Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ,

You have probably heard it said before that a husband teaches his sons way more about how to treat women by *how* he loves his wife than by what he *says* about how to treat women. So he might have all the teaching nicely lined up but if he calls his wife names and ignores her opinion and yells at her, then that speaks a far louder message.

And this reflects the truth of the saying, which is that **Actions speak louder than words**. Have you heard that before? We see that idea in the Book of James where James says, “*I will show you my faith by my works*.” How a person behaves says a lot about what they say they believe.

Well, this idea of actions speaking louder than words is closely related to another saying, which is that **A picture is worth a thousand words**. Have you heard that saying? It’s very true, isn’t it. I could give you a description of ice cream in a cone and list all the ingredients and describe the colours and the texture and the flavours of the sprinkles, or I could just show you a picture of ice cream in a cone and you would go mm-yum!

Well, as we saw last week, v1 tells us that everything that follows in ch’s 13-18 are a demonstration of the love of the Lord Jesus for all His followers. And that is why we described ch’s 13-18 as a **love letter** from Jesus to His followers. And the love letter begins with something that Jesus *does* – His washing the feet of the disciples. Before He *says* anything to His disciples about love, He will *do* love. And that is why our sermon theme today is that **what Jesus Does Here is a Picture of Love Worth *Ten* Thousand Words**! There are words spoken throughout this episode, but what Jesus *does* here is worth ten thousand words.

And what we will see is the incredible love of Jesus for His followers, what it is that ought to make Christian so *different from* the world and so *attractive to* the world, and also some very important truthes about how salvation works.

1. So first of all, this picture of love is seen as Jesus is **Contrasted** with Judas in vv2-3.
   1. And it is very plain that John wants us to contrast Judas and Jesus. We have already seen from v1 that all that Jesus did and was about to do was motivated by His love for His followers. But as we come to v2, we learn that Judas Iscariot was moved to betray Jesus by the devil. And then in v3, in addition to His love for His followers, we see that Jesus was also motivated by His knowledge that the Father had given Him all things, and that he had come from God and was going back to God.
      1. So one the one hand you have Judas who was moved by Satan, and on the other hand you have Jesus who was motivated by love and the knowledge of God.
      2. On the one hand, you have the jealousy and anger and pride of Judas, and on the other hand you have the love and humility and selflessness of Jesus.
      3. On the one hand you have the treachery of Judas, and on the other hand you have the sacrificial service of Jesus.
      4. And congregation, this is **the stark contrast between Satan’s way and God’s way**. Satan’s way is all about serving self, even at the expense of others; God’s way is about serving others, even at the expense of self.
      5. So much about human society is about respect and esteem and position and what you deserve, but the way of Jesus is about humility and self denial and serving others and being willing to endure injustice. You and I have unfairness buttons that are so easily pushed! But that is not the way of Jesus. In **Philippians 2** we have that incredible passage that explains that Jesus let go of what He deserved – His position of honour in heaven – and emptied Himself, by taking to Himself a human nature, and humbling Himself to the point of death on the cross. And He did this for us. And **1 Peter 2** sets the way of Jesus before us as our example – He suffered, He was unjustly treated, He was falsely accused, He was unfairly treated, He did not deserve what happened to Him. And in this He left us “*an example, so that [we] might follow in His steps*.” The way of Christ and His followers is to be the way of lowly and loving service that places others before self.
      6. I think I may have told you before about **the soldier who would kneel by his bunk** bed at night to pray before he went to bed. Well, the other soldiers started to make fun of him, and one night another soldier threw his army boots across the room at the praying soldier, and the others all laughed. But in the morning, when that soldier woke up, he saw his boots standing by his bed all clean and polished. And that act made a powerful impression on him because it was so unlike what we expect people to do. It truly was a picture of love worth a thousand words.
      7. So how about you? Are you an I give as good as I get sort of person? Are you a payback sort of person? Are you all about getting justice and being treated fairly? Or are you a turn the other cheek sort of person? An ask me for my shirt and I will give you my jacket also sort of person? An I would rather be seen to be wrong for Christ’s sake than to hold on to my rights sort of person?
2. So this picture of love is seen even as Jesus is contrasted with Judas. But the picture of love is seen also, in the second place, as Jesus **Condescends** to Wash Feet in vv4-12.
   1. This truly is a staggering act! I was talking about what Jesus did here with someone during the week and we were trying to think of a **modern day parallel** for this act. And about the closest we could think of was if I was hosting a formal dinner at home, with men expected to wear tuxedoes and women to wear ball gowns, and the guest of honour was the Prime-Minister. And all of the guests arrived at the same time, dressed to the nines! But as they walked up to the house, to the horror of everyone, someone noticed a pile of dog pooh that had been squished all over the path. Now, it would make sense if I as the host did the clean up or if I laid a board across the path so that the Prime-minister and all the other guests could avoid the mess, but it we would all be utterly flabbergasted if the Prime-minister quickly changed into overalls and got down on her hands and knees and started scrapping and scrubbing away the mess. I mean, that is just not what you would expect a Prime-minister to do! Well, that doesn’t even come close to what Jesus did here. He deserves the praise of angels! He created the heavens and the earth! He is God come into flesh! If we read that Jesus snapped His fingers and ordered a disciple to get Him a drink, we would think nothing of it because that is what Lords and Masters are entitled to do. But He undressed and then dressed as the lowliest of slaves to do what the lowliest of slaves did in a household of that time. It is just extraordinary that Jesus would clean away the dirt and the filth and the toe jam from between the toes of the disciples’ feet!
      1. Now, you will see in v7 that Jesus knew that **the disciples would only understand what He was doing *after* He had died and risen and ascended to heaven**. On the night they probably thought that what Jesus was doing was a bit odd but, you know, if He was determined to clean their feet, so be it. But later on, after He ascended into heaven, you can imagine the moment when the first disciple reminded the others about this occasion and the spiritual penny dropped for them all! Ahhh! That’s what the foot washing was all about!
      2. And I have already mentioned the extraordinary **Philippians 2 passage**. But you see, what Jesus *does* here is a living parable of what Philippians 2 teaches:
         1. The Philippians passage says that Jesus left the position and prestige of being God in heaven. ͢͢
         2. And then the Philippians passage says that He took “*the form of a servant, as He became a human being.*”͢
         3. And then the Philippians passage says that “*He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross*.” ͢
         4. And the Philippians passage ends by talking about Jesus ascending and being given “*the name that is above every other name*.” ͢

