



DEVOTIONS FOR LIFE

Aldersgate Church ~ St. Louis Park, MN

Week of March 13, 2022 (John 13:1-17, 33-35)

Prayer for Groups & Personal Devotion:

Jesus, who washed your disciples' feet, help us to stoop down and wash the feet of others today. Help us to wash the feet of those who are homeless; to wash the feet of those who are hungry; to wash the feet of those who are abused; to wash the feet of the lonely, the confused, the dying, the bereaved, the ill, the hurting.

With basin and towel and hearts full of love, help us to stoop down and serve your world, listening to the needs of those we serve and committing ourselves to action. And as we do so, help us to know you working through us to heal the world, to feed mind, body and spirit, to make your people whole.

Lord, may your church be known as the place where people gather to serve, not just their friends but all in the community...

Devotions for Life A LifeGroup & Personal Resource

The Story: John 13:1-17, 33-35

Context: Last week's story, the raising of Lazarus, is a huge turning point, as it is the story that leads to the religious leaders finally making sure they arrest Jesus, as evidenced in John 12:9-11: *"When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came not only because of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death as well, since it was on account of him that many of the Jews were deserting and were believing in Jesus."*

This week, however, we skip over what could be said is Part II of the Lazarus story. In chapter 12:1-8, Martha, Mary, and Lazarus are now hosting a meal with Jesus and his disciples. Mary anoints Jesus feet with oil, which, one, is a way (without her knowing) of preparing him for his death, but, two, also stands in stark contrast to chapter 11: In chapter 11 we are given the image of the stench of death from the tomb, whereas now we have a lavish meal and the scent of expensive perfume. We are moving from death to life, from emptiness to fullness. As this perfume anointing is happening, it is only in John that Judas is named as the one saying, *"Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?"* (12:5). All of this sets up the scene in chapter 13.

Reading the Story:

In 13 we are again at an intimate meal. Mary has just washed and anointed Jesus' feet in chapter 12, and now

... May it be known as a place where all are valued, a place where folk will be seen and heard and loved, a place where folk imitate you, humbling ourselves to love and serve the world. Amen.

Acts of Compassion & Justice:

MN Food Share Month:

Welp, March is upon us, and that means Minnesota Foodshare Month! MN Foodshare month is a



statewide effort every March to support local food shelves and other organizations that help with food insecurity. We, of course, will be holding a food drive for STEP, with a focus on their stated need of Cereal, peanut butter, and jelly. Support STEP!

Ukraine Support: Join us in contributing to UMCOR for Ukraine support. The Foundation will match up to \$3,000! Just designate gifts to "Ukraine" or "UMCOR".



Jesus washes the feet of his disciples. If you or your group want to dig deeper, read 12:1-8 as well and compare and contrast language in both stories. Also, while our assigned passage today skips over it, it must be noted that Jesus' washing the disciples' feet and his command to love both come in the context of betrayal and denial.

Questions for Discussion & Reflection:

- What images or metaphors popped out at you in this passage? What don't you quite understand?
- Where do you see any glimpses of Jesus as The Good Shepherd in this passage, particularly as it pertains to belonging to Jesus, following, not following, etc.?
- How do you feel about verse 13:2? What impact does this have on the story overall?
- Have you ever been betrayed? Or betrayed another? What was that experience like? Can you relate to Judas at all? What do you make of Judas?
- How do you think Judas felt at this moment?
- Why is Jesus washing their feet?
- How do you think the disciples felt having their feet washed by Jesus?
- Jesus washes the disciples' feet in the context of betrayal. How does this impact his command to us to wash one another's feet?
- What does it mean to "love one another" as Jesus loves us?
- How do you think the words, "I give you a new commandment..." landed on the disciples? Can you command love?

