

#5 Life's Washing in Love to Maintain Fellowship

Bird's-eye view 1/2-8

I Since John is a book of Signs, what is recorded in John 13 concerning foot-washing should be considered a sign, which is a symbol with spiritual significance. 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" (John 13:1,3-5). 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. 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, 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" (John 13:14). 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" (John 13:34). 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, the word, and life; 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. Titus 3:5 ...according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, John 15:3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. B This is not the washing away of our sins by the blood; 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 love in the fellowship of the divine life, which is revealed in John's first Epistle, a continuation of the Gospel of John.

IV For us to experience the washing, we need to spend time in the Lord's presence and with the saints who are full of the Spirit, the word, and the divine life. A If we remain in the Lord's presence, the Lord will come to us and wash us, not with the blood but with the Spirit, the living word, and the inner life. B "You also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14). John 13:15 For I have given you an example so that you also may do even as I have done to you. C Whenever we are about to wash other's feet, we need to follow the Lord's pattern by "laying aside our garments"; this is to lay aside our attainments, virtues, and attributes. D To be girded with a towel means that we are bound and are willing to lose our liberty; we give up our liberty for the purpose of ministering life to our dear brothers and sisters.

V Each of us must learn how to love the brothers and sisters by ministering the spiritual foot-washing to them to cleanse them from the earthly touch; this keeps them new, fresh, and living; our loving one another in this way is a sign that we belong to Christ. John 13:35 By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. A We can summarize defiled feet as staleness in our fellowship with the Lord; clean feet, however, denote fresh fellowship with the Lord: 1 Not many can say today that they treasure and love the Lord as much as they did five or ten years ago; many people have to say that

they do not have the same feeling that they had a year ago. **2** Their feet are defiled, and they have become weary; this is spiritual weariness; it is the loss of spiritual freshness and vitality. **B** The Lord is always fresh, and He wants us to be fresh all the time, not spiritually enervated; this is why He makes us lie down in green pastures, He leads us beside waters of rest, and He restores our soul; foot-washing sustains an intimate fellowship between us and the Lord and rekindles our spiritual vitality and spiritual freshness. Psa. 23:2-3 He makes me lie down in green pastures; / He leads me beside waters of rest. / He restores my soul; / He guides me on the paths of righteousness / For His name's sake. Acts 3:20 So that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord and that He may send the Christ, who has been previously appointed for you, Jesus, **C** We should never follow ourselves to become old, which is to be set, settled, and occupied; we must keep ourselves empty, open, fresh, new, living, and young with the Lord; we need to pray that the Lord as the Spirit of reality would guide us into the reality if Psalm 110:3—"Your people will offer themselves willingly / In the day of Your warfare, / In the splendor of their consecration. / Your young men will be to You / Like the dew from the womb of the dawn."

VI There must be an enigmatic freshness, power, nourishment, and supply within us that will drive others to seek after God by our presence; others should desire to seek after God, and their spiritual energy should be revived as a result of meeting us and speaking to us. **A** We need the renewing of the Holy Spirit day by day so that we can always be fresh and invigorated. 2 Cor. 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. **B** Foot-washing means recovering our former feelings, bringing us back to the freshness and newness of life, and giving us fresh strength to recover how we previously treasured the Lord as our first love by giving Him the first place in all things. Rom. 6:4 We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life. **C** We cannot wash others' feet unless we enjoy the Lord as our overcoming life and obtain the Spirit's help to live out such a life; the Spirit within us is our Comforter, the One who takes care of our case, our cause, and our affairs. **D** Every one of us needs our feet washed, and every one of us needs to

be prepared to wash others' feet; among all the services that Christians minister to one another, nothing is more crucial or precious than foot-washing—"If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them" (John 13:17).

VII Foot-washing is a matter of the Lord's loving us to the uttermost in order to meet our uttermost need; each of us must learn how to love the brothers and sisters by ministering the spiritual foot-washing to them.

VIII Without the spiritual foot-washing, the church life cannot be realized, and the reality of the church life would be gone. **A** In order to wash others' feet, we must daily be filled with the Holy Spirit, be in constant fellowship with the Lord, and live in the mingled spirit. Eph. 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissoluteness, but be filled in spirit, **B** Therefore, the daily foot-washing definitely needs to be exercised by the Lord Himself on the one hand and by all the saints on the other hand; then we shall be able to maintain an excellent fellowship with which we shall have the real church life. **C** "Now I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because these have filled up the lack caused by your absence; for they refreshed my spirit and yours. Acknowledge therefore such ones" (1 Cor. 16:17-18). **D** May we have fresh spiritual experiences every day; Romans 15:32 says, "I may refresh myself and rest with you"; this is the result of foot-washing.

