

S Children's Moment

December 14, 2014

Title: Christmas Lights

Object: Christmas Lights

S Scripture: ⁶“There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the Light, but *he came* to testify about the Light.” (John 1:6-8)

Christmas is the most wonderful season of the year! Don't you agree? **S** I love all of the decorations, especially the lights. **S** Many towns have a lighting contest to see who can decorate their home the best. Usually, the newspaper publishes pictures of the most beautifully decorated homes and during the holidays, people get in their cars and drive all around town to see the beautiful lighting displays. It is so easy to get so caught up the beauty of the lights that we might think that that is what Christmas is all about, but it isn't. You see, the lights aren't Christmas, the lights are just reminders of the One True Light that came to bring light into the world.

There is a beautiful song, it is called, “Shine Jesus Shine.” The words go like this:

S I would like to sing the whole song. Can we do that? Will you sing with me? I bet if we ask Pastor Rick nicely, he and his group will lead us. Lets ask Pastor Rick.

The Bible tells us that there was a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came to tell about the light so that everyone would believe. John wasn't the light, he only came to tell others about the light. Who was the light that John came to tell people about? That's right, it was Jesus. Jesus said, "**I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light**

of life." (John 8:12)

This Christmas, as we enjoy the beautiful Christmas lights, **S** let's remember that while they are beautiful, they are only reminders of the one true light -- Jesus.

S Let's also remember that we have been called to tell others about Jesus -- the light of the world -- that they might be saved, that they might have life, that they might find their way in the darkest night.

Heavenly Father, this is such a beautiful time of the year. As we enjoy the lights of Christmas, we give thanks for your Son, the Light of the world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

-S- Humble Love

Sermon #73

Actions speak louder than words. I have heard this all my life. My father often said by a man's actions you are able to judge the value of his word. Biblically we know that out of a man's heart flow words and actions that reveal who he is and what are his motives. In our study passage we see the contrast of the love for others and the love for self. In verse one we just read how Jesus loved His disciples and followers to the end. Now there is an abrupt shift to the darkness within Judas. Verse two reads, "During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, *the son of Simon, to betray Him.*"^(v.2) The contrast between light and darkness is glaring; the darker Judas' heart - the brighter the Light of Jesus is. Jesus humbly washes the feet of His disciples including Judas. Jesus meets the evil plan of Satan that is executed by Judas with humble love. Judas would do the greatest injury to Jesus that a human being could do and by washing Judas' feet Jesus demonstrated to His disciples and to us that we are to show love to our enemies. In C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity* he takes this principle taught here by Jesus and puts practical feet to its application. "Do not waste your time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbor act as if you did. As soon as we do this, we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him. If you injure someone you dislike, you will find yourself disliking him more. If you do him a good turn, you will find yourself disliking him less." If we live this out in our own lives we will be changed for the better and those we serve will react in one of two ways just as Judas and the disciples did.

This act of love by Jesus repelled Judas but drew the other disciples closer to Him. John and the other gospel writers had been exposing in their gospels Judas' greed and ambition with what they revealed about the moneybox, perfume and Judas' meeting with the priests in the Temple court. Satan did not force Judas against his will, but used the desires of Judas' heart to work his plan to oppose God. Even though this change may have been gradual we see Satan influencing the heart of Judas and soon Satan would enter Judas and possess him, ["Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve."](#) (Luke 22:3)

From this point onward in Luke and soon in the Gospel According to John, Satan and Judas were in one accord – Satan physically and spiritually possesses Judas – they together desired to kill the Messiah sent by God. Is it possible for the called, the regenerated and the saved to be possessed? Yes, believers are possessed by the indwelling of the God the Holy Spirit. However, a true believer cannot, cannot be possessed by evil demons or spirits.

