

RELATIONAL THEOLOGY SERIES ONE
CHRIST AND HIS TOWEL
Dr. Roger Barrier
John 13:1-17

- SLIDE #1: (Put on screen when offertory is over and I am walking up to preach.)

Take survey

Turn to Matthew 20 (or John 13). As Glenn said last week, bring your Bible every week.

- SLIDE #2: What did you want to be when you grew up? That's a question we enjoy asking children." And the answers we get usually are
 - SLIDE #3: Policeman
 - SLIDE #4: Nurse
 - SLIDE #5: Fireman
- Some kids are more visionary. They answer
- SLIDE #6: Movie Star
 - SLIDE #7: Singer
 - SLIDE #8: Doctor
 - SLIDE #9: Professional ball player

In all my life I cannot recall any child ever saying,

- SLIDE #11: "When I grow up, I want to be a servant."

Let me share one of Jesus' favorite dreams. When we were children, ask Jesus Christ what he wants us to be when we grow up. And I promise you He would reply, "When that child grows up, I want him to be a servant."

- SLIDE #12: The mother of James and John once knelt before Jesus and asked, "When you come into your kingdom, will you let my boys have the best seats, I want my boys to have power over everybody else."

Like pushy parent, I want my boy to start on soccer team. My boy is really better. Disciples all upset and angry.

- SLIDE #13: Jesus called them together and said, "The Gentiles fight for the best seats of authority because they want positions of power over everyone.
"But not you, not you...*READ MATTHEW 20:26-28. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave--just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*"

Let's take the servant's test:

- BUILD SLIDE #14A: Serving others is more important than having others serve me
- BUILD SLIDE #14B: Being last in line is better than being first
- BUILD SLIDE #14C: Ensuring that others have their share is more important to me than getting my share
- BUILD SLIDE #15A: Making certain that others are the center of attention is more important than getting attention for myself
- BUILD SLIDE #15B: Meeting other's needs before I take care of my own needs is my philosophy for life

●SLIDE #16: John 13 contains one of the most beautiful pictures of the Lord Jesus Christ ever written—the story of Jesus washing the Disciples feet.

Let me give you the background. 12 hours until the cross. He has sent them ahead to prepare the upper room for the Passover meal.

READ JOHN 13:1: *It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.*

●SLIDE #18: READ JOHN 13:2-4: *The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.*

Now, let me tell you what is happening. In Israel everything is dirt and sandals were the in thing. Could you imagine that their feet were rather dirty? In every Jewish home a pot of water was at the door and it was the servant's job to wash the feet of the guests when they arrived.

Of course, the disciples have no servant, So, when they entered the upper room the number 12 disciple should have got some water and washed the feet. No one was willing to admit he was number 12. So none of the feet got washed.

●SLIDE #19: Let me show you why this was important. Leonardo da Vinci had it all wrong. They were not sitting in chairs on one side of a long table.

The table was a low, rectangular platform upon which the food was placed. People sat cross legged at a meal, and when that got uncomfortable, they stretched their legs out and reclined. This position meant that if your feet were not clean, your neighbor was very much aware of it.

●SLIDE #30: Like going to Olive Garden and everyone takes off shoes and socks or hose and puts their dirty, smelly, feet up on the table.

●BUILD SLIDE #20A: It is hard to ignore a face full of dirty feet.

During the meal, What do you think they talked about? Listen to

●BUILD SLIDE #20B: LUKE 22:24: "A dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be the greatest."

What do you think they were arguing about: Who should have washed the feet?

"Well, men, I can't wash feet, I am going to be first in the kingdom!" "Oh, no you're not, I am first."

James and John: "Our mother already got the top two places reserved for us!"

You know, that in an argument about who is the greatest, no one is about to get some soap and wash some body's feet.

Someone should have said, "Men, come on over, I'll wash your feet."

Another could have said, "Well, let's just share it. We will do it to each other."

It could have been a beautiful thing, but they were all so selfish. So nobody did it. Finally the meal is ready and they all recline to eat with dirty feet.

Suddenly, in an act of love and humility, with total calm and majesty, in total silence the Lord Jesus Christ stands up, takes a towel, gets a bowl and kneels to wash their feet, one by one.

●SLIDE #21: READ JOHN 13:5: *After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.*

I believe that in that one moment all the argument suddenly stopped.

Legend says that He began with Judas. Imagine as they looked into each other's eyes, Judas looking down at Jesus—Jesus looking up at Judas. Is this love or what?

●SLIDE #22: READ JOHN 13:6-7: *He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."*

●SLIDE #23: READ JOHN 13:8: *"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."*

I imagine Peter is absolutely broken by now. Horrified with guilt and humility. Pulls his feet back under his robe—and uses the strongest negative in Greek, “never ever never.”

●SLIDE #24: READ JOHN 13:9-10a: *"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean.*

The idea is simple. Take a bath in the morning and don't need another bath as go from house to house, just need to wash feet occasionally to keep clean.

Once we have been bathed by the blood of Christ, we never need to get another bath again!

However, as we walk through the world every day we pick up the dust of sin. We don't need another bath—to get saved again. Once we have been saved we are always saved.

But, we do need to confess the sins we commit which dirty up our feet as we walk through the world. Daily confession is important to keep our fellowship with God clean and unimpaired.

●SLIDE #25: READ JOHN 13:10b-11: *And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.*

●SLIDE #: READ JOHN 13:12: *When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them.*

●SLIDE #27: READ JOHN 13:13-14: *"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.*

He threw them a curve. What did they expect Him to say next? It is obvious, “I washed your feet – so – now you should wash *My* feet.” That's what they expected.

