



WEEKLY STUDY

Week 5

This week we took a look at what the sacrificial love of God means for those of us who are trying to follow Jesus. John wrote that Jesus loves his disciples *to the end*. That short phrase is packed with significance. *To the end* really means that we are loved *perfectly* or *to completion*. We can break free from the trappings of trying to earn love, and can love as Jesus first loved us. His love is sacrificial—he stoops to wash his disciples feet. In fact, his whole life was God’s way of stooping down to serve and save His creation. May you find freedom in letting Jesus sit on the throne of your life while you serve others in the Way of Christ.

Peace of Christ,
Dr. Mark Youngman
Pastor of Discipleship

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected to a Providence Small Group visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt. You might also pray this prayer of confession that we prayed at the end of the message.

*Jesus,
I relinquish my hold on my life. It is yours and not my own. Show me the way to love sacrificially as you do.
Show me the way to love with your love. Show me the way to serve others in your name.
Amen.*

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: JOHN 13.1

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

- Once again, John writes with poetic intent so that we as readers can uncover the layers of truth about who Jesus is. Jesus loved his disciples, and he loved them to the end. His time to leave this

world was coming and he would not stop loving his disciples. But we know the rest of the story. Him leaving this world was not the end. Instead, he sent the Holy Spirit to come and ignite the movement of the church. And he promised to come back for his disciples. John was also indicating that Jesus would love us to completion—to perfection. We're not there yet, so Jesus is loving us in that direction! He's loving us to the arrival of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

- *God, thank you for the perfect love of Jesus that gives me hope today. May my eyes remain focused on him to the end.*

TUESDAY: JOHN 13.2-5

The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.³ Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.⁵ After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

- Have you ever discovered that someone was plotting against you? Even if it were just a small disruption in a relationship, we would tend to want to address it right away. We tend to want to fix the situation. *Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power.* That means he could have fixed the situation with Judas. Instead of allowing this distraction to steal the spotlight, Jesus wrapped a towel around his waist and washed his disciples feet. He did the job of a servant. Soon he would tell them to love each other as he had loved them. THIS is how he loved them. What did that do in Judas' heart? What does it do in your heart?
- *Jesus, I still do not fully know how to follow your example of selfless love, but today I will look for ways to live it out.*

WEDNESDAY: JOHN 13.6-11

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷ *Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."*

⁸ *"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."*

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

⁹ *"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"*

¹⁰ *Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you."¹¹ For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.*

- It was difficult for Simon Peter to receive this sign of love (foot washing) from Jesus. It didn't fit within the cultural norms for someone besides the servant to wash feet. But Jesus was so adamant that it started a shift in the way Peter understood his teacher. And again a spotlight was on Judas whose own guilt exposed that he was not clean. He needed more than a foot washing, he needed a changed heart.
- *Jesus, reveal the places in my heart that are hardened and turned away from you. Wash me clean so that I may have a place with you.*

THURSDAY: JOHN 13.12-17

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. ¹³ “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

- As uncomfortable as it may have been for some of the disciples to have their feet washed by Jesus, he then told them to do the same for one another. If the Son of God would stoop to wash feet, then the ones who have been served must also serve. Otherwise, the disciple is acting like he or she is greater than Jesus. This instruction from Jesus is often conveniently overlooked, but it is core to what it means to follow him.
- *God, shine a light on the places of privilege and position that I hide behind to avoid serving others.*

FRIDAY: MATTHEW 20.25-28

Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ²⁶ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

- In Matthew’s account, Jesus gives a contrast between the Way of Jesus and the way of the world. If we truly want to be great, we must serve others for God’s glory and not our own. This contrast still exists in the world today. Maybe more than ever! It is not easy to follow Jesus, but it is good. His Way leads to life.
- *Almighty God, refine my desire for glory and greatness so that my life will point to you.*

SATURDAY: EPHESIANS 6.6-8

Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. ⁷ Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, ⁸ because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

- In what areas of your life would you say that you are living *wholeheartedly*? I recognize that my heart is often divided between multiple motivations. What would it mean to serve God by serving others with my whole, undivided heart? God will reward us, but that reward is not meant to be our motivation. Serving others is meant to come from the heart.
- *Jesus, help me to live and to love like you.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

In this week's message we heard a quote from the great writer A.W. Tozer,

“In every Christian's heart there is a cross and a throne, and the Christian is on the throne till he puts himself on the cross. If he refuses the cross he remains on the throne. Perhaps this is at the bottom of the backsliding and worldliness among gospel believers today. We want to be saved but we insist that Christ do all the dying. No cross for us, no dethronement, no dying. We remain king within [our] little kingdom...and wear our tinsel crown with all the pride of a Caesar, but we doom ourselves to shadows and weakness and spiritual sterility.”- Tozer

- Can you picture both the cross and the throne of your heart? How would your life be different if you used that image to navigate your responses to the world around you? How might you love others differently?
- These are hard words for us to read. Is there some “dying” that you have not allowed yourself to do in order to fully follow Jesus? What part of your life are you withholding from God?