

TEXT: John 13:1-17
TITLE: "AN EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW"
DATE: February 20, 2011
SERIES: THE THINGS THAT REALLY MATTER #5

Closing Song – "Make Me a Servant"

INTRODUCTION: Someone once said, "Children may close their ears to advice, but they keep their eyes open to example." Every Christian is a minister and every minister has a ministry. What does ministry look like? Jesus is our teacher as He shows us what ministry looks. He gives an example to follow.

I. (vs.1-5) AN EXAMPLE OF MINISTRY THAT TEACHES US TO TAKE ON THE ROLE OF A SERVANT WITH A HEART OF LOVE

1. ****"Ministry in its simplest form is doing love."(Win Arn)**
2. This statement by Church Growth expert, Win Arn, that I use in the Welcome Class gets to the heart of what is taking place in this passage.
3. The example of service is demonstrated in the story of Jesus washing the feet of His disciples just before the Passover Feast.
4. The entire ministry of Jesus was driven and directed by love.
5. The love that had been evident to His disciples up to this time continues right up to the end, concluding with the crucifixion, the ultimate revelation of love in its full extent.
6. His great love was not based on who they were but on who He was.
7. His expressed love to them was not based on what they did but on what He did as one who took on the very role of a servant.
8. Paul wrote of Jesus He **"...made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-even death on a cross!" (Philippians 2:7-8)**
9. He loved even the one who would betray Him.
10. This act of washing His disciples' feet in the upper room is not an isolated event of service, but rather, it vividly portrays the whole journey He made from the Father into the world and back to the Father.
11. The whole life of Jesus from beginning to end was about serving with a heart of love.
12. Jesus revealed His purpose, saying, **"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."**
"Matthew 20:28
13. Jesus, knowing His origin, that He came from God, His destiny, that He was returning to God, and His authority, that all things were under His power, got up from the meal and washed the feet of the disciples.
14. Washing feet was a menial task usually assigned to the least of servants, but Jesus picked up the towel.
****PROP:** A white towel
15. Jesus knew who He was but He picked up the towel of ministry.

16. Paul said of Jesus, **“And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.” (Colossians 1:18)**
17. Jesus, the Head of the church, picked up the towel of service.
18. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul wrote of Jesus, **“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9-11)**
19. Jesus the exalted one picked up the towel of service.
20. The disciples called Him “Teacher” and “Lord” but, contrary to the culture and practice of the day, He picked up the towel and washed the feet of His disciples, which was the task of a servant not a Savior.
21. One of the amazing things about Jesus is that the King of kings, Lord of lords, Son of Man, Messiah, Bread of Life, Counselor, Capstone, Faithful Witness, First and Last, Holy One, King of the Ages, Lord of Glory, Mighty One, Morning Star, Author of Life, Light of the World, Lamb of God, Prince of Peace, Redeemer, Resurrection and Life, Rose of Sharon, Root of David, True Vine, Word of God, Coming King, took on the role of a servant.
22. He is the Savior who took on the role of a servant.
23. As someone said, “He is the king whose scepter is a towel.”
24. Jesus was a leader who led with a towel.
25. Luke records that at the Last Supper, a dispute arose among the disciples as to who was considered to be greatest.
26. “Jesus said to them, **“The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.” (Luke 22:25-27)**
27. Greatness is expressed in service.
28. Admire all that we know about the greatness of Jesus, we must never forget that Jesus took on the role of a servant with a heart of love.
29. If Jesus took on the role of a servant, what should His followers do?
“Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.”(John 13:14-15)
30. As followers of Jesus, we are here to serve and minister to others.
ILLUSTRATION: There is an old story about a famous preacher and evangelist, Dwight Moody, the Billy of Graham of his day, when he had invited some preachers to preach. One preacher from England had set his shoes outside the door for someone to polish. Moody picked up the towel himself and polished them. It was D.L. Moody who said, *“Do all the good you can, to all the people you can, in all the ways you can, as long as you can.” (D.L. Moody)****

