

# A New Way

Passion Prayer Week | Thursday Devotional

*-Pastor Kevin Bruce-*

It never ceases to amaze me what Jesus chose to do in His final hours of life. He could have preached to multitudes, led a healing crusade, or done some other form of public sign to help His popularity as He pressed toward His hour of trial. And yet, He doesn't do any of that.

In John 13, we find Jesus gathering with His twelve disciples in an upper room, eagerly waiting to experience Passover with them and communicate to them some very important truths they had yet to hear. The King knew He was about to entrust the keys of His Kingdom to His followers, and it was time to prepare them for this new assignment.

Oh, what it would have been like to be with Jesus on that fateful evening! Can you imagine it? Place yourself in their dusty sandals for just a moment. You are certain something big is about to happen, the town is buzzing with anticipation, and Jesus has been saying some somber and cryptic things lately. What is going to happen next?

Just when you might expect the Messiah to reveal the strategy to topple Roman oppression and liberate Judea, Jesus does something other worldly and unexpected. He rises from the table that you are sitting at and removes His outer cloak, wrapping Himself in a towel as a servant would. He then proceeds to wash your feet, along with the rest of the disciples.

Your first instinct is to protest, but then you remember what happened the last time one of His disciples tried to reprimand Jesus. Why would Jesus be washing feet? If He were to wash His own feet, it could be understandable, but masters and rabbis don't wash the feet of their disciples, and kings do not wash the feet of servants. The way and culture forbid everything about it. There was no honor serving someone else, instead it was humiliating, base and beneath.

As Jesus did so, Peter spoke up and refused to let Jesus proceed. What exactly was Peter protesting to? He wasn't embarrassed by the smell of his own feet, and he wasn't objecting by stating that they were already clean. He simply did not want His Messiah to act like a servant, and he couldn't fathom why Jesus would stoop to wash his feet. What honor was there in this? What respect could be demanded by a king who kneels to others He is leading? Everything about this scene was wrong...or was it?

As Jesus washed, He taught. This was not a lesson in foot washing, or the need to clean feet, but rather it was an example. Jesus was instituting a New Way for His followers to walk. This New Way involved overwriting the old code of honor and pride and re-writing it with service and humility. To serve is now greatness in the New Way, and to humble yourself before God is to be exalted by God. Think of it! Jesus left His throne in heaven and washed dirt and dung from human feet! This is a microcosm of the entire Gospel story. In fact, the dirt that was once on the feet of His disciples was now smeared upon Him. Jesus wore dirt, your dirt and my dirt.

The Kingdom of God was at hand, and that hand had grabbed a basin of water and a towel to prove that the world's lords had gotten it wrong. Pride and promotion were the way of the false king, and now the New Way must be after the likeness of the New King – one of meekness, service and humility. As the water was being poured into the basin for washing, new wine was being poured into new wineskins. The New Way of the Kingdom could only be received by those who were willing to embrace it, but those who resisted would burst with pride and tradition, spilling the wine on the ground they were too arrogant to kneel on.

As you approach Good Friday and begin to reflect on the sacrifice your King made for you, remember His words at Passover and allow them to pierce into the very depths of your being. Are you willing to embrace the New Way of life that Jesus modeled and taught? Whose feet is He calling you to wash, perhaps tonight?

*“...Do you know what I have done to you? 13 You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. 16 Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. 17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” – John 13:12-17*

*“24 Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. 25 And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’ 26 But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. 27 For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.” – Luke 22:24-27*