Copycat Christianity - Rev. David Parker

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Preacher: Rev. David Parker

[0:00] If you could turn back with me then to John's Gospel, chapter 13.!

The idea in the morning was to bring a well-known passage from one of the Gospels. So, on the first Sunday it was from Matthew's Gospel, and of course there's that very well-known verse in that Gospel, Come unto me, all you who labour and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
And then we were looking on the second Sunday at another very well-known passage of the prodigal son. And now, in my final morning message, we're looking at this, I believe, very well-known passage again of Jesus taking the towel and washing the feet of the disciples.
What kind of Christianity does Jesus want us to have? Are we to use the church to showcase our gifts?
Are we to settle for a quiet or secret discipleship? Are we to be a kind of exclusive club talking to ourselves?
[1:43] Jesus is not only our saviour, but our supreme example for copying. In this wonderful chapter, Jesus, on the eve of his crucifixion, demonstrates by an unbelievable act what kind of Christianity he expects from his disciples and his people.

We'll look at this passage under four headings. Profound humility of Jesus.
Peter's pride. Powerful call to servant Christianity. And promised blessing. Before we go into the four headings that I want to use to explore this passage, I want you to note the short prelude or prologue that comes as its introduction in verses 1 to 3.
And we'll just look at that and it'll help us, I think, gain greater understanding of the moment, greater understanding of the atmosphere and of the situation in which Jesus did this amazing act of washing the feet of the disciples.
And the first thing that John wants us to be aware of is it was just before the feast of the Passover. That's the first thing that he wants us to be aware of.
[3:36] And throughout this gospel, John is great. I mentioned this, I think, in one of my messages. John is great for allusion.

Just sort of alluding to something without necessarily going into more content and association. And John has always been associating Jesus with the Passover.
And the Passover is that great moment in the Old Testament that birthed the people of God, the ancient Israelites, if you like.
And now Jesus, John wants us to have in our minds that this Passover is connected with Jesus. And this Passover, as you probably know, is known as the Exodus. And Jesus then, John goes on to report that when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, notice the language there, to depart.
[4:49] In other words, John is suggesting to us that Jesus is the true Passover lamb. He is the true sacrifice for our sin, for our problem, for our guilt, for our running away from God.

And notice he said that Jesus, the certain things that Jesus knew, remember, were 24 hours, believe it or not, or not much more than that, than Jesus being crucified here.
The chapters from here till about 17 are known as Jesus' farewell address to the disciples.
And this is part of it here. And it's not so much an address as a momentous action. The hour, the hour, that is first mentioned in John chapter 2, you will remember, at the wedding of Cana in Galilee, where Jesus said to his mother, he said this to his mother in John 2, verse 4, my hour has not yet come.
My hour has not yet come. And what does Jesus mean by that? He means the great point for which every step he made was moving towards the cross as him being our saviour and our sacrificial lamb.

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[6:47] That's what he meant. Although his healings were unbelievable, although his miracles, John calls the miracles signs, although the signs or the miracles were unbelievable, although his teaching was unbelievable, although everything about him was unbelievable, here was the omega point that he was making his way to, the cross.

Because without the cross, there's no gospel. Without the cross and resurrection, there's no gospel, there's no Christianity. So, Jesus is aware, and he's also aware, as we read, I think that he knows who is going to betray him.
Did you pick that up in verse 11 of chapter 13? For he knew who was to betray him, and that is why he said that you're not all clean.
And also, not only did Jesus know about this hour, and about his whole, why he was sent, why he was there, why there was an incarnation, why he donned a human body, not only did he know why that was, and where it was moving him towards, but it also tells us something else that he knew.
It says that he knew, he knew that the Father had given all things into his hands.
[8:25] In verse 3 there, Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hand, and that he had come from God, and was going back to God. In other words, he was also aware of where he had come from, and where he was moving towards, and who was to betray him.

Now, it's in that, that's all in Jesus' mind, and it's in that state of mind, that this momentous event happens.
And even though he knew who would betray him, he has him at this table. We too need to have an exodus.
There is something that we too, if we haven't done so already, need to depart from. And what that departing in exodus for us is, is from living our life without God at its center.
So, this is the situation that Jesus is aware of. Let's now look at this profound humility of Jesus in verses 4 and 5.
[9:57] Jesus rose from supper, laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it round his waist.

Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.
This act that Jesus suddenly rises from supper and performs was normally the act of the lowest slave in a house that was able to have slaves.
Indeed, the word slave is used here in the original language. And this must have been a shock to the disciples.
They must have been watching this and saying, what on earth is he doing? This is our Lord and Master. This is our Teacher.
[11:09] This is the Son of God. What on earth is he doing? It's a picture, is it not, of the incarnation.