●SLIDE #28: Who *wouldn't* want to wash Christ's feet? We'd stand in line to wash our Savior's feet. But that is not what He said. A servant's heart is not interested in his own feet.

●SLIDE #29: He said, “I washed your feet – so – now you should wash *one another's* feet.”

As we think about appropriating Christ's model, three specifics stand out:

●SLIDE #: 1. Obedience means personal involvement.

We cannot serve one another in absentia or at arm's length. It means if someone is drowning in a troubled sea, we get wet, we get in touch.

It means if someone drifts away, we don't ignore that person, we reach out to help and restore.

Nobody ever learned how to water ski in the living room through a correspondence course. You have to get into the water and get personally involved.

Nobody ever learned to play golf from a book.

Nobody ever learned how to serve from a sermon. Servants learn by doing.

Parents need to teach children. Volunteer in nursing home. Teach unselfishness respect among children. Mission trips.

•**SLIDE #33:** There are two basins of water in the New Testament:

Pilate had a basin: used it wash his hands of the whole affair.

Jesus had a basin: used it to get involved.

Which kind of person do you want to be around?

Which kind of heart do you want to have? How many here want a heart like Pilate? Like Jesus?

Julie and I did a marriage intimacy conference for a room full of pastors and their wives who were all fired by their churches. Noticed a thread of discussion: “we have just been preaching the word and they fired us.”

•**SLIDE #34:** 1 THESSALONIANS 2:7-8: *“But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the Gospel but our very lives as well.”*

“Well, we were just sharing the gospel and they fired us.

What if I were to say to you, “I want to share the gospel with you, but like a nursing mother caring for her little children, I also want to share with you my life.” How would that go over with you?

Do you wonder how Paul could get away with his pronouncements and strong exhortations: “Don’t work, don’t eat.” Because he said, “I came like a nursing mother and shared my life with you. I imparted the message and my life.

These pastors began to see that they were sharing only one/half of the message. People want to know,” Do you care about me?”

We have done well at imparting the gospel, but we’ve forgotten to impart our lives to the people.

•**SLIDE #35:** 2. Obedience requires Christ-like unselfishness.

Chad was a shy, quiet young boy. One day he came home and told his mother, he’d like to make a valentine for everyone in his class. Her heart sank. She thought, “I wish he wouldn’t do that!” because she had watched the children when they walked home from school. Her Chad was always behind them. They laughed and hung onto each other and talked to each other. But Chad was never included.

Nevertheless, she decided she would go along with her son. So she purchased the paper and glue and crayons. For three whole weeks, night after night, Chad painstakingly made thirty-five valentines.

Valentine’s Day dawned, and Chad was beside himself with excitement! He carefully stacked them up, and bolted out the door. His mom decided to bake him his favorite cookies and serve them up warm with a nice cool glass of milk when he came home from school. She just knew he would be disappointed... maybe that would ease the pain a little. It hurt her to think that he wouldn’t get many valentines – maybe none at all.

That afternoon she had the cookies and milk on the table. When she heard the children she looked out the window. Sure enough here they came, laughing and having the best time. And as always, there was Chad in the rear. He walked a little faster than usual. She expected him to burst into tears as soon as he got inside. She noticed his arms were empty, and when the door opened she choked back the tears.

“Mommy has some warm cookies and milk for you.” But he hardly heard her words. All he could say was,
“Not a one... not a one.”

Her heart sank.

And then he said, “I didn’t forget a one, not a single one!”

“Now that I have washed your feet, wash one another’s feet.” Not my feet. Someone else’s feet.

●SLIDE #36: 3. Obedience results in deep, inner, ultimate fulfillment.

Heaven, yes, but right now, too.

CASAS HEROES

- SLIDE #37: Mary Clements 77 years old still working at the school
- SLIDE #38: Shirley Koch, cancer still serving here at Casas
- SLIDE #39: Steve Blight and the tech crews
- SLIDE #40: Les and Nancy Anderson, give life for this place.
- SLIDE #41: Gerald Barrett—set up with Gathering; food court, moves chairs, children’s play areas
- SLIDE #42: Stacie Varner—volunteer work with kids, Teri in Mexico, do anything to help, above and beyond the call of duty. “Very gentle and humble spirit.”

I know of only one time in the Bible when Jesus opened up His heart and revealed his inner personality. Can you think of any?

- SLIDE #43: “I am shepherd,” but what about his personality?
- SLIDE #44: “I am servant,” but what about his personality?
- SLIDE #45: “I am teacher,”
- SLIDE #46: but that does not tell us about his personality?

I have found only one place where Jesus Christ – in His own words – describes his own “inner man.” In doing so, He uses only two words. Do you know what He said?

- SLIDE #47: Come to Me, all who are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest, *for I am gentle and humble in heart*, and you shall find rest for your souls (Matthew 11:28-29).

I am *gentle*. I am *humble*. These are servant terms.

Frankly, I find it extremely significant that when Jesus lifts the veil of silence and once for all gives us a glimpse of Himself, the real stuff of His inner person, He uses *gentle* and *humble*.

Close eyes and meditate on Jesus: Open arms, says, “Come to me because I am gentle and humble.

How do you think He said that? Open arms,. Come to me . . .

I had a hard week and at breakfast, Julie told me to put cares on piece of paper and imagine Jesus taking them away. “I can’t.”

Imagine his humble heart. This is the kind of person people will approach.

This is the kind of person God wants us to be.

Reflect on the double meaning of Jesus' words about washing. Understand that He would wash the disciples' feet with the blood of the cross.

Are you clean? Make a confession of your sin to God. Pray for God to wash you thoroughly.

Think of some small task that you can perform, a task that is humble, yet useful. Preferably let it be a task that some one else will have to perform unless you relieve them of that duty. When you have thought of that task, leave this place and go do it.