



HG248: BLESS
Serve In Love

John 13:3-17

Home Group Study Notes

6 November 2022 - Pauline Randall



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION
BEFORE THE MEETING!

*Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group
with you, along with any previous notes and other
resources which might be helpful for your discussions.*



Welcome (10 mins)
Ice Breaker

What would you say is the greatest change or paradigm
shift in your lifetime?



Looking Upwards (10 mins)
Worship

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs
of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using
Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...



HG248: BLESS *Serve In Love*

John 13:3-17

Home Group Sermon

6 November 2022 - Pauline Randall

Introduction

Our Home Group series is looking at five different ways to share our faith by using the acronym B.L.E.S.S. and today we are on the 4th in the series looking at 'Today we will be seeing how we can bless others by how we 'serve in love'.

Jesus says in John 13: 34-35: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" and in John 15:12-13: "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no-one than this: that he lay down his life for his friends."

The Importance Of Serving In Love.

We may not have to die for someone, but there are other ways to practice sacrificial love: listening, helping, encouraging, giving,. Such love will not only bring believers to Jesus, it will also keep them strong and united in a world hostile to God. Jesus was a living example of God's love, as we are to be living examples of Jesus' love.

We are to put others ahead of ourselves, love people we don't like and share our resources generously. To love and serve others includes everything we do that is wholesome and beneficial to someone or some cause, and everything that is done out of our heart's desire to make a difference for good in the life and experience of another person or cause.

In today's Bible Reading of John 13:3-17, Jesus washes His disciples feet before the Passover. He was the model servant and he showed his servant attitude to his disciples. When we have our Agape meal. there is an opportunity to wash one another's feet, We often do this in my Homegroup. It is a very humbling experience.

Our feet are not the prettiest part of our bodies and probably some of us would not be able to accept having their feet washed by someone else. Jesus did this to show His love.

The book B.L.E.S.S. that goes with this series refers to Jesus's action at the Last Supper as setting aside His crown for an apron.

Jesus Knew His Position And Power.

He knew that God had put all things under His authority, and yet what did He do? The one who sat in the high position stooped down to serve. So far we have looked at three ways to love your neighbour and change the world: Begin with Prayer, Listen, and Eat. Jesus told us pointedly, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve..." (Matthew 20:28).

He modelled for us that once you begin with prayer, listen, and eat with someone, there is a good chance that by then you will have discovered how you can best serve the person God is asking you to bless.

John, Jesus's close friend and disciple, records the scene this way: "Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 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". (John 13:3-5).

We need to understand the magnitude of what is happening here. Jesus is God in the flesh, the Maker and Sustainer of everything, the King of kings and Lord of lords. There is no one higher, no one with more power. Even if you were in the room and didn't fully understand His authority, you would still have known Him as a highly respected teacher and rabbi.

In the ancient world, washing someone's feet was a routine practice before sharing a meal. But it was a job for the lowest-ranking person in the house. And I doubt I have to tell you it was a gross job!

In the first century, the feet were two of the dirtiest areas of the body. Just imagine no nail clippers, no pedicures, no socks, and a culture where shoes were seldom worn. In this culture, it was almost impossible to avoid stepping into "stuff" that would make feet truly disgusting!

For a meal like this, Jesus's friends would have reclined at a table and sat on the floor. All those gross, gnarly feet might even be within inches of your face. Just imagine the awkward silence in the room as the disciples realised there was no servant to wash their feet.

Now if I were there, says the author of the book, I hate to admit it, but I would have put what my wife calls my "task avoidance skills" to work! I would have pretended not to notice the dirty feet, maybe feigned a slight injury like a back problem or a headache. That usually works at home. But then the awkwardness meter gets dialled up to eleven as Jesus, the disciple's teacher and rabbi, their Lord, takes His shirt off, ties an apron around His waist, and starts to wash the feet of His followers.

Keep in mind that theirs was an honour-shame-culture. Protecting your reputation and your dignity was critically important. Your honour was like your credit rating: the higher your honour score, the more privilege and prestige you enjoyed. If you had a high score, other people were expected to serve you. Washing feet in public wouldn't be a great way to increase your honour score. No one would risk that!

It's why Peter responds to Jesus this way: "He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realise now what I am doing, but later you will understand" "No," said Peter, "You shall never wash my feet." (John 13:8a) Jesus answered, "unless I wash you, you have no part with me." "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" (John 13:8b-9).

The story continues: "When Jesus 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. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 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. I tell you, the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger great than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." (John 13:12-17).

Jesus's Message To Us TODAY!

It is a simple message for us. It is OUR turn to serve the way Jesus served. It is OUR turn to set aside our crown for an apron. We live in a world that believes the higher you rise and the more power and wealth you accumulate, the more leverage you have to get others to serve you, but Jesus takes that idea and says, "Here is what it really looks like to bless the world: you serve!" Are you willing to follow Jesus' example of serving? Who can you serve today?