You know, when you go into the letters of the New Testament, there is a letter there that in a sense puts words to that whole act of Jesus removing his outer garment, putting on a slave's garment, and going around with a basin and a towel and washing the feet of his disciples.
And it's these words from Philippians chapter 2 that in a sense put words to this event.
Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped or held onto, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant and the word is slave there as well.
Being born in the likeness of men and being found. So, here we have, here we have Jesus modeling what kind of Christianity we should have.
[12:33] We're obviously going to see more of that. And of course, at its center, where it is throbbing and pulsating, is humility.

Humility. And of course, that's the road into the kingdom of God, isn't it? Humility. And it was the road that Christ needed to tread and to walk were he to be our Savior.
He had to divest himself of all his rights as God and, as it were, get the basin out and start washing the feet of the disciples.
It's, that humility is so important for Christ and his mission. it's so important for us as Christians and our interactions with one another and the kind of ideas that govern our behavior.
And it's very, very critical for society as well. Society, you might say, is characterized by a lack of humility.

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[13:55] And this humility humility was something in Jesus' day that was scorned. The, the, the, the Greek ideas, and you must remember that where Jesus was at that point, the Greek ideas and the Roman ideas thought it was a shame for anyone to, to be a slave, to be in these lower echelons of society.

a challenge, is it not, for you and I? And just to show you the shock that that made, we now move to verse 6.
On the disciples, he came, and I say on the disciples because although Peter is the one that expresses his, his shock, I guess they were all shocked.
he came to Simon Peter who said, Lord, do you wash my feet? Jesus answered him, what I am doing you do not understand now.
And, and, and this is true of all the disciples. If you read the Gospels, they never understand so much of what Jesus is saying to them, and they particularly do not understand his comments about dying and rising again.
[15:24] But I am sure by the time John wrote this Gospel, he would have been, and by the time Peter perhaps later on in his life, he would have began to see the illusion, the, the, the, the, the deeper spiritual truths in that act that Jesus had performed.

Anyway, there he is, Peter, and Jesus tells him he'll not understand this just now, and Peter replies to Jesus' reply, you shall never wash my feet.
There was no way that he wanted to see his Lord in such a humiliating posture as bending down and washing his smelly, dirty feet.
and then Jesus' startling response to Peter in verse 8.
Jesus said, if I do not wash you, you have no share with me. And that volatile man, Peter, but a very sincere man, by the way, I've got Peter's pride in inverted commas.
[16:46] It's a sincere pride, if you get what I mean by using that phrase. Anyway, Jesus said to him, if I do not wash you, you have no share with me.

Simon Peter said, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. And Jesus said to him, the one who has bathed or bathed does not need to wash except for his feet, but is completely clean, and you are clean, but not every one of you.
In actual fact, in chapter 3 of verse 15, we read these words of Jesus speaking to his disciples, already you are clean, because of the word that I have spoken to you.
And the reason is Jesus' words are not mere words, they're power, they're authority, and when Jesus says to someone be clean, that is why they are cleansed, and when we come to Christ and confess our sins and ask him to be our redeemer, when Jesus says you're one of mine, these are not just mere words, it's true.
Peter needs more understanding in order to see the depth, the spiritual depth of what Jesus is doing.
[18:14] Let me ask you, we've just been looking at Peter in this room, in this act of Jesus rising from supper, do you want Jesus to wash you?

Do you want a part with Jesus? Why not copy Peter and wholeheartedly say yes?
Simon Peter said to him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. And although he was technically wrong, that he didn't need all of that, because he had already been washed by the powerful word of Christ.
Although that was the case, isn't it wonderful to see Peter's open heart? Oh yeah, I want completely washed, Lord. How about us?
Wash me in the blood of the Lamb, says the hymn, and I shall be whiter than snow. Have you been bathed in the blood of Christ?
[19:33] Have you come to Christ and received him as your saviour? If you have, that's wonderful.

I'm glad I was about 21 when I came to Christ. It's great coming to Christ at any age, but I'm so grateful to God that he enabled me to come when I was 21.
if you're already a Christian, you're washed in the blood of Christ.
You're clean because Jesus' sacrifice has washed away all your sins, never to be raised again at you for their guilt or judgment.
He sees you if you're a Christian, if you're a believer, if you have received Christ as your saviour, he sees you as accepted in Jesus Christ.

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[20:51] This is a wonderful thing. Jesus, God, sees you and I if we're Christians. He sees us as we're in Christ. He sees us through the lens of Christ.