31. Sometime we look at something and say, “Why doesn’t someone do this?” instead of picking up the towel and polishing the shoes.
32. If we are not careful, we reduce church to “meeting my needs,” focusing on what the church will do for me instead of as a ministry center where I can use the
 *(Make in an acrostic for notes and on screen) **Ministry SHAPE**
 Spiritual Gifts
 Heart
 Abilities
 Personality
 Experiences
that God has given me for His Glory.
33. Being part of the body of Christ is about what we can do together, as each one does our part in fulfilling our role as a minister or servant.
ILLUSTRATION: Many of us would be familiar with the presidential speech of President John Kennedy that challenged us to: “Ask not what your country will do for you but what you can do for your country.”
34. Jesus sets an example that teaches not to ask what the church can do for you but what you can do for others.
35. We truly are saved to serve.
36. As Rick Rusaw and Eric Swanson said in their book, The Externally Focused Church, “If we take away service, we take away the church’s power, influence, and evangelistic effectiveness.
37. If we follow the example of Jesus, it will lead us to a life of service for His glory, motivated by love.
38. We are here to serve others, not to be served.
39. Ministry or service done with love can bring hope in the midst of the darkness of evil, sin, disappointment, and discouragement.
40. As Christians, we are to be the light of the world.
“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)
ILLUSTRATION: (Prop – little key chain flashlight) Todd D. Hunter in His book Giving Church Another Chance, tells, “While ministering at [a church] in Anaheim, we had a blackout during one of our services. An automobile accident knocked out the power line to our building. There were approximately three thousand people in the room and close to a thousand children in the area behind the sanctuary. For a reason I cannot remember, the emergency lights failed, too. Sitting in the front row of the church, I was only a dozen steps from the hallway leading to the children, but the darkness was so overwhelming and disorienting that it was difficult groping my way there. When I finally reached the door that led to a long hallway, I saw that a mother who had a small flashlight on her key chain had beat me to the door and was making her way to her children. Her small light didn't illumine the whole hallway, but it reoriented the whole scary moment for me. Soon, others found emergency flashlights in the classrooms, and still others shined their car headlights through the classroom windows. We got all the kids out to safety.**

Twenty years later, I still remember the enormous power of that mom's flashlight to bring hope and orientation to a seriously unnerving moment."

41. Picking up the towel of service or ministry with a heart of love can bring hope, pointing people to the hope of Christ.
42. Will you pick up the towel and follow His example and take on the role of a servant with a heart of love?

II. (vs.4-5) AN EXAMPLE OF MINISTRY THAT TEACHES US TO SEE OPPORTUNITIES AND NEEDS AS JESUS SEES THEM.

1. Jesus had eyes to see what others had failed to see and respond to.
2. Jesus saw an opportunity to minister that others had not seen or responded to.
3. Jesus saw feet that needed to be washed that no one else washed.
4. Seeing an opportunity to minister and model ministry, Jesus got up from the meal, wrapped a towel around his waist, poured water into a basin and washed his disciple's feet.
5. Every day, we are surrounded by opportunities and people who need their feet washed in some way.
6. Our community is full of people who need their feet washed in the name of Jesus.

"Be very careful, then, how you live-not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil." (Ephesians 5:15-16)

7. Look for daily opportunity to minister asking the Spirit of God to open your eyes to see the needs that you can meet.

ILLUSTRATION: **"Unless our belief in God causes us to help our fellow man, our faith stands condemned." (Billy Graham)

8. Jesus washes the feet of others through our hands when we see the opportunities and needs as He does.

"Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matthew 9:35-38)

9. Ministers are people who see people as Jesus sees them.
10. Ministers are people who see needs and opportunities through the eyes of Jesus and responds to them.
11. Workers are needed because the harvest is plentiful and opportunities abound.
12. Pray for workers so that the harvest is not lost and opportunities are not missed.
13. ***List of some of the ministry opportunities so you can pray and respond as the Lord leads in a flyer in bulletin. (Starlene)
14. Pray for workers, for workers are needed because the harvest is plentiful.
15. Workers are people who are faithful to see needs and meet them.

