



# One Page Sermon

## By Pastor Robb McCoy

### March 13, 2022

Worship Every Sunday at 9:30 AM

## Second Sunday of Lent: Jesus washes the feet of his disciples

*John 13:1-17*

The Gospel of John tells the story of Jesus very differently from Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The Fourth Evangelist has a different understanding of the last week of Jesus' life. While Matthew, Mark, and Luke (The Synoptics) tell us that Jesus gathered with his disciples for the Passover meal, John's timeline is quite different.

In John, it is explicit that this is not the Passover meal. In John, Jesus is crucified on the Day of Preparation, which is the day before the great Passover meal. John is the Lamb of Passover, not one who presides over the meal and transforms it for his followers.

Chapters 13-17 of John is known as the Farewell Discourse. This was a common literary tool in ancient stories of important figures. The last teaching of someone carried much weight. Within this passage there are important instructions to his followers—things they must know and understand for when Jesus is gone. Yet this is not the "Last Supper" as we imagine it.

In this meal of Jesus and his followers, there are no "Words of Institution." There is no "Take. Eat, for this is my body." There is no "This is the cup of forgiveness." There is simply a long portion of teaching. Jesus, knowing that his time on earth is coming to an end, shares the summary of his life, teaching, and ministry with his disciples. He wants to make sure that they are as prepared as possible for what is to come.

Perhaps this is why he begins this important moment in their lives with an incredible object lesson. He takes off his robe, ties a cloth around his waste, kneels at their feet and washes them. Taking the posture of a servant, he replicates Mary's incredible act of devotion that she performed on him (as we talked about last Sunday).

Judas objected to Mary's extravagant show of love and intimacy. This time Peter objects. Yet Christ tells him simply, if you do not accept this act of love, you cannot be with me. Mutuality is the key ingredient to following Jesus. One must serve and allow themselves to be served. Jesus puts it bluntly soon after this display. "Love each other as I have loved you." This



Bronze statue of Jesus washing the disciple Peter's feet in Witness Park outside the "Prayer Tower," perhaps the most recognizable landmark in Pittsburg, Texas. Photo Credit: The Lyda Hill Texas Collection of Photographs in Carol M. Highsmith's America Project, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

love now includes being willing to accept love from Mary and to show love to his disciples.

And when I say "show love to his disciples," I mean all of his disciples. Yes, even Judas is there and present as Jesus washes their feet. Jesus knows Judas will betray him. Still, he kneels at his feet. To the very end, Jesus offered relationship. He offered his service. He offered his bread.

Judas took it and ran off into the night to betray him to the authorities that sought his death. Two weeks in a row we see a story of devotion, service, and intimate love. Two weeks in a row we see the choice that is clear. Follow Jesus into this kind of amazing friendship or reject it. Follow Jesus into intimate love and an abiding presence, or deflect from the beauty and purity of what is offered, and choose death.

Jesus offers relationship to the very end for Judas, yet he turns away. Peter, we know, will have his own troubles. Next week we will see Peter's greatest failure. Yet through his failure, Peter refuses to fall away completely. As Jesus kneels at Peter and Judas's feet in this story, we are reminded of how far Jesus will go to prove his love and how much he yearns for us all to choose the path of intimate, abiding love.