

VCEFC Daily Devotion
March 20- March 26, 2006

March 20: John 13:1-17 You also should wash one another's feet.

Notes:

- v. 1-3 John mentions about Judas' intention to betray Jesus so as to highlight that Jesus knowingly washes the feet of the one who is going to betray Him. The way He exercises the power given by the Father is to serve humbly, even serving His enemy.
- v 4-5: The foot washing scene is only found in the Gospel of John. It was a common practice to wash one's feet before reclining at table for a meal. Usually the host would provide basins of water and towels for the guests to wash their own feet. Footwashing would also be done by slaves for the masters, wives for their husbands, children for parents, and disciples for their teachers. However, by taking off His outer clothing and wearing only His tunic, Jesus serves His disciples like a slave.
- v 6-8 Peter's refusal to have his feet washed shows us how unreasonable and unusual it is for the teacher to wash his disciples' feet. However, the humble service of Jesus has a deeper meaning: it points to His sacrificial death, which will cleanse the sin of all. In order to have a share in Christ's community and the eternal life that comes through faith in Him, one has to be washed by Jesus.
- v 9-11 The bathing refers to the cleansing from sin through the death of Jesus on the cross. The washing refers to the forgiveness of one's daily sins. Judas was unclean because he had rejected a saving relationship with Jesus.
- v 12-17 If the Master willingly embraces the role of servant, then the servants of such a Master should do the same. Even as Jesus submitted Himself to the Father's will, so His disciples are called to submit themselves to Jesus' authority over them. The lifestyle of mutual service and sacrifice exemplified by the footwashing scene is the source of true blessedness. The Gospel is not simply a set of principles, but a lifestyle to be lived.

Meditate:

1. What does Jesus' example tell you about the true meaning of "power"?
2. What would you respond to Jesus' call to follow His example?

March 21: John 13:18-30 The Betrayal

Notes:

- v. 18-19 Jesus talks about His betrayer, Judas, by citing Psalm 41:9, which describes the betrayal David suffered by a close friend. Jesus' foreknowledge of the betrayal verifies that He is a true prophet of God.
- v. 20 One who is sent is as he who sent him. Jesus' mission is God's mission. And as His followers, our mission is Jesus' mission
- v. 21-22 Jesus is deeply affected by the devastating experience of being betrayed. He expresses the inner pain even though He knows that He is in control of the situation. The deep emotions reflect the true humanity of Jesus.
- v. 23-25 "The disciple whom Jesus loved" is actually John. He is the only one who hears Jesus' answer.

- v 26-27 Jesus's act is a gesture of love because the host at a special meal like Passover often honored special guests at his table by giving them a piece of bread. This may be a final appeal to Judas to abandon his plans of betrayal. However, Judas gives way to Satan and let him enter into his heart.
- V. 28-29 None of the disciples realize the betrayal has been set into motion.
- v. 30 The darkness into which Judas disappears is a symbol of the spiritual darkness surrounding him as he carry out his betrayal.

Meditate: Have you ever betrayed by a close friend? Will you treat the betrayer like the way Jesus treats Judas, i.e. washing his feet, showing him the gesture of love, etc.? What have you learned from Jesus?

Mar 22: John 13: 31-38 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you....

Notes:

- v . 31-32 God glorifies the Son of Man in making His self-offering effective for mankind, so that God is glorified in the perfect obedience and love of the Son, and at the same time manifests His love to the world.
- v. 33 Jesus addresses the disciples affectionately as "My children", an expression frequently used by Jewish teachers to their pupils. He knows they will want to follow Him in devotion, but He must go to the cross alone. His death is a departure from the human realm to the divine.
- v. 34-35 The new command is the obligation of the people of the new covenant in response to the redemptive act of God and His gracious election which made them His new people. By loving one another in the style of Jesus' own self-giving love, the disciples proclaim to all people their mutual bond to Him.
- v 36-38 Peter fails to understand that Jesus is about to go to the Father, and the reason of His going. Jesus acknowledges Peter's desire and promises to follow Him, but only later. Jesus has to go away first to accomplish God's plan in His life. Peter's willingness to "lay down" his life echoes Jesus' description of the marks of a good shepherd (10:11, 15). By the power of the Good Shepherd's sacrifice Peter finally became a good shepherd, and followed in his Lord's footsteps.

Meditate:

1. How does "loving your neighbors as yourselves" differ from "loving your neighbors as Jesus has loved you"?
2. How would you respond to Jesus' new command?