Love in Action

Verse two says, ["During supper"](#) or as we know from our perspective this is Jesus' last evening with His disciples. It is only natural that when one knows the end is near and time is precious that you want to impart to those you love the most important thoughts and lessons. Jesus begins teaching not with words but with two meaningful actions. The first was washing the disciples feet as read about in verses 2 to 11 and we will study this morning. The second was the giving of the bread to Judas recorded in verses 21 to 30 and that is for another message. The question that came to my mind was why did Jesus wash the feet of the disciples? Jesus always had a reason for what He did. Any thoughts? I believe the answer, in part, was that the disciples were distracted with everything happening around

them. We know from John that the disciples feared the Jewish leaders and these Pharisees had send guards to look for Jesus and His disciples. I believe the disciples strongly suspected that these Jewish leaders were about to arrest Jesus. They most likely feared that they would die with Jesus if He was arrested and put to death. Conversely, if they did not die with Jesus they would be left alone to deal with the failure of this Messiah. Was Jesus the real Messiah? We might ask how could they have doubts at this point? But then we remember the disciples had not yet received God the Holy Spirit into their very souls.

Jesus said to His disciples, ⁷“But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper (*Holy Spirit*) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.” (John 16:7) Who is this “helper” Jesus is speaking of? Right, God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is given to the elect when they are saved by God and the Holy Spirit will do the following; ⁸“When He comes, (*The Holy Spirit*) will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; ⁹concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me (*Jesus*); ¹⁰and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; ¹¹and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world (*Satan*) has been judged.” (John 16:8-11) Because the disciples did not have the Holy Spirit they were men hoping, searching and trying hard to believe. The disciples were distracted by what was going on all around them in the world. So Jesus acts quietly, deliberately and boldly to get their attention.

Love of Jesus, Love of Judas

On this last and most important night as they were finishing their supper Jesus begins by washing the feet of the disciples, Jesus was motivated by love. Reading beginning at verse 2, “During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of

Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon, to betray Him, ³ *Jesus*, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, ⁴ got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself.” What we see here is the humility of Jesus versus the pride of Judas. There is faithfulness to the end versus treachery and betrayal. John includes the devil in verse 2 to show the contrast between the evil self-motivated desires of Satan and the self-sacrificing love of God. The prophet Isaiah described the fall of Lucifer into the evil Satan, ¹²“*How you (Lucifer) have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations!*” ¹³But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’” (Isaiah 14:12-14) Satan’s desire for advancement is always at the expense of others, including Judas. For his self-seeking glory he is willing to kill God incarnate – he is blind with ambition.

On the other hand we also observe the way of God. The way of God incarnate, Jesus, is spoken of by Paul, ⁵“*Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,*” ⁶who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant (*slave*), and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:5-8) By washing the disciples feet the result is honor for Jesus and blessing for those who are His own. Jesus laid aside His garments and goes to His knees demonstrating how we as His slaves and children are to serve men and pray in humility before God. Unfortunately, most Christians want to serve God, but in an advisory capacity only.

Love's Motivation

Verse 3 says, “*Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands...*”

Jesus knew that God the Father had put all things under His power. This speaks of Jesus' authority. Jesus has always had all authority, but submitted to become a man for His love of His creation and their need for salvation. Verse 3 in its middle says, “*... that He (Jesus) had come forth from God and was going back to God...*”

Jesus knew He had come from God and John recognized and wants his readers to recognize the divine origin of Jesus. We also see Jesus clearly knew He was going home to once again be one with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. As John's readers are being instructed and so are we that he is speaking of Jesus' future glory after He has resurrected. When Jesus washed the disciple feet it was deliberate act of God acting as God – sacrificially serving and loving those He created and who the Father had given to Jesus from eternity past.

Love for Others

Jesus often used parables to teach lessons and principles for living, both for those who were unbelieving and those who were believers. We can see here Jesus is again using a parable to teach important concepts and principles. However He is not using words but is demonstrating the parable by His actions. Jesus is dramatizing the character of His ministry. Jesus is showing the love and service of His ministry and what He would soon be sending the disciples out to do and teach. Remember when Jesus called the disciples to Himself and told them this important principle that in the washing of the feet He displayed in another way. Jesus spoke to them saying, ⁴²“*You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them.*” ⁴³“*But it is not this way among you (elect), but whoever wishes to become great among*

you shall be your servant; ⁴⁴ and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:42-45) Jesus was always serving.

