 24 –

24 Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest.

9. Here they are again – arguing about what? About whose the greatest among them.
- a. had they been *deaf* to Jesus's many lessons about this before? It seems they had.
 - b. and now that they've come to this special hour when it was all narrowing down to the cross, they seemed to be oblivious to the sense of urgency and fervency in Jesus' words and countenance.
 - c. they were still competing with one another in the argument over who was best, over who was *closer* to Jesus, who was the most *spiritual* among them.
10. Once more, Jesus tells them -

25 And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' 26 But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves.

11. As we saw last week, the disciples had fallen into the trap of thinking of greatness and success in purely worldly terms.
12. Jesus turns the world's ideas on greatness on their head and says that in the Kingdom of God, greatness is defined by being, not a lord, but a servant.
13. Here Jesus says that the greatest in the Kingdom is found in being like the *younger*.

- a. in that time and culture, it was the firstborn who got all the goodies
 - b. when dad passed on, it was the oldest child who got the house and land and property.
 - c. the younger children lived totally at the benevolence and charity of their elder brother.
 - d. and as a result, the younger brothers and sister typically had a hard time making it.
 - e. the world system was no friend to the younger;
 - f. and to be *the younger* meant to be *disadvantaged*, at least in terms of what the world considers an advantage.
14. When Jesus said that those who want to be great in His kingdom are to be as the younger, He was directly rebuking the disciples pre-occupation with the marks and status of worldly success.
- a. He was reminding them that following Him would put them at *odds* with the world!
 - b. and that a concern for accumulating the marks of worldly status would only burden them and slow them down in their pursuit of the Kingdom.
15. I've learned that when traveling, the joy of the journey is directly proportional to the luggage I carry!
- a. the first time Lynn & I went to Israel, we packed two massive heavy suitcases
 - b. we thought, wow- nearly two weeks half way around the world – we'd better bring along a lot of clothes and **stuff**.
 - c. even though the extent of our luggage handling was only in the airports and then from the lobby of the hotel to our room – it was a major ordeal hucking those bags around!
 - d. on our next trip, we put all our **stuff** in one suitcase – what a difference!
16. If you've had to make a move, you now how much **stuff** you can accumulate!
- a. in fact, many of us have *so much stuff*, we have to rent special units just to store it.
 - b. how many of us have shelves and little bins to separate and store our **stuff**?
 - c. I'll bet some of us men even have **stuff** in our garages that if

someone were to ask us what it was, we'd be hard pressed to say – but we keep it from year to year because we know, if we throw it out, we'll need it the next day.

17. One day a man approached Jesus and asked, “Good Master, What must I do to be saved?”
 - a. now – this was a *smart* guy – he knew the right question to ask.
 - 1) other people asked Jesus *dumb* questions like –“Should we pay taxes to Caesar?”
 - 2) “Whose wife will she be in the resurrection?”
 - 3) dumb questions!
 - 4) but this guy asked a good question – he was sharp!
 - b. not only was he sharp, the gospels tell us he was *rich*!
 - c. he looked like a prime candidate to join the Apostolic Band!
 - 1) you can just picture the apostles looking on and poking each other in excitement
 - 2) this was the kind of guy who could underwrite and sponsor their whole team
 - 3) imagine how serious the buzz would be around *here* if one Sunday morning Bill Gates and his family showed up for church and came forward at the end of service for prayer
 - d. he's the kind of guy most churches would look at and ask to be on their elder board.
 - e. Jesus said to him, “You know the commandments, see that you keep them.”
 - f. the man replied that he'd done his best to keep them since the time he was knee high to a grasshopper.
 - g. so, he's not only smart & rich, he's also *godly*!
 - h. but then Jesus said, “One thing you lack; go and sell all that you have, give it to the poor, and come and follow Me.”
 - i. it says that the man turned away sorrowful, because he had a lot of – **STUFF!**
18. There's nothing wrong with being rich.
 - a. many of God's most effective servants have been incredibly prosperous.
 - b. there's nothing inherently wrong with having wealth –
 - c. the problem is when wealth *has you*.
 - d. there's nothing wrong with having possessions; the problem arises when your **stuff** *possess you*.

