

**LOVING THE LORD AND LOVING ONE ANOTHER
FOR THE ORGANIC BUILDING UP OF THE CHURCH
AS THE BODY OF CHRIST**

Message One

Life's Washing in Love to Maintain Fellowship (1)

Scripture Reading: John 13:1-17, 34-35

- I. Since John is a book of signs (2:11), what is recorded in John 13 concerning foot-washing should be considered a sign, which is a symbol with spiritual significance (vv. 1-17):**
- A. Foot-washing should not be taken merely in a physical sense but rather, and even more intrinsically, in a deeper, more important, and spiritual sense.
 - B. In John 1—12 the Lord as life came and brought forth the church, composed of the regenerated ones; in their spirit the regenerated ones are in God and in the heavenlies, but in their body they are still living in the flesh and walking on the earth; this shows us the necessity of the Lord's fellowship in John 13.
- II. "Jesus knowing that His hour had come for Him to depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the uttermost...Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all into His hands and that He had come forth from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His outer 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"—vv. 1, 3-5:**
- A. The outer garments that the Lord laid aside signify the Lord's virtues and attributes in His expression; hence, He was putting off of what He is in His expression.
 - B. The Lord's girding Himself signifies His being bound and restricted with humility—cf. 1 Pet. 5:5.
 - C. In ancient times the Jews wore sandals, and since their roads were dusty, their feet easily became dirty; if, when they came to a feast, they sat at the table and stretched out their feet, the dirt and smell would certainly frustrate the fellowship; hence, for the feast to be pleasant they needed foot-washing.
 - D. The Lord washed His disciples' feet to show them that He loved them to the uttermost (John 13:1), and He charged them to do the same to one another in love:
 - 1. "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet"—v. 14.
 - 2. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another"—v. 34.
 - E. The Lord's washing of the disciples' feet was the washing away of their dirtiness so that their fellowship with the Lord and with one another could be maintained.
- III. In our experience the defilement of the feet signifies separation from God and from one another through contact with the world; foot-washing signifies the recovery of spiritual freshness and vitality and the recovery of our fellowship with the Lord and with one another:**
- A. In our experience the washing water in John 13 signifies the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5), the word (Eph. 5:26; John 15:3), and life (19:34; 10:10; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:6; 1 John 5:16); the Lord washes our feet by the work of the Holy Spirit, by the enlightenment of the living word, and by the operation of the inner law of life.

- B. This is not the washing away of our sins by the blood (1:9); this is why, after John 12, there is the need for such a sign in chapter 13; spiritual foot-washing saves us from staleness in our fellowship with the Lord.
- C. Today the world is dirty, and we, the saints, are easily contaminated; for us to maintain pleasant fellowship with the Lord and with one another, we need spiritual foot-washing carried out both by the Lord in His love and by one another in love.
- D. This is absolutely necessary for us to live in the fellowship of the divine life, which is revealed in John's first Epistle, a continuation of the Gospel of John.