神戸に在る召会 交わりと報告事項

1. 朝毎復興について:

今、追求している2022年10月ITEROの内容は、#5をした後、1/9の週から2022年Thanks giving dayの内容に入ります。追求していない#4、6、7、8の内容は、YouTube福音集会の主題に使用します。担当地区は以下の通りです。

1/8 本山G	10月ITERO#4
1/15 六甲	10月ITERO#6
1/22 YPG	10月ITERO#7
1/29 夙川	罪人に対する三一の神の愛
2/5 三宮・神戸	10月ITERO#8

2. 年始のスケジュール:

詳細は祈り集会でお知らせしたカレンダーを見てください。

CP1 To experience the foot-washing, we need to spend time in the Lord's presence, and be with the saints who are filled with the Spirit, the Word and the divine life

IVA If we remain in the Lord's presence, the Lord will come to us and wash us, not with the blood but with the Spirit, the living word, and the inner life:

1 Whenever we are in need of such a washing, we can just open ourselves up to the Lord as we spend time in His presence and allow the inner life to flow within us.

John 13:14-15 If I then...have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example so that you also may do even as I have done to you.

B "You also ought to wash one another's feet"—John 13:14: **2** It is the spiritual foot-washing ministered to one another that keeps us clean from the earthly touch; while we are walking and working on the earth, we not only need the Lord's foot-washing ministered directly within our spirit but also the foot-washing from the brothers and sisters.

C1 We must humble ourselves and empty ourselves; many wear a garment of spirituality and look down on others; they are proud of being spiritual. **D** To be girded with a towel means that we are bound and are willing to lose our liberty; we give up our liberty for the purpose of ministering life to our dear brothers and sisters.

Remain in the Lord's presence, and the Lord will come to you and wash you, not with the blood but with the Spirit, the living word, and the inner life... Sometimes it takes only a few minutes to wash the dirt away; at other times it may take half a day. Whenever you are in need of such a washing, just open yourself up to the Lord as you spend time in His presence, and allow the inner life to flow within you. Spontaneously, something living will flow, water, and wash you, and you will become clean again. Your spirit will be uplifted, and your whole being will be so pleasant in the Lord's presence.

We must wash one another's feet by ministering the work of the Holy Spirit, by ministering the enlightenment of the Word, and by ministering the operation of the inner life. In this way, I help you, you help me, and we help one another to be washed in the work of the Holy Spirit, in the light of the Word, or in the operation of the inner life.

Application to young people, college students, new ones

The secret to your experience of spiritual washing is Christ and the church. Fellowship with Christ personally, just as you are, and honestly. You can go

to the Lord with your problems and worries about your studies, friendships, etc. Don't cheat or lie about important things, but be just as you are, be honest, and come before the Lord and fellowship with Him. Unless you go to the Lord in spirit and in truthfulness, you cannot have a person-to-person or face-to-face relationship with the Lord. As you spend time in personal fellowship with the Lord, put aside deceit, lies, and vainglory, and train yourself to simply and genuinely go to Him.

Furthermore, connect with the saints who are taking care of you, the brothers and sisters who are moving forward in life and service. The Lord does not perfect you directly, but through these people. Spend time with these saints in the Lord. As soon as you leave them, you will backslide from the Lord.

Testimony My in-laws belonged to Taipei Meeting hall 4, and they opened their own home and held small group meetings and Lord's Day meetings there. No one lived in this house at the time, but they owned it for the meetings. They opened their home and always gave hospitality to the brothers and sisters generously. The elders and the coworkers at Hall 4 were also open, friendly, and they were always filled with the Holy Spirit. Through my contact with them, my feet were washed. Through this washing I realized that I was an individualistic, narrow-minded person. I realized that if I remained like this, I could not give hospitality, supply, and wash the feet of the brothers and sisters because I was not interested in people. I prayed, "I am embedded in the old customs of my father's house and Japanese culture, and if not sinful, yet am individualistic and dirty". am unable to serve as it is. Have mercy on me. Wash my old disposition in life. Transform me organically."

After returning to Japan, following the example of my parents-in-law and elders in Taipei, I was able to actively open my home for meetings and give hospitality with a broad heart.