ILLUSTRATION: In the world of sports superstars, Mike Murphy plays a small but essential role for his pro-baseball team, the San Francisco Giants. Recently, he helped the Giants win their first World Series in 52 years, and

Mike was on the job for the entire 52-year journey. But you won't find his name on the scoreboard. You won't see him endorsing new products for millions of dollars per advertisement. He'll never make it into the Baseball Hall of Fame. "Murph," as they call him, has been with the team since 1958, starting as the team's batboy, before moving up to his roles as the clubhouse attendant and finally the equipment manager. Throughout his 52 years of faithful service, Murph has worked behind the scenes, cleaning shoes and ordering bats, so his much more famous teammates could achieve success. According to an article in *The New York Times*, "If anyone embodies the 52-year endurance test the San Francisco Giants underwent to reach baseball's summit, it is Mike Murphy." That's one reason why the owner of the team handed the World Series trophy to Murphy so he could present it to his ecstatic teammates. At some point during the wild post-game celebration, the reporter noted, "[Murphy] turned to a clubhouse attendant and pointed to some bags. There was equipment to be loaded on to a truck Murphy was back at work."

16. We must be in the harvest field faithfully serving by being the hands of Jesus.

17. If we see people as Jesus sees them, we see their feet.

18. If we look around with the eyes of Jesus, I believe we will see a lot of feet we can wash.

19. We see needs we can meet with the gifts and abilities God has given us.

20. We see areas we can apply the towel in our hands to.

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Ephesians 2:10)

21. Don't miss the opportunities around you to make a difference in the harvest field.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Violin from home) The great violinist, Niccolo Paganini, willed his marvelous violin to city of Genoa on the condition that it must never be played. The wood of such an instrument, while used and handled, wears only slightly, but set aside, it begins to decay. Paganini's lovely violin has today become worm-eaten and useless except as a relic. It was wasted. It had been crafted by the master craftsman but it had been silenced. A few weeks ago, we were cleaning and working in the storage room. There, I showed Amanda an old violin that had been my dad's. It is not playable, as it is had been cracked and neglected. My daughter looked at me and asked, "Why did you and Grandpa let this happen to the violin? Why do you let it become this way?"

22. "Son, I have given you a ministry shape, talent, and gifts, for opportunities need to met.

23. Don't put it in the case and on a shelf, but get in the harvest field play the music of service for God's glory."

III. (vs.6-11) AN EXAMPLE OF MINISTRY THAT TEACHES US TO SUBMIT IN OBEDIENCE TO JESUS AND RECEIVE HIS MINISTRY

1. Peter did not understand what was going on.
2. Jesus was reversing the customary practice.
3. Peter was working from a worldly point of view.

4. Slaves were looked down upon in the ancient world and Peter could not stand the thought of his teacher doing the work of a slave.
 5. It did not make sense to him that a master washed the feet of a servant.
 6. He did not want to submit or receive the ministry of Jesus.
 7. He said 'no' to what wasn't in accordance with his belief and to what differed from the way he thought things should be done
 8. Jesus was teaching Peter that we must live life the Lord's way and not our own.
 9. To minister to others, Peter had to surrender self, and his pride, and receive the ministry of Jesus.
 10. When Jesus came to wash his feet, he responded, **"No,' said Peter, 'you shall never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.'"** (John 13:8-9)
 11. It was acceptance or rejection of Jesus and His redemptive mission as a whole.
 12. In short, Jesus washed His disciple's feet in order to symbolize the washing of redemption soon to be available through His death and resurrection.
 13. Jesus' use of the towel that night points to His death on the Cross.
 14. John tells us that Jesus' hour had come.
 15. John also mentions Judas' betrayal of Jesus so that we will associate the foot washing to the Crucifixion.
 16. John uses two words to describe Jesus' actions: *lay down* (or *lay aside*) and *take up*.
 17. Those two words are used earlier in the Gospel of John to refer to Jesus' death.
 18. Jesus says in John 10:17-18, **"...I lay down my life – only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. (John 10:17-18)**
 19. Before we can really minister to others, we must submit to the redemptive ministry of Jesus.
 20. Baptism is an act of submission and surrender to Christ, symbolically expressing our acceptance of His redeeming grace and our commitment to follow Him.
 21. There is a washing only Christ can give.
 22. To be as servants of Christ, we must receive His ministry of grace.
 23. Ministry flows out of having our feet washed by Jesus and being ministered to by Him.
- ILLUSTRATION: *"Ministry isn't always what we go and do. It's what we do as we go."** (Nelvin Vos)
24. It is the lifestyle out of the overflow of His redeeming and continual ministry to us.
 25. We serve out of His saving grace and love and His ministry and work in our own lives.
 26. As someone said, **"God did not save you to be a sensation; He saved you to be a servant."** (Unknown)
 27. Peter came to realize that humble service meant obedience to Christ.
 28. When Jesus washed the disciples' feet, He was demonstrating His ultimate sacrificial act--giving His life for them on the cross.
 29. It was a call to submit in humility to Christ.
 30. It was a call to receive the ministry of Jesus.
 31. It was a call to obedience

