

He Chose the Towel

JOHN 13:4-17

SCRIPTURE VERSE MAPPING COMPANION

“Jesus knew
exactly who He was—
and still chose the towel.”



HISTORICAL CONTEXT



DUSTY ROADS & SANDALS

People walked everywhere in open sandals along dusty roads and footpaths. Dirty feet were simply part of everyday life.



HOSPITALITY

Offering water for guests to wash their feet was an ordinary act of hospitality. In some homes guests washed their own feet; in others a servant might perform the task.



THE BASIN & THE TOWEL

For whatever reason, the disciples' feet had not been washed before the meal. Then He got up.



KEY INSIGHTS



JESUS SERVED FROM SECURITY, NOT INSECURITY.

He didn't kneel because He doubted His worth. He knelt because He knew exactly who He was.



JESUS' LESSON WAS SPIRITUAL. HIS SERVICE WAS PRACTICAL.

There were dirty feet.
So He got water.
Sometimes the holiest thing
isn't complicated.



PETER HAD TO RECEIVE BEFORE HE COULD IMITATE.

Peter understood serving Jesus.
He struggled with Jesus serving him.
Before Peter could pick up the towel...
he had to receive the washing.



THE TOWEL NEVER DIMINISHED JESUS' AUTHORITY.

Jesus didn't become less Lord
when He knelt. He was still Lord—
just the Lord with a towel
around His waist.



WORD & PHRASE OBSERVATIONS

- “He riseth from supper” (v. 4) – Jesus initiates. He makes the first move. Love is always proactive.
- “Took a towel” (v. 4) – The towel was the mark of a servant. Jesus chose the role.
- “Poured water” (v. 5) – Not symbolic—practical. Real water for real dirty feet.
- “I have given you an example” (v. 15) – Not just a story to admire, but a pattern to follow.
- “As I have done to you” (v. 15) – The standard is His example, not the world's expectations.

*Sometimes the holy thing...
...is the practical thing.*



TRUTH TO CARRY

*Jesus knew
exactly who
He was...
...and still
chose the towel.*



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1 Which part of John 13 stood out to you most this week?
- 2 Why do you think John tells us about Jesus' identity before describing His actions?
- 3 Is it easier for you to serve others or to receive help from Jesus—and from other people?
- 4 Where might God be inviting you to notice a basin you've overlooked?



GRIT PRACTICE

This week, ask yourself:

- Where is there a “basin” already sitting in front of me?
- What practical need have I been walking past?
- Who might simply need someone to notice?
- What ordinary act of service could become holy if I offered it to Christ?

*Then...
reach for the towel.*



PRAYER PROMPT

Ask the Lord to help you notice the practical opportunities to love and serve that are already around you.

Pray for the humility to receive His grace... and the willingness to reflect His heart through ordinary acts of service.

Do I notice the basin?

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