19. The rich young man's stuff possessed him, it dominated his heart and affections and the thought of parting with it was too much to bear
20. He'd come to define himself *by the world's idea of greatness* and couldn't part with it.
21. When Jesus said that those who are great in the Kingdom are those who are *as the younger*, He meant that we need to make a clean break with the world's ideas on what constitutes success – and keep our touch with this world as light as possible.

27 For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.

22. Jesus asks them, “Who's greater, the one who sits and eats, or the servant who stands by waiting to refill the bowl? *According to the world's wisdom and way of doing things*, it's the one who sit and eats.”
23. Then He says, “But look fella's – I'm your Master and you call me ‘Lord’, and yet I am like that servant who waits on *you* while *you* sit at the table.”
24. Okay, now, go to John 13 –

II. JOHN 13

A. Vs. 1-5

1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

1. Or – “He loved them to the uttermost.”
2. Twice before in his gospel John has said that Jesus's enemies could not lay hands on Him because “His hour had not yet come.”
3. Well, that hour has finally arrived – the last phase of His ministry, when all that is left is for Him to depart from the this world to the Father.
4. This is the *grand climax* – the high point of the plot of a story that had begun when God stretched out space like a vast dark curtain and the first stars burst into existence.

5. John means to portray this as *High Drama* – and that’s the way it comes across.

2And supper [meaning the Passover] being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray Him, ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, ⁴rose from supper and laid aside His garments,

6. STOP! Don’t read any further.

7. Look at the way John builds the scene and tension . . .

- a. the Passover meal, that great feast celebrating the victory of God over the power of Egypt, is finally done.
- b. as we’ve just read in Luke 22, Jesus has just added a new rite to the Passover celebration for His followers – Communion!
- c. the enemy is committed to a course of action in betraying Jesus and the plan has been set in motion.
- d. Jesus is now fully aware of the hour and that there is just a short time till it’s all over.
- e. the plan of God from the dawn of eternity has been entrusted to Him and He possesses all authority in heaven and earth.
- f. so He rises from the table, pulls off His tunic, shirt, undergarment, and →
- g. what we expect to read is – that His appearance was transformed like it had been on the Mount of Transfiguration
 - 1) His skin began to glow with an eerie light.
 - 2) He extended His hands and rays of light shot forth in rainbow colors from His fingertips.
 - 3) He opened His mouth and out came the sound of a mighty rushing waterfall.
 - 4) above and around Him was an emerald circle.
 - 5) powerful looking heavenly beasts swirled in the air, singing “Holy! Holy! Holy!”
 - 6) and the disciples all fell down as though dead in sheer terror of what they saw.
- h. surely that is what we *expect* to read because that’s the way John sets it up –
- i. but it’s not what happened

4 [Jesus] rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. ⁵After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded.

8. Friends, connect the dots to what we just looked at in Luke 22.
 - a. the disciples had been arguing over who was greatest – Again!
 - b. Jesus said to them that He, their Master, was among them as One who served.
 - c. and here He rises from the table to *actually serve them*.
9. He knows that all authority is His and that all things lie in His power.
10. What does He wield that power to accomplish? He washed their feet!

B. Washing Feet

1. It was customary upon entering a house that a servant would wash your feet.
 - a. most streets were unpaved, made of dirt or gravel.
 - b. the streets were also the place that many people tossed out their refuse and emptied their bedpans.
 - c. they were dirty and smelly and because people either went barefoot or at best wore sandals, their feet became soiled.
 - d. no one wanted this filth in their homes, so they removed their sandals and washed their feet before entering the house.
 - e. in those houses wealthy enough to own servants, it was a slave's duty to perform this task of foot-washing.
 - f. immediately inside the doorway, was a small vestibule or foyer in which was a stool, a stone basin, and a pitcher of water.
 - g. the slave would sit there and when someone entered, he would offer the stool to the guest, remove their sandals, place the feet in the basin and then pour water over them, rub them to loosen the muck, and then rinse and dry them with a towel.
 - h. this was considered the lowest and most menial task and so was given to the youngest and lowest servant.
2. When the disciples had entered the room that evening to celebrate the Passover with Jesus, no doubt they'd looked for someone to

wash their feet – but there was no servant, and they weren't about to stoop to the task themselves.

