

# NO GREATER LOVE

## 2. Loving Servant

Text: John 13:1-20

### Points to discuss

#### 1. Jesus Leads

Jesus was a distinctly different kind of leader. Instead of being served, he chose the most menial and socially degrading task available, and washed his disciple's dirty feet. He didn't just talk about doing it, he actually did it, and so demonstrated what true service and true leadership looked like. This would be a vivid reminder for the rest of their lives, of what serving really looked like in real life. Jesus' act of service was an act of love, and would remind the disciples of his love in time to come.

Though the act of service was deeply humbling for the disciples, it was not out of character for Jesus. He had walked the walk with the 12 disciples for 3 years, and this was just one level deeper than he had gone before. The disciples would have found it incredibly difficult to accept that their rabbi was stooping down to this level. But they also had no idea that he was just about to stoop even lower, as he handed himself over to be executed, like a common criminal, for their sake.

When God asks something of us, we can be absolutely sure that he has stooped just as low, or even lower. He will never ask us to do something that he was not prepared to do himself. This is true leadership.

### Discussion Questions:

1. What does the washing of the disciples' feet make you feel and why?
2. Why is it important that Jesus not only lead through his teaching, but modelled what servanthood looked and felt like?
3. Why is it important for us as believers to serve consistently, and not just teach others about Christ?

#### 2. Jesus leads in unquestionable servanthood

There was no mistake or confusion that Jesus lowered himself to take on the role of a servant. This would have been extremely difficult for the disciples to accept, having just seen him ride into town and praised as the next king. It would have contradicted everything they understood about the nature of a leader. We would have had the exact same reaction. Our picture of leadership is usually one of position, power, prestige and having people run around you, doing your menial tasks. This is why we all aspire to be leaders in life. We imagine that at the top of our game we will eventually have all the privilege without having to do all the dirty work. We imagine being admired, respected and looked to for all wisdom and direction.



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When we come across great leaders, we automatically ascribe to them a profound identity, one worth looking up to. We give them this because they have “earned” it, or because they are specially gifted. We all derive our sense of identity by what we do or where we are stationed in life. But this is not the way of the Kingdom of God. Jesus knew he was God, he knew he was king, and he also knew that he needed to lay it all down in order to serve and lead humanity. His identity was secure, and so he didn’t need an earthly position to prove it. His dignity and worth was rooted in who he was, not in what he did.

Jesus was not just a servant though. He also led the disciples. He did both at the same time. This is what true leaders do. When we serve those that we lead, we show them that they are loved.

## Discussion Questions:

1. Why was it so hard for the disciples to see Jesus take the role of a servant and why do you think we would have felt the exact same way?
2. *Go around the room and let each person answer:* what is one area that you have been called to lead in during this season of your life? (e.g. husband, boss, GC group, work group, mother...)
3. *Read out the following question to the group and then ask one or two of them to share.* As God’s children, leading people also means serving them. Consider the role you just mentioned, and think about what changes you need to make, in order to serve those you have been called to lead. Write them down so that you can action some of them this week. Come back next week ready to share what happened.

## 3. Jesus leads in unquestionable servanthood characterised by love, humility and redemption

Jesus served the disciples to show his love for them. Soon, he would demonstrate the depth of his love, as he died for them on the cross. His acts of love gained him nothing, but cost him everything. This is true love. When Peter realised that he needed his feet to be washed, he wanted his whole body to be washed too. He didn’t realise that Jesus would soon die in order to cleanse his whole life from sin. We need to be willing for God to cleanse us from all of our sin too, and we need to allow him access to all of the dirty and shameful places in our hearts that need his washing.

## Discussion Questions:

1. What part of Jesus’ cleansing did Peter not understand yet, and why?
2. Why is it important for us to open our heart to God, and allow him to cleanse the sin deep in our hearts, and to trust him with those areas we are ashamed of?