32. We minister to others out of the ministry we receive from Christ.
33. We minister out of who we are because of what Christ has done and is doing in our lives.
34. He has redeemed us and made us His ministries.
35. A foundation for effective ministry is a revelation of who we are in God.
ILLUSTRATION: During Cold War, a Jewish Rabbi in Russia became very discouraged & disillusioned. In his despair, one evening, he took a long walk in the night. He was so engrossed in his thoughts as he walked that he did not notice that he was walking into an area secured by the Russian authority. As he walked into that forbidden area, a soldier suddenly called out to him, "Who goes there?" The Rabbi was suddenly taken by what the guard had said. He walked up to the guard and asked him, "What did you say?" The guard said, "I asked you, who goes there?" The Rabbi then asked him, "How much do you make as a soldier here?" Taken back by such a question in those circumstances, the guard asked him why he wanted to know. Then, the Rabbi said, "I will pay you that much to ask me that question every morning. You have just given me the answer I have so desperately needed. I was in despair wondering what I could do about the circumstances of my life. But, I had forgotten the more important and more basic question that must first be answered, "Who am I?" Thank you for reminding me what is most important of all." [11]
36. If you are a Christian, you are a servant of the Lord, redeemed by His grace.
37. Sometimes we have to go back and remind ourselves why we are doing what we do.
38. Why we give time, talents, and finances.
39. We give time to clean the building and to be temple caretakers, teach children, be involved in worship, lead a life group, work with youth.
40. We are His servants, ministers saved by His grace, ministered to by His redeeming overflow.
41. Because of who we are in Christ Jesus, we minister to others.

IV. (12-17) AN EXAMPLE THAT TEACHES US TO WASH THE FEET OF OTHERS THROUGH MINISTRIES

1. Jesus set an example for His followers to follow.
2. After completing the task of washing the feet of His disciples, He asked the question, "Do you understand what I have done for you?"
3. Jesus then acknowledged, "That you call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and that is right for that is what I am."
4. Though Jesus was a servant, He was never less than Teacher and Lord.
5. Jesus does not deny who He is. But He uses His example to instruct them on what they should be doing.

"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet." (John 13:14)

6. The "should" of verse 14 is a genuine obligation, not merely good advice.
7. It is something we must own as our own responsibility, based on the teaching of Jesus.

8. The love and ministry we have received from Jesus we are to pass on to others.
EXAMPLE: **One theologian suggests this simplistic diagram of a triangle (Put copy on screen when talking (241 NIV commentary), to explain the heart of Jesus pronouncement in verse 14.
9. The point of such a triangular sentence in verse 14 is that God's actions of grace toward humanity, through Jesus, find their completion and full realization in things that the recipients of this grace do for one another.
10. His disciples were to follow His example and wash one another's feet.
11. Someone said, **"We would gladly wash the feet of our Divine Lord But He disconcertingly insists on washing ours, and bids us wash our neighbor's feet." (Unknown)**
12. When speaking of washing feet, I am not speaking of literally washing feet but of serving and ministering to others as Jesus did.
13. It is not "wash my feet because I am washing yours," but "because Jesus has washed mine."
"I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." (John 13:15)
14. "Do as I have done" is a call of sacrificial service.
15. Ministry is often not convenient, but it is necessary.
16. Not always convenient to invest in youth, but necessary.
17. Not always convenient to invest in a group of people, but necessary.
18. Not always convenient to invest in children, but necessary.
19. Not always convenient to invest in facilities for ministry, but necessary.
20. Not always convenient to invest in various projects, but necessary.
21. Not always convenient to invest in worship related ministry, ranging from ushers and greeter to technicians, to musicians, but necessary.
22. Not always convenient to invest in ministry that reaches outside of the walls of the church, but necessary.
23. Service often requires sacrifice.
24. We are to put sacrificial service into practice.
25. In both word and deed, we are to pass on the selfless love of God.
26. Love is expressed through ministry.
"Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." (I John 3:18)
27. It is giving up the pride, time, and self-centeredness.
28. He is calling us to do for others what He has done for us.
29. He is calling us to invest in others and the mission of spreading the gospel.
"I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him." (John 13:16)
30. Their servanthood to one another is not an end in itself but a means toward the greater end of continuing and extending Jesus' own mission.
31. They were to continue the mission of Jesus to the world
32. Jesus brings in the theme of mission, for we are messengers and ministers on a mission.
"Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." (John 13:17)

