

Things we ought to do

Part 1

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[00:00:00] I wonder if we could read a verse in John 13, John 13, and verse 14, John 13 and verse 14. If I then, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you.

And in John's epistle, John's 1st epistle, John's 1st epistle, chapter 2, John's 1st [00:01:10] epistle, chapter 2, he that says he abides in him, ought himself also so to walk even as he walked. And in chapter 3, and verse 16, chapter 3, verse 16, hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our life for the brethren. Chapter 4, and verse 10, chapter 4, verse 10. Herein is love, not [00:02:03] that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son for propitiation for our sins.

He loved us. If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. And finally, in 3rd epistle of John, 3rd epistle of John, and just to get the whole context, we have to read the verse 5. Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren and to strangers, who have borne witness of thy character before the church, whom if thou bring forward on thy journey after a godly thought, thou shalt do well. Because that [00:03:06] thou shalt do well, thou shalt do well. For his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth. Now, I think you probably will have gathered the connecting link there. It's certain things that we ought to do. There are many other verses, of course, in the New Testament that tell us what we ought to do. But these are really real exhortations. The point really is that they're all given by John. Well, really, the ones in the epistle are really given by John as indicted by the Spirit. But the first one that we have, of course, is the words [00:04:06] of our blessed Lord himself, in chapter 13 of John. I'm not absolutely sure whether he's exhausted all these verses in the Bible, he didn't. I'm not sure, really. But certainly reference was made to this, you see. We ought also to wash one another's feet. It's incumbent on us, really. It's really not voluntary, it's not really something we can opt out of.

So it should exercise us very much to see that we are capable of washing one another's feet. How will we be capable of washing one another's feet? Now, I speak to myself, not because [00:05:03] I've got O-levels or A-levels or I've been to university and I've done the next thing. That doesn't enable me to wash the feet of the saints. No, no, no. What does it that enables us to wash the feet of the saints is keeping close to our blessed Lord. It's beside him, passing ourself on him. You know, we've been talking about Paul's ministry and John's ministry, but dear, beloved Mr. Darby, from whom we are a quote from Andrew, in another one of his letters, I think it's volume 3, page 224, roughly. And there you'll see that he says that Peter brings out the ways of the Lord, the ways of the Lord. But don't let's neglect Peter's ministry. I know, of course, John's is going to go on to the end in John 21.

The Lord Jesus said to Peter, if he tarry till I come, what does that tell you to me? Follow thou me. And of course that's Peter's great predominating thought. [00:06:04] The last words, this blessed gospel of John. Wonderful. John's simple page. And what's the last words of our blessed Lord in that gospel? Follow me. Follow me. Simple enough.

I'm sure a three or a four year old would know it, wouldn't they? Follow me. I can remember telling it to my own children when they were that age. Not necessarily to follow me, but to follow their mother was a better thing. But to follow, to follow. And they knew what was meant by that, didn't they? So it shouldn't be beyond us, you know, although we've been 50, 60 years on the pathway and we've been bound, Darby, Kerry, all the rest of it. We've got to follow the Lord. And then the ministry of John will go right on to the end. So here the blessed Lord says to wash one another's feet. It's keeping close to the [00:07:04] blessed Lord in company. Company to hear his heart beat. We later on in this chapter, you know, read about one who's in the bosom. He's on the breast. He hears the heart beats of the Lord. Dear Saint of God, is that where you're living? I don't want to be necessarily negative, but you know, you'll not get it in front of that television screen. No, you won't get it there. There's nothing on there that will minister to your soul and keep you in touch with the blessed man in the glory. There's a man in the glory there. Do you wake in the morning with thoughts of his love who is living for you in the glory above? Each moment expecting he'll call me away and that keeps me bright for the rest of the day. The moment sweet onward and on comes the noon. And still I am singing, he'll come very soon. Dear Saint of God, is that what you're going along with? Can you hear his footsteps on the threshold of the door? Are you waiting for that next take to be into the presence [00:08:04] of the Lord? Hear his summoning shout. Dear Saint of God, do you know the reality of these blessed things? They're not old-fashioned things, they're things that you know now and here and now. And you know, it can go on, it can go on. As a young brother known to some of you, known to me, when he was at his work, they had management by objectives, management by objectives. Maybe not many of you know about that, but of course one of the procedures is every year, you see, you have your appraisal. And your manager appraises you. And this, Valerie was before, his manager says, X, you're too unworldly to get on in this world. And X had to say, well, I want to serve you, my employer, faithfully and well, but my desire is to get on to the next world, get on into that world. But I'll serve and do my daily [00:09:02] duty here. So dear Saint of God, keep close to the Lord and then you'll be able to wash his feet. And I think, you know, this bit about part that was stressed very much, it's having part with him. And it's rather significant that we get that same word again, don't we, in Luke chapter 10, where Mary sat at his feet and heard his word. And the Lord said, One thing is needful, one of the seven one things. You young brethren, search them out. Search them out, you know, in our meeting we get homework. We get homework, different ones, you know, and that's something for you. Search them out, the seven one things. Blessed they are. Challenge to your hearts where you are. Anyway, it says, Mary, what has she done?