And we see that acted out here as He lays aside His outer garments.

And we see that acted out here as Jesus ties a towel around His waist and becomes a servant.

And we see that acted out here as Jesus washes the disciples’ feet as a picture of what He will soon do on the cross.

And we see that acted out here in v12 as Jesus once again puts on His outer garments and resumes His place.

So do you get the foot-washing? Do you see what it reveals about Jesus? He is the Son of God who left heaven to come to earth to die a bloody death on the cross for the forgiveness of your sins. But He lives and reigns, now, in heaven, as the King of kings and Lord of lords!

III. Well, we see even more about this picture of love, in the third place, in Jesus’ **Conversation**

with Peter in vv6-11.

* 1. And it is a slightly confusing conversation, isn’t it. Are Peter and Jesus just talking about bathing and foot washing? How are we to understand these words? Well, we are helped to see that **there is a spiritual meaning to Jesus’ words** by what He says in vv10-11 about Judas not being clean.
     1. In recent weeks we have repeatedly noted the emphasis in John’s Gospel to the fact that Jesus’ saving love is focused only on His sheep, the chosen of God, those given to Him by God. And we see that made clear here also. All of the disciples are clean except for Judas. This means that the other 11 are Jesus’ sheep, chosen of God, given to Jesus by God.
     2. So what Jesus is saying is that the 11 are saved or born again or **justified**. That is what Jesus means in v10 when He describes Peter and the others as already having been bathed. They had had the once for all washing in Jesus’ blood that is justification. What is our special phrase to explain justification, boys and girls? Just-as-if-I never sinned. So the 11 disciples were new creations, children of God, righteous ones. They were, as Jesus said in v10, “*Completely clean*.” And that is how it is with you if you have repented of your sins and trusted in Christ for your salvation. You are a new creation, a righteous one, a completely clean one.
     3. But are you totally free of sin? Has this been a sinless week for you? Was Peter totally free of sin? No. There is still much sin that we commit each day. So as Jesus said that Peter and the other 10 just needed their feet washed, He was demonstrating that even though we are justified once and for all, we still need *daily* **sanctification** – we need the daily work of the Holy Spirit to purify us and prepare us for heaven.
     4. Did you follow that? The bathing Jesus refers to is a picture of *justification* – that once for all event that happens when we first receive Jesus; the foot washing is a picture of *sanctification* – the daily process of renewal and purification. We only need to bathe – be justified – once, but we need our feet washed – sanctification – every day.
     5. So again, we have an incredible picture of Jesus’ love for His followers in His conversation with Peter. The much loved hymn, **Rock of Ages** includes these lines:

*let the water and the blood, from thy wounded side which flowed,   
be of sin the double cure; save from wrath and make me pure.*

And it is the double cure by Jesus’ blood that is pictured in Jesus’ conversation with Peter. The blood of Jesus *has* made us spotless new creations, but the Holy Spirit is also *making* us more and more holy by the power of Jesus’ blood, every day.

* + 1. So there are two things you can pray about, regularly: Dear Father, thank you for making me a new creation by the blood of Jesus, and Spirit of God, please make me more and more holy by the blood of Jesus, each day.

IV. Well, that brings us fourthly and lastly to the picture of love that is seen in Jesus’

**Command** to Us All in vv12b-20.

1. In the second half of v12, Jesus asks the disciples if they understand what He has done? But He had already said in v7 that they would not understand until after He had died and risen and ascended to heaven. And He reinforces that reality in v19 by explaining that it is after Judas has betrayed Him and He has been crucified and He rises that they will truly and fully believe that He is God’s Messiah.
2. But His major point in this section is what we read in vv13-15 where He says, “*You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you*.” If we truly understand that Jesus stooped down to come and serve and sacrifice for our sakes, then we will be eager to stoop down and to serve and sacrifice for the sake of others. And this is about *doing*, not about speaking; Jesus would have us imitate His *behaviour* here.
3. And as Jesus did this act of service for His disciples, so we are to serve one another as fellow believers. **Galatians 6:10** says, “*So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith*.” It is often the case that brothers and sisters in a family can be very polite and considerate with visitors, but they are just nasty and selfish when it comes to their siblings. They say things and do things to their siblings that they would never say to visitors. Does anyone here know what I am talking about? Well, let that not be the case with us as a church family. And so, for example, there is nothing very glamorous about cleaning the church. And you can just straighten the chairs and pick up the old bulletins as a kind of minimal clean. But that is not what the Lord is calling us to here, is it? And there are many other very practical ways that we can serve one another – meals or meal money when there is illness, offers to babysit for busy parents, visiting those in rest homes, sending notes of appreciation or thank you gifts, volunteering to serve wherever we can do so, regularly inviting others over for coffee or a meal, being willing to lend whatever we have to others who could use it, even if it is costly.
4. And our love for one another is a powerful witness to unbelievers. Later in this chapter, Jesus will say, “*As I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples*.” And we will say more about this when we come to this verse but you have probably heard it said before that many people will never get to read the four Gospels, but you can be the fifth Gospel and they will read you. What will they see? Will they see acts of lowly and humble service? Will they see a person who goes the extra mile, who stoops down and endures injustice and mistreatment? And what will they hear? Will they hear that you do these things because Jesus Christ has loved and does love you?

Thisafternoon we are going to consider the meaning and the practice of “Amen.” And we will do this as we conclude our tour of the Lord’s Prayer. If you look at v16, you will see that it begins with the words “truly, truly...” And “truly” is a translation of the words in the original language which are “Amen.” Jesus literally says, “Amen, Amen…” And we have seen Jesus use this phrase regularly in John’s Gospel. It is an emphasis phrase. Jesus is saying, What I am about to say is true and certain and reliable and established. So as we look at what He went on to say we need to remember that we are not greater than Jesus. If ever anyone had a right to stand on what He deserved and what He was owed, it was Jesus. But instead, He washed His disciples’ feet. Surely this is a picture of love worth Ten thousand words. May our lives be a similar picture of love. Amen.