3. Why, they hadn't even washed their own feet, lest the others see them doing it and then line up to have them wash their feet too.
4. So all through dinner, they'd sat at the table with dirty, stinky feet.
5. Pride stinks!
6. Now that the dinner is coming to an end, and now that they've once more started up their on-going debate about who was the greatest,
 - a. Jesus, knowing the time left with them is tricking away like the last sands in an hourglass,
 - b. rises from the table, pulls off his garments, wraps a towel around His waist,
 - c. pours water into a basin and then moves to the feet of one of the disciples and starts to wash.
7. Oh friend – never was there a picture more contrary to the wisdom and ways of this world!
8. And the disciples are speechless – all that is, until Jesus gets to Peter

6 Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?"

7 Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this."

8 Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!"

Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

9. Peter thought Jesus was giving them a test and as He made his way around the table Peter grew increasingly indignant that no one stopped Him.
 - a. arriving at Peter's feet, he declined
 - b. it was unthinkable that the Master should so humble Himself.
 - c. why, Peter would not permit it!
10. But Jesus rebuked Peter's resistance to this humble service.
11. What were the disciples arguing about? Who was the greatest among them!
12. Jesus said the greatest was the servant of what? Of ALL!

13. Jesus IS THE GREATEST OF ALL, and if Peter refused this service, then he excluded himself from that ALL.
14. We need to understand that the foot-washing was a foreshadowing of the great cleansing work Jesus would do in just a few hours at the Cross.
15. The Cross was the consummate act of service for all of History.
16. The Cross is what secures Jesus' eternal status as the Greatest in the Kingdom, and this washing of the disciples' feet was the precursor to it.
17. That's why Jesus said in v. 7

“What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.”

18. Peter, now duly humbled, submits, and Jesus washed his feet.

C. Vs. 12-17

12So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you?”

13You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.

14If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

15For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

16Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.

17If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

1. With this, the debate among them about who was greatest was forever settled.
2. We never read about them arguing over this issue again.
3. For within just a day, the Cross would forever burn this image and truth upon their hearts and minds.

4. Kingdom greatness is defined by being a servant.
 - a. it's not about status, rank or power.
 - b. it's not the one who dies with the most toys wins.
 - c. it's not about titles, income, or fame.
5. It's all and only about realizing how much GOD loves people, and then placing ourselves at His disposal to make that love visible.
6. If you want to know what God is like – look at Jesus.
 - a. if you want to know what Jesus is like, then it's supposed to be that we look at Christians
 - b. just as Jesus was God incarnate – so we are the Body of Christ!
 - c. a Body in which every part plays a part in the health and success of the whole.

III. CONCLUSION

A. The Blessedness Of Doing

1. Look at v. 17 as we close

17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

2. It's not enough to merely KNOW.
3. Knowledge has to be translated into action.
4. I can stand up here and give a 4 week series on servanthood that's impassioned and stirring
5. It can sound like I've got this wired and give you the impression that I sit in the doorway of our home and when people enter, I give them a foot massage.
6. But we all know there's a vast difference between knowing and doing.
7. Blessedness isn't found in the knowing – it's in the *doing*!

B. The Call

1. My precious brothers and sisters – the Lord is calling us to make a clean break with the world and its ideas on what constitute success.
2. We must be what we are – and to be a Christian, means to BE A SERVANT.
3. Be what you are!
4. Let go the world's pursuit of greatness and embrace the glorious truth that Jesus gave us; We find life by losing ours and taking His.

5. It's Jesus who will give us the power to live the servant's life.
6. We must simply turn to Him and ask Him to live through us.
7. It's not about us – it's about Him, living through us.
8. On March 28, 1990, Michael Jordan scored a career high 69 points against the Cleveland Cavaliers.
 - a. during the post-game interviews, rookie Stacey King got a chance to comment on the historic occasion.
 - b. King had scored 2 points that night so he told the reporters, "I will always remember this game as the night Michael Jordan and I combined for 71 points."
9. Friends, whatever good we manage to do in life, whatever service we render, we know isn't the result of our own strength or goodness – it's because Jesus has saved and changed us.
10. We can only add our meager little 2 points to His billion.
11. What an honor that He allows us to play on His team!