Fallen into it. She's chosen it. Definite effort. Definite effort. And I think, you [00:10:01] know, there's an element perhaps in this feet washing. Are we ready? Are we prepared? Are we really choosing it? Or do we want to go on and ignore it and let it just be on one side? It's a matter of choice. Are we prepared for it? Anyway, sorry, enough of that really.

I really wanted to get over into these other aughts that the beloved John can give us here.

And the first one in chapter 2 of his first epistle, chapter 2 and verse 6. Remember there are, oh sorry, these numbers, but there are nine occasions in which he brings before us eternal life. He brings out to us eternal life. And he begins in verse 3 by saying, Hereby we know that we know him.

We keep his commandments. And he goes on, you see, and [00:11:01] whoever keeps his word in him, verily, the love of God is perfectly good. And hereby we know that we are in him. That's eternal life, dear beloved, isn't it? To know that we are in him. We are in him. And then he says, there's an outflow from that, isn't it? It's not just something that we go away and clap our hands about and get off into a corner and sit in some ivory tower. Coming out with that, that reality, and we come out and what do we do? It says, He that says he abides in him, how do we know that a believer is abiding in Christ? How do we know that a believer is abiding in Christ? By his walk. By his walk. And I would say by his talk too. By his walk. He ought himself to walk even as he walked. So to walk. He ought to walk. Isn't it remarkable that dear brother, John [00:12:03] Bunyan, one of the brethren, dear brother John Bunyan, what did he say when he wrote that allegory, The Pilgrim's Progress, and Christians going through with the faithful beside him, they're going through vanity fair, aren't they? They're going through vanity fair. And there they're shouting with their wares, oh come and buy this, see this, come and see this, dilly dally. Oh there was plenty there to pervert them, to soil them as they went through, but they weren't soiled, they went through. They went through faithful, later to be faithful unto death. The Christian went through there and then these warlings said ah yes, yes. He says they don't walk like us. They don't talk like us. And they don't dress like us. And it's evident, he says, their eyes, their eyes are on the heavenly [00:13:04] city. Yes, Bunyan captured it, didn't he? Maybe another allegory and all the rest of it. We don't like these things, but nonetheless he got the grisp of it, didn't he? And that's where the saint is going through. He's got his eye on the heavenly city and he's got his eye on the man that's there. The man that's there. What makes a house a home? Hmm? What makes the house a home? I don't want to jump into chapter 14, but you know what makes a house a home? It's the people who are there. It's the people who are there. That's what makes a house a home. Hmm? Yes, you all know that, don't you? I can see a few heads nodding there. That's what makes a house a home. It's who's there. And so we walk, we walk as he walked. We ought to walk as he walked. Dear beloved, let's get the gospels into hearts and souls. Read them. I like to always turn to the gospels and read about the Lord Jesus [00:14:04] Christ. You know, these are the facts of Christ, aren't they? We often think of the Pentateuch as being the figures of Christ, don't we? And the prophets being the foretelling of Christ. But then we have, of course, in the gospels, the facts of Christ. And then the Acts, of course, is the foretelling of Christ. And the epistle writers, the five of them bring out the features of Christ. But you know, as we consider the facts of Christ, it's blessed too to have along with them their reading from the Psalms. The Psalms, where we get the feelings of Christ. The feelings of Christ. It's blessed, dear saint of God, to meditate on the facts of Christ and to read them in connection with the Psalms and to reflect what was going through that blessed holy soul. You and I could be confronted with the same circumstances, but do we feel them? Do we feel them? The way that blessed man [00:15:02] did, who was here for the pleasure of God. Dear saint of God, get these things into your soul. Walk as he walked. Oh, think of him. Absolute embodiment of holiness and grace and love, righteousness, tenderness, firmness when necessary. Take this hence, make not my father's house again of merchandise. He could be faithful in every way. And of course, we read, of course, we've had before us in that John 13, one of the features of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, hungry with humility, bending down to the great Lord. He spake and he stood fast. He called that whole vast universe into being. He was going to go on to carve his cross, lay down his life, yet he could stoop down and wash the feet of his disciples, including the one that was later going to betray him. Yet he could hold the [00:16:05] feet of that man in his hands. You and I wouldn't do it, well maybe you would, but I certainly wouldn't do it. If I knew that a son was going to betray me, I wouldn't hold his feet in my hands. Dear saint of God, I don't want to be emotional or sentimental, but get a hold of this. That our blessed Lord held in his hands the feet of the one that was going to betray him. These blessed hands of the Lord, the bride says his hands, set with a barrel, set with a barrel of meditators on the hands of her blessed Lord, to walk. As he walked, well dear brethren, these are just little