There is a special blessing for those that not only agree that humble service is Jesus' way, but also follow through and do it. (look again at v.17) Some of us tend to avoid even the simplest tasks that might be associated with serving. A story from the book.

“ My brother, Jon, when he got married to Lisa, agreed it was his responsibility to take out the rubbish. Not sure he really knew what he was saying ‘yes’ to way back then. He didn't know he had exclusive rights (a binding contract) for rubbish hauling and that no-one else would ever do it. They had two children, and sometimes Jon would go out of town for a few days and when he returned the rubbish would be full and overflowing on the floor. Sometimes he would just leave it there to see if anybody would notice. Guess what –nobody did! Even worse, when he did take it out, he would get nothing for his efforts. No recognition. No thanks. It was like nobody else noticed his selfless and sacrificial service.

It had also been decided when they got married that Lisa would do the laundry. Jon admitted that the laundry was a much bigger job than the rubbish. Sometimes he noticed that the laundry was backed up and clothes were spilling out of the laundry basket. Did he pick them up? No! Not if he wasn't getting any help with the rubbish. Yes, he let the rubbish overflow and the laundry pile up. He would look the other way.

I wonder if any of us are like Jon. If we are going to bless the people God has put in our lives, we are going to have to make a major shift when it comes to serving others.”

Where To Serve - In Proximity.

Jesus met many people on his travels. He healed the deaf man who was brought to him near the Sea of Galilee. Jesus took him aside from the multitude privately.

Notice that Jesus served those that were near Him - in close proximity. Too often we want to do something big and bold that gets attention, but we must start with where we live, our neighbours, where we work, where we play, where we hang out, our family. Our mission lies wherever our feet take us. Take some time to think again about the eight people you identified, when we looked at ‘Who is my neighbour?

As Hugh Dibbens emphasised last Sunday; those of us who are Grandparents often are in a great place to talk to our grandchildren about the love of Jesus. We have the time.

Jesus was sensitive when he healed the deaf man and took him aside so that he wasn't made a spectacle of.

Jesus Served Powerfully.

When Jesus served, He accessed God's power. We can access that same power! When you serve, you have available the power of God.

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT?

John14:12 says, “ I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing,. He will do even greater things than these because I am going to the Father, And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.”.

What do you need to put down to bless someone through serving them? What is your crown? Is it your time? Your pride? Your inconvenience?

What would it look like for you to put down your crown and put on an apron where you live? In your neighbourhood? In your home? Your boss?

These everyday ways to love your neighbour and change the world are not just for somebody somewhere; you can start with the people you interact with every single day.

Do you believe that when you begin with prayer, listen, and share meals with people; more opportunities to serve than you can count will present themselves! Eventually, someone might ask you what makes you different or why you serve the way you do. Then you can put into action the fifth and final B.L.E.S.S. practice that we will hear about in the last study, which Paul will be sharing with us the end of November.

Romans 12:9-16 says: "Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil: cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless and not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice: mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited."

Jesus set the example. He didn't demand the perks of his position. Instead he loved his disciples with a servant's heart. He wants us to love each other that way. By devoting ourselves to each other and honouring each other above ourselves we can build each other up. We bring out the best in the people around us and those we meet and enable them to grow in the Lord.

Prayer

Lord, make us good neighbours to those who live near us, work with us, or who are part of our lives in any way. May we always be ready to serve them in the way that you would do. *Amen.*

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**BUT THE PLANS OF THE LORD
STAND FIRM FOREVER, THE
PURPOSES OF HIS HEART**

Through all generations.

PSALM 33:11

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Looking Upwards (40 mins)

Bible Study

Read the text for this study, and any references given, then answer the following questions. You may find it helpful to listen to the sermon and/or read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, your answers with your Home Group and, remember, these questions are only a guide to start your discussions.

1: Why do we resist serving even the people we care about most?

2: Read John 13:1-17. Why did Jesus choose to wash His disciples' feet the night before His crucifixion? How would you have felt if you had been there?

3: Jesus served in proximity, He served personally, and He served powerfully. Which of these qualities is most difficult for you to exhibit when it comes to serving the people around you?

4: When Jesus served, He accessed God's power. We can access that same power! When you serve, you have available the power of God. **DO YOU BELIEVE THAT?**

5: What do you need to put down to bless someone through serving them?

What is your crown? Is it your time? Your pride? Your inconvenience?

What would it look like for you to put down your crown and put on an apron where you live? In your neighbourhood? In your home.

6: REFLECT: Who do you think God wants you to serve this week?

Use Relational - Physical - Mental - Spiritual to describe some ways you will begin serving the people God is calling you to serve.



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



Looking Inwards (15 mins) *Caring For Each Other*

Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an opportunity to share, not something you have to do, however, 'It's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



Looking Outwards (15 mins) *Concern For Others*

Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours or church, which you would like to share (please be sure not pass on anything that is confidential or which you think the person concerned would not wish to be shared) for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?

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