ILLUSTRATION: (John Cartoon – put punch line on second copy) A man had just had his annual physical exam and was waiting for the doctor's initial report. After a few minutes, the doctor came in with his charts in his hand and said: "There's no reason why you can't live a completely normal life as long as you don't try to enjoy it."

33. God wants His disciples to be blessed.

34. There is great blessing in washing feet.

35. The *theory* of being a servant isn't worth very much.

36. But the *practice* of being a servant pleases God and fulfills our calling.

37. It can be one thing to know and another to do.

38. The gospel is a life to be lived and not just an ideal to be contemplated.

39. Jesus' act of menial service is meant as an example to be followed.

40. How will you respond to the example He gives for us?

ILLUSTRATION: One commentator noted, "Jesus has laid aside his life for us all, and the debt which we owe to him is to be discharged by our subjection to our neighbors in loving service. Our neighbor is the appointed agent authorized to receive what we owe the Master." (Newbigin)

41. Will you pick up the towel and wash feet as unto the Lord?

ILLUSTRATION: "When you belong to King Jesus, you can no longer write on your dossier or your *vitae*, 'I do not do feet.' " That's precisely what you do, because that's what he does. (Elizabeth Nordquist)

42. Jesus' life of self-emptying love calls us to be a kingdom of foot-washers.

43. Every Christian is a minister and every ministry has a ministry.

44. Are you fulfilling the ministry or ministries God has for you to do?

45. Are you washing the feet God wants you to wash?

46. Don't let anything get in the way of service.

"Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." (I Corinthians 15:58)

47. Give yourself totally, not partially, to ministry.

48. Give yourself totally and completely to the work of the Lord.

ILLUSTRATION: In 1904, the heir to the Borden Dairy Estate, William Borden, graduated from Chicago High School a millionaire. His parents gave him a trip around the world. During that trip, he became burdened for all the hurting people he saw in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. He made a decision to prepare for the mission field. When he made that decision, he wrote in his Bible the words, "No Reserve."

When William Borden arrived at Yale University the next year as a freshman, his passion for Christ was already kindled. He was disappointed to find the school morally bankrupt and the teaching filled with empty philosophy. So, during his first semester, he asked a friend to begin praying with him before breakfast. As a result of his leadership, other prayer groups began to spring up. And, by his senior year, 1,000 of the 1,300 students were meeting in prayer groups. Many of those young leaders came to the Lord through that movement.

Upon graduation, he was offered high paying jobs. But, he turned those offers down and continued to pursue God's call on his life. While making those decisions, he wrote two more words in his Bible, the words, "No Retreat".

When he completed his studies at Princeton Seminary, he sailed to China to work with the Muslims. On the way, he stopped in Egypt to study Arabic. But, there in Egypt, he was stricken with spinal meningitis and within a month, at the age of 25, he died. What his friends and family found written in his Bible was a great source of comfort. Added to the words previously written, "No Reserve, No Retreat" were two more words, "No Regrets".

49. Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing for you and me to arrive at the end of our earthly journey with those words written in our hearts, "No Reserve, No Retreat, No Regrets"?
50. Jesus wants to say to you at the end of your journey, "Well done, my good and faithful servant."
51. Jesus gives us an example to follow so we can hear Jesus say, "Well done, my good and faithful servant."
52. Will you follow His example?

Conclusion:

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Closing chorus: Make me a servant.

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