appetizers, things for you to meditate and get into. Then we come to a really searching verse, don't we, in chapter 3 and verse 16. We think a lot about John's gospel 3 and 16, and well [00:17:05] may we do so. Tell us out John 3 16, that glorious gospel message. We are only too pleased, I haven't been able to do it of course since last August, but before that I was pleased along with all other preachers to stand in Princes Street and proclaim this glorious gospel John 3 and 16. And I pray that God will raise me up again in health and strength that I'm able to go out and proclaim that glorious gospel again. Anyway, that's enough of me. Look at here we have 1 John 3 and 16. It says here, Hereby we have known love, because he, he, and who is he? The Lord Jesus Christ, our beloved Lord and Saviour, has laid down his life, laid down positive willful acts, as he did, laid down his life for us, for us. And then the exhortation follows from that, and we ought for the brethren to lay [00:18:06] down our lives. It's a challenge, a challenge of our own heart. If all I could only do is really speak to myself in this verse, then the Spirit would have achieved something. But the verse is there for us. Dearly beloved, we ought for the brethren to lay down our lives. You know John only exhorts us once as brethren in this epistle. He uses beloved several times, but only once does he use brethren. Brethren is a reality. And he connects it, doesn't he, with when he uses brethren, he follows on from Cain through his brother. And he wants to bring out the reality of brethren, of brethren. Paul of course speaks very much about brethren, but it was a reality for him. He'd been slaughtering the saints of God, putting them to death, thinking he was doing God's will. And then when he was struck down, [00:19:05] who was the first person to come to him? One of us. What did he call him? Brother. Brother Saul. He led right there and then the reality of what it is to be brethren. The reality of what it is to be brethren. You know, we talk much about the brethren. We talk much about the brethren. Do we know the reality of what it is to be brethren? Hmm? I said brother Bunyan, didn't I? And I could also mention brother C.S. Lewis. Brother C.S. Lewis. Now no doubt that man was born again and we'll see him in heaven. And he said, you know, we may not, you know, it's one thing that Satan tries to get us is to be loving everybody. And then he said, we're so busy loving everybody, we haven't time to really love specific people. And you see, we may not be called to lay down our lives for brethren, [00:20:03] but we are called to give them a crust of bread when they need it. Invite them for a meal. Spend some time and effort with them. That's what we're all called upon to do in many ways. And I'm sure, of course, if we were ever called upon to lay down our lives for the brethren, the Lord would give us the grace to do so. There was a young brother once said to an older brother, he said, oh, I don't think the Lord would ever give me the grace to lay down my life for the brethren. And the older brother, wise old brother said, yes, well, he will when it comes up. And what you need is the grace to live for him here and now and love the brethren and do it in these practical ways. And then we have, of course, in chapter 4 and verse 11, again in the face of the love of God. Herein is love.