Prayer Oh Lord Jesus, when I have a sin, I need to be washed by the blood of Jesus, but even if there is no specific sin, I get dirty and old in the living. So I need to be washed by the Spirit in the Lord's presence. Not only the direct washing from the Lord, but I connect myself to the brothers and sisters who are moving forward and who take care of me, and receive the foot-washing from them in the work of the Holy Spirit, in the light of the Word and in the operation of the inner life.

CP2 Fellowship daily with the Lord, be filled with the Holy Spirit, practice foot-washing and have the reality of the church life

VII Foot-washing is a matter of the Lord's loving us to the uttermost in order to meet our uttermost need; each of us must learn how to love the brothers and sisters by ministering the spiritual foot-washing to them: **VIII** Without the spiritual foot-washing, the church life cannot be realized, and the reality of the church life would be gone: **A** In order to wash others' feet, we must daily be filled with the Holy Spirit, be in constant fellowship with the Lord, and live in the mingled spirit. **B** Therefore, the daily foot-washing definitely needs to be exercised by the Lord Himself on the one hand and by all the saints on the other hand; then we shall be able to maintain an excellent fellowship with which we shall have the real church life. **D** May we have fresh spiritual experiences every day; Romans 15:32 says, "I may refresh myself and rest with you"; this is the result of foot-washing.

Suppose you have completed your day's work and feel tired. You cannot utter any praises from your mouth. In the evening when you come to the meeting, someone asks you to pray. Halfway through your prayer, you cannot go on, and you stop. You feel as if your prayer is nothing more than a composition. However, perhaps one brother in the meeting has a fresh spirit, and his prayer refreshes your spirit. Your spiritual energy is renewed. This is washing one another's feet. Many times when we come to the meeting, we find the saints' spirit weak and downtrodden. We pray and read the Word, but nothing seems to work. The reason for this is that everyone's feet are defiled, and there is no basin to wash the feet. It is as if something is quenching our spirits. If someone would stand up at this point and wash everyone's feet by offering a prayer or saying a few words, the whole meeting will be refreshed...The same is true in our family life. A brother or sister may unexpectedly drop by your home and fellowship a short while r give a testimony, and everyone in the family is brought into the presence of God. Before that time there was a separation between them and God, but after such a simple conversation, all the separation is gone. This is washing one another's feet.

We should have an ambition before the Lord to wash others' feet. In order to wash others' feet, we must have the water; that is, we must be filled with the Holy Spirit and be in constant fellowship with the Lord. For this cause we must live in the Holy Spirit daily. Only then will we have the living water to wash others' feet. Every time we come to the

meeting, we must have the living water to wash others' feet.

Application to business persons, graduate school students

We need each other's foot washing. You wash my feet and I will wash yours. You should never say, "I can only have my feet washed; I can't wash other people's feet." Foot washing in the church life is a mutual foot washing. Learn to wash the feet of your other brothers and sisters according to the portion of Christ you have enjoyed. **Testimony** Since I started working, in my busy business life, I had unknowingly become defiled, my spirit became old and weak. I needed to be washed. For this, when I came back early from my work and attended the meetings, I trained myself to exercise my spirit and listen to the fellowship and prayers of the brothers and sisters. Whenever I exercised my spirit and opened my heart and spirit to the brothers and sisters and the Holy Spirit, I received fresh supplies. And I myself was able to pray by exercising my spirit. Even though my body was tired before the meeting, I can testify that after attending the meeting, I was made fresh inside and my physical fatigue was restored.

I also testify about the mutual foot-washing in the church life. A brother from another locality, who had come to Kobe for fellowship regarding his work, informed me by LINE that he had decided to change jobs for the church life. I called him immediately and fellowshiped and prayed with him about his career change. Together, we thanked the Lord for His provision and guidance in his career change. I then forwarded his LINE message to the brothers and sisters in Kobe who had previously been involved in the fellowship with him. One of the sisters immediately sent me a prayer, which I forwarded to him. He was so pleased to see the prayer that he immediately sent his prayer back to me! I practiced the foot washing to him according to my portion, and another practiced the foot washing according to her portion. Praise the Lord for the mutual foot washing in the church life!

Prayer Oh Lord Jesus, I need to be washed daily because in business life I become defiled, my spirit becomes old and weak. Even if I am busy with work, I can experience being washed by attending the church meetings, opening to the fellowship and prayer of the brothers and sisters, and praying by exercising my spirit. I also learn to wash the feet of others according to the portion of Christ that I have enjoyed, being filled with the Holy Spirit day by day and in the constant fellowship with the Lord. Praise the Lord for the mutual foot washing in the church life! Amen!