

International Conversation Cafe

New Testament: Jesus Demonstrates Loving Leadership, John 13

Jesus' twelve disciples expected that Jesus would soon rule Israel and thus over the Romans. Since Jesus would be the king, they assumed they would become very important as well. But how important? And who would be the most important among them? On at least three occasions, Jesus defined what great leadership is; it is not how you control people but how you serve people. Mark 10 records these words of Jesus to his disciples.

Jesus called them together. He said, "You know about those who are rulers of the nations. They hold power over their people. Their high officials order them around. Don't be like that. Instead, anyone who wants to be important among you must be your servant. And anyone who wants to be first must be the slave of everyone. Even the Son of Man did not come to be served. Instead, he came to serve others. He came to give his life as the price for setting many people free."

Restate Jesus' explanation of leadership and his own example.

What are your thoughts about this?

The attitude Jesus speaks of is "humility." Why is humility important in a leader?

Jesus demonstrated humility to his disciples. In Jesus' time, there were no paved roads. It was a hot dry climate, so people's feet got dusty as they walked. A household servant or child commonly had the task of washing the guest's feet. Foot washing was a gift of hospitality and refreshment. In John 13, Jesus does the unthinkable and assumes the role of a servant to show how much he loved his disciples and to teach them how to love.



John 13 It was just before the Passover Feast (a religious holiday to remember how God saved their nation from disaster). Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world. It was time for him to go to the Father. Jesus loved his disciples who were in the world. So he now showed them how much he really loved them.

So he got up from the meal and took off his outer clothes. He wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a large bowl. Then he began to wash his disciples' feet. He dried them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter.

"Lord," Peter said to him, "are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus replied, "You don't realize now what I am doing. But later you will understand."

"No," said Peter. "You will never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you can't share life with me."

"Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet! Wash my hands and my head too!"

Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs to wash only his feet. The rest of his body is clean. And you are clean. But not all of you are."

Jesus knew who was going to hand him over to his enemies. That was why he said not everyone was clean.

When Jesus finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes. Then he returned to his place.

"Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord.' You are right. That is what I am. I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet. So you also should wash one another's feet. I have given you an example. You should do as I have done for you.

"What I'm about to tell you is true. A servant is not more important than his master. And a messenger is not more important than the one who sends him. Now you know these things. So you will be blessed if you do them.

Discussion

Tell the story in your own words, noticing Peter's reaction. Why do you think Peter felt as he did?

What are some of your culture's ways of welcoming guests into your home?

Are there certain jobs that wealthy or important people do not do?

How would you apply Jesus' example in your own life?