This is what it's shown in. Not that we love God, but that he loved us. God loved us. In [00:21:07] that past age of eternity, we're chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Think of it, that love of God sat there and he sent his son. He sent his son a propitiation for our sins, an answer to the great question of sin, his beloved son. The gift is the very essence of God's love. That's how God's love is shown. The very essence of the love of God is his gift. And who is his gift? His beloved son, the darling of his bosom, the only begotten son who is right in the affections and the bosom of the Father. And God sent him. And then the apostle, the practical outcome of that is, beloved, if God has so loved us, we also ought to love one another. Further in challenge, isn't it? We also ought to love [00:22:06] one another. Yes, it's a challenge to us. What does that love involve? Ought to love one another. It means going that further step, going that second mile, that third or that fourth mile. That's what it is. You're not just going so far and then leaving it there. You know, if a coal fire, and probably some of you younger people won't remember coal fires, but you know as some of the bits of coal got to the outside, they would soon cool down. And you used to take the tongs and you took the bits and

you put them in the middle to keep them burning. That's what we need to do. If something is getting a little bit cold, let us warm them up with the love of Christ and get them into the heat and the warmth, the warmth of Christ. There's another story told, isn't there, of a young brother. [00:23:06] He said, oh, I don't like such and such a meeting, you know, meeting A. There's no love there. And the wise old brother said to him, well, why don't you go and take some love there? You see, we're always sitting back wanting love to be shown to us. But it's got to be reciprocal. And we've got to take initiative in it and show the love. And it's done in a very practical way. It might mean needing to get our jackets off and help, and not to fight them, no, but to help them and care for them in every way. And that's what's needed to love one another. We ought also to love one another. And then I'm just, as I say, going through just a little taste here and there for you to meditate on at your leisure. We come to the third epistle of John. And he's dealing with the great matter of men [00:24:01] that go about, preachers, bearing, they've been walking in the truth, and further go around bringing the truth. And sometimes there were strangers to them, but they were known to be bringing the truth. A great thing for the saints of God to be bringing the truth. And John, actually Gaius, was setting them forward on their journey, worthy of God. He exhorted them to do that, because they had gone out for his name's sake, taking nothing of the nations. Maybe we haven't got so much of it now today, but we can thank God for those who go out to the world, go out serving the Lord, taking nothing of the nations, looking only to the Lord. And it then says, you see, that we therefore ought to receive such, that we may be fellow workers with the truth. We may not be enabled for various reasons to [00:25:02] go out in that way, but as they come around, as the servants of the Lord move around, let us be helping them. It says we ought to receive such, and minister to them, and care for them in very practical ways, that they are able to serve the Lord, either in the preaching of the gospel, the ministry of the word, in any way. Let us be found doing this, of this attitude, so that those who would desire to go out and serve the Lord may be sustained in it. And let it be evident that we are desirous of the truth, and being held and encouraged in the truth. Because John had said, hadn't he, that he loved Gaius in the truth, and he also said to the elect lady in the second epistle, that he rejoiced that he could find them walking in the truth, and desirous of it. So that's another thing that we ought to do, dearly beloved. We ought to receive such, that we may be fellow workers with the [00:26:01] truth. So I trust that you have just grasped something of what the Lord has made of my heart, as an outcome from this very blessed matter of five things that we ought to do. The key thing, of course, was in John 13, that we ought to watch one another speak, and then John, the apostle writer, being present at the supper, he sees fit, in his epistles, to bring out four other occasions of things that we ought to do. May we be found doing these things, for the pleasure of our blessed God and Father, until we see this thing. Lord, we align, thy claims we own, Ourselves to leave you before we get, We're not in our hearts alone, but to do thy glory let. Hear, let us hear them each, thy mind display, More like gracious image shine, [00:27:02] Than to all we expected them, And now shall dawn, Our real light.

Lord, we align, For thy life, our heart, Wants to forgive, With grace of sin, But have we, Yet not to know, And hate thy sins, While we live.

Now let us sing, The wondrous song, With love and ears, So divine, That when death comes, [00:28:02] Ever in song, We own that we are whole, We align.

Lord, we align, Thy claims we own, Ourselves to leave you before we get, We're not in our hearts alone, But to do thy glory let.

Hear, let us hear them each, Thy mind display, [00:29:05] More like gracious image shine, Than to all we expected them, When thou doubt, Oh, that we align.