Let's examine the actions of Jesus in verse four. First, John writes that Jesus “got up” or rose from supper. This was a shadow of what Jesus had already done by rising from His throne in heaven – His throne of glory to come into the fallen and sinful world for the salvation of mankind. Second, Jesus “laid aside His garments” The apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Philippians that Jesus “laid aside” His glory which belonged to Christ so that He would come to earth as a man, both truly man and truly God, so that so that for the first time man could look upon God and not die or be blinded by His glory. Thirdly, Jesus took “a towel, He girded Himself.” This was the clothing of the lowest of servants. The role of the servant was exactly what we read in the Gospel According to Mark. Jesus was God, but modeled servant hood. As those who belong to Him how can be do less? The last thing Jesus did before He washed their feet was “He poured water into the basin.” Soon in an act of unselfish service He would pour out His blood that our sin might be covered. His blood would cleanse our souls and wash away the stains of our sin just as the water washed the filth from the soles of the disciple's feet. To see the end of this parable we need to jump ahead to verse 12. “So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined *at the table* again, He said to them, ‘Do you know what I have done to you?’” When Christ was done with His mission on earth and serving mankind to show them their sin and need for salvation He again returned to heaven and is exalted and sits at the right hand of God. As the writer of Hebrews wrote, “He (*Jesus*) is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the

Majesty on high. (Hebrews 1:3) This simple humble act of loving service was wrought with deep and meaningful lessons for all who will see.

There is also another dimension to this parable that can be seen in the exchange between Jesus and Peter. Jesus rose from supper and laid aside His clothes girding Himself in a towel the dress of a lowly servant and as He began washing the feet of the disciples. I can imagine that there was stunned silence. Even Jewish slaves did not wash the feet of their masters – this was a job for foreign slaves. Jesus is washing feet and works His way around to Peter. You just got to love Peter. Peter blurts out what everyone else has been thinking, **“Lord, do You wash my feet?”** Jesus both loves and understands Peter so He responds in simple straight forward truth, **“What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter.”** (v.7) Peter is humble enough to be overwhelmed that Jesus would wash His feet, but he was not humble enough to not speak up and tell the Son of God what to do. Peter shouts, **“Never shall You wash my feet!”** Jesus patiently but with firmness and authority responds, **“If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.”** Peter does an about face and declares with enthusiasm, **“Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head.”** Peter, Peter, Peter, a man of passion but who at times does not listen well and understand. Jesus says to Peter, **“He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.”** Jesus is not talking about physical dirt but about sin and that all people need to be cleansed from their sin. He was explaining to Peter, but certainly not Judas, that a justified saved person needs only cleaning from the contaminating effects of sin and does not need to be continually pardoned from sin’s penalty.

In Israel, as was in most of the counties around Israel, the custom was for a person

to bath when going to another's home for a dinner feast or party. On the way, as they walked the dirt roads in sandals their feet would become dirty. When they arrived their body was clean but their feet had become contaminated and would need to be washed. When God gives a person to Christ and they are justified before God they do not need constant cleansing from their exposure to the defiled world and their sins in order to continue in fellowship with God. They simply need to repent and their sin is cleaned and forgiven. In our present day language a believer in Jesus Christ does not need to be born again and again and again. We most certainly need to come before Christ and confess our sins for His cleansing forgiveness.

Servant Love

Jesus said, "Do you know what I have done to you?" He tells the disciples they can call Him "Teacher" and "Lord" and it is right for them to do so for Jesus is the Christ. What does Jesus mean by this question? Jesus is telling the disciples and telling us here today that we are to model His humility and that God's people are to take a servants role in this life. My brothers and sisters, you and I are to care for those who are unable to care for themselves – our aged parents, the poor, orphans and widows. We are seek out those who are suffering and work to alleviate their suffering and in doing so exhibit the love of Christ. We are to seek to honor others and in doing so honor our Lord. We are to seek to restore the brothers and sisters who have fallen – not enabling them, but helping them, walking with them through their recovery. We are to preach the gospel of Christ gently to make it inviting for the lost to come to Jesus. This gospel is like the refreshing drink of clear cool water. We are to be careful of what temperature the gospel water is when we wash someone's feet. If it is too hot we will scald and burn. If the water is too cold

the won't want to stay in very long – maybe not long enough to hear the word of God from His servants. Then there are some Christians that do not believe you need water at all to wash feet. They try scraping the dirt off and peel the skin off with the dirt. Let us learn from Jesus this day that we are to especially approach each other with love, grace and mercy. We are to approach those outside the faith with humble spirits of love. These are the marks of servant hood, love, mercy and grace are the marks of true disciples of Christ.