**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, September 2, 2020**

Good afternoon!

Have you ever had your feet washed by someone or washed another’s feet? I’ve experienced both! It’s both a humbling and honoring experience all at the same time! Many years ago, I was in a church meeting that included members and elders. One of the church members started to get upset about some things that were being discussed. Halfway through the meeting one of the elders got up and left the room only to return with a bowl of warm water and a towel. He knelt down at the feet of this sister, slipped off her shoes and washed her feet at that moment. You could have heard a pin drop! It brought a large dose of humility to the meeting. By humbling himself and showing honor to her, the upsetting situation suddenly dissolved! Although foot washing is not commonly practiced today, the practice of humbling ourselves and showing honor to others can be done in different ways of serving. This can still have the same impact when we are faced with difficult situations.

In John 13 we read that Jesus washes the feet of the 12 disciples. He desires is to eat one last Passover meal with them before experiencing His upcoming crucifixion. Take a minute and read the following.

• “Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them [to the end. During supper... Jesus... got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded... 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? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.” John 13:1-17

Foot washing in the first century was a common social practice. After walking the dusty and dirty roads, before they would recline at a table to eat, it would be important to have your feet washed! The table in which they ate was typically only a foot or so higher than the floor. It was shaped like a U or a C with an opening to allow access for the servers during the meal. Reclining involved laying on the floor sideways while being propped up on your left elbow and eating with your right hand. This is why we read in John 13:23, “there was reclining on Jesus’ breast one of His whom Jesus loved.” As they all reclined to the left, their feet would be closer but behind those to their right. Thus, the need for foot washing! For some reason, there was no one present to do the washing on this occasion. Each of the disciples must have walked past the bowl and towel as they entered the room. As the supper began Jesus “rose from the supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, girded Himself about.” I bet you could have heard a pin drop as Jesus washed all 120 toes including the feet of His betrayer Judas. It’s one thing to wash your own feet as you enter a room but it is another to have someone else do it for you! None of the 12 did this, but Jesus did! You see, in the room that night, in a sense, there were 12 lords and one servant! Jesus ends the event by saying “I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you... you are blessed if you do them.” John 13:15-17

So, what’s the point? Said best by the Lord Himself in Mark 10:44 “Whoever wishes to be first among you shall be a slave to all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life as a ransom for many.” In other words, if you want to be honored, it begins with being a servant who honors others above themselves!

Like my brother and elder friend in that rather intense meeting that night years ago, his act of humility seemed to defuse the situation. Proverbs 15:1 says, “A gentle answer turns away wrath.” Honoring one another by acts of serving above wanting to be served is a key to making a difference. As the old saying goes, real JOY is expressed in keeping Jesus first, Yourself last, and Others in-between!

Blessings,

Mike