Mar 23: John 14:1-7 I am the way and the truth and the life

Notes:

- v. 1-4 If Peter's faith is to collapse to the point of denying his master, what will happen to the rest of the disciples? To comfort the disciples before His departure, Jesus commands them to focus on God, not themselves, their feelings and their circumstances. The verb "trust" is a call to keep on believing, to cling to their faith in God and in Jesus. Even when the world may appear to have gone mad, but the disciples must continue to believe in God as the sovereign Lord of creation. Also, Jesus reminds them the purpose of His departure: to prepare a place for them in heaven. Jewish sources frequently use the images of house and rooms

when speaking of heaven. Jesus will then come back again to take them away to the “house” that they may be with Him always.

- v. 5-6 The way to the Father’s house cannot be marked on a road map, address and all, as Thomas seems to assume. The way to the Father is traveled by means of a person: Jesus. He is the only way leading His disciples to the Father by revealing truth and giving life. By virtue of who He is and what He has accomplished through His incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension, Jesus is the only way to the Father.
- v. 7 Jesus comes into the world to reveal the Father and He has been revealing the Father to His disciples in His ministry.

Meditate: What does Jesus’ claim(He is the way, the truth and the life) mean to you?

Mar 24: John 14:8-14 Anyone has faith in me will do what I have been doing...

Notes:

- v. 8 Philip is ignorant of Jesus relationship with the Father. Perhaps he desires an experience comparable to what Job, Moses or Isaiah experienced (Exod. 24:9-10; Number 12:6-8, Isa 6:1, 5).
- V. 9-11 Jesus again reveals the mystery of the Trinity. His oneness with the Father is completely mutual and reciprocal, and yet He is not the Father. The disciples cannot fully understand the purpose and significance of Jesus’ ministry until they grasp Jesus’ oneness with the Father.
- V. 12 The mission of Jesus’ disciples or those who have faith in Jesus is not only to do the works He does, but even doing greater works. They are enabled by Jesus to continue His work in the world to a greater extent than was possible during His earthly ministry.
- V. 13-14 Jesus does not promise to give His disciples whatever they want. Praying in Jesus’ name means to pray in keeping with His character and His agenda, which is the kingdom and the glory of God.

Meditate:

1. Have you ever imagined that you can do the things Jesus did? How do you claim this promise of Jesus?
2. What is the key to guarantee your prayers being answered?

Mar 25: John 14:15-21 If you love me, you will obey what I command.

Notes:

- V. 15 To love Jesus is to obey Him. As Jesus loves the Father and commits to do His will, Jesus’ disciples also have to authenticate their love for Him by obeying His commands.
- V. 16-17 The disciples will not be left alone in their mission in the world. They will experience the presence of the Father and the Son through the Holy Spirit, Who is a helper, a friend and a counselor, to help Jesus’ disciples with their mission in the world.
- V. 18-20 Jesus promises to come back to the disciples after His resurrection, which will transform their fear and sorrow to joy. Then they will come to realize the oneness that exists between the Father and the Son, and will also experience

oneness with Jesus through the Holy Spirit. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit will enable them to accomplish the mission to the world.

- V. 21 If we love Jesus through obedience to Him, He will show Himself to us.

Meditate:

1. Have you ever experienced spiritual blindness? How do the words of Jesus speak to those who want to see God?
2. Have you experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life? Think of some examples.

Mar 26: John 14: 22-31 Peace I leave with you.

Notes:

- V 22-24 Judas expects Jesus to show Himself to the world in a spectacular way. However, Jesus explains to him the way of showing Himself to the disciples is by His indwelling. Both He and His Father will dwell with His disciples when they manifests their love for Jesus by obeying Him. Without love and obedience, one will not experience the presence of God.
- V 25-26 The primary role of the Holy Spirit is to instruct the disciples in the meaning of Jesus' words. The Spirit works in union with the Son even as the Son works in unity with the Father. So the Spirit will witness to Jesus even as Jesus has witnessed to the Father. All things refer to all that Jesus has said and done during His earthly ministry.
- V 27 Jesus promises His troubled disciples the gift of peace. He offers the gift of confidence that comes from faith in Him and from a life lived in union with the Father's will. Jesus demonstrates this peace in the face of His own impending death.
- V 28-29 The time for Jesus to accomplish His Father's mission has now arrived. He will soon return to the Father through the cross. If the disciples grasp the deeper meaning of Jesus' departure, they will rejoice with Him.
- V 30-31 The prince of this world will be defeated. The cross will bear witness to Jesus' love for the Father by obediently laying down His life for mankind.

Meditate:

1. Have you experienced the work of the Holy Spirit as what Jesus has promised?
2. Have you received the gift of peace that Jesus has promised to give? How does it differ from the peace given by the world?