Christ is there hiding, if you like, because he has taken all that guilt on his own shoulders and Christ, our sin is not seen in that sense before God.
Do we wash one another's feet? I don't mean literally. In other words, are we ready to take the smallest task, the most thankless task in humility and love for God and love for one another?
don't think that if you're involved in the church and that you're only able to do something small, that God is not noting that.
He is. We give a cup of cold water in the name of Christ, God will note that. If something that you're doing in the church seems insignificant, if you're doing it for God, it's very significant.
[22:32] What Jesus did here was a stunning, powerful example of Christ-like Christianity. in verses 12 and 13, he asked them this question, do you understand what I have done to you?

You call me teacher and Lord, and you're right, for so I am. If then your Lord and teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.
As Jesus finished washing the feet of the disciples and resumed his place, you might say, his rightful place, I mentioned this a moment or two ago, but could it be that later on the disciples recalling this event would see it in the kind of words that we read in Philippians, he who was God became a slave for you and me.
They probably, as I say, were shocked, flabbergasted, puzzled, not for a moment thinking, he was spelling out the kind of discipleship and Christianity that they were to practice, but in verse 14 Jesus drops the bombshell.
In verse 14, if I then, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.
[24:29] Note that word, ought. in other words, he's spelling out the kind of discipleship and Christianity that they were to endeavor to practice as copying Jesus Christ.

And Jesus is the one who has the authority to say ought, since he is the embodiment of God's righteousness. And therefore, Jesus models and embodies the will of God.
And that is why he and only he can use that powerful verb ought. And so that the ought isn't merely, as some thinkers would say, a descriptive term, but rather a prescriptive term.
because it comes from one who has the right not only to describe, but to prescribe. And what is this foot washing then?
Well, in general, it's surely following the stunning humility of Jesus Christ. It's one of the open secrets of Christ-like Christianity which this world needs to see.
[26:03] The world out there, it needs to see that humble, loving, kind, fellowship and ministry from Christians, from churches, churches, in its community.

We must not forget that Jesus is our supreme example, as well as our Savior, and therefore he is to be copied.
That's what follow me means. And Jesus said, I have given you an example in verse 15, that you also should do just as I have done to you.
There's the word to go out and copy him. That you should do just as I have done to you.
The heart of Christ-like Christianity and discipleship is to follow Christ. Part of that following is humble service to one another.
[27:24] Because remember, he's speaking to the disciples collectively and he's asking them to follow his example and that they should do just as I have done to you.

A servant is not above his master nor is a messenger greater than the one who is sent. Don't think your seemingly little ministry for Christ, as I said a few moments ago, doesn't matter.
It does, and especially if it's done in humble love. In that introduction, going back to the introduction, we read that Jesus loved his people to the end.
And that no doubt is talking about the time that Jesus was there, but surely it's true for all of his people. And loving them to the end in the actual context, if you like, the historical context there, I believe means the cross.
He loved them enough to be incarnated. He loved them enough to take the towel and wash their feet.
[28:48] He loved them enough to suffer all the shame and disgrace and rejection of his society around him. What about our love for him?

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finally, the blessing that Jesus promises here, I want you to note that as well.
Jesus said in verse 17, if you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.
there might be people here, I don't know, there might be people here who have fantastic knowledge of the gospel, who have great knowledge of theology and the Bible.
have heard that great preacher C.H. Spurgeon once said, an ounce of heart learning is worth a ton of head knowledge.
[30:12] Jesus just reminds us in that promise, it's not enough to know about God or about the gospel or about its theology.

We need to obey and we need to do. And the blessing that Jesus promised is to the doers of the world and not the hearers only.
perhaps you've heard about the great truths of Jesus but still you haven't done what he has said you ought to do which is receive him as your Lord and Master.
Will you do that today and know the blessing that this Christ promises who humble themselves under the mighty hand of God and took the towel and the basin and washed the feet of the disciples.
Amen. May the Lord bless these things to each one of us for his glory and for our eternal good.
We're going to conclude our service then by singing in Psalm 51 from the Sing Psalm section on page 68 page 68 Psalm 51 and we'll sing from verse 10 Lord create a pure heart in me and a steadfast mind renew do not take your spirit from me cast me not away from you give me back the joy I had keep my willing spirit glad let's sing these verses of Psalm 51 verses 10 to 17 to God's praise
[32:22] Lord create a pure heart in me and a steadfast mind renew do not take your spirit from me cast me not away from you give me back the joy I have keep my willing spirit high then I'll teach your ways to sinners rebels will turn back to you free me from my savior

God most merciful and true then I'll praise your righteousness teach my lips your name to bless sacrifice does not delight you else my tribute I would bring nor you take any pleasure in!
may! Jesus Christ, and the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore. Amen.

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