

Resistance to God's Work

JOHN 13:1-17

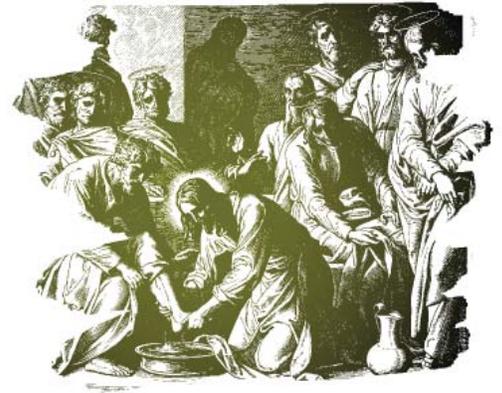
Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. **2**The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper **3**Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, **4**got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself.

5Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. **6**He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' **7**Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' **8**Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.'

9Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!'

10Jesus said to him, 'One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.' **11**For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'

12 After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? **13**You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. **14**So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. **15**For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. **16**Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. **17**If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.



Why is Peter so resistant to Jesus' leadership in this scene? How do you read Peter? (sympathetically, critically, identifying with him or not, etc.)

How does Jesus deal with Peter's misunderstanding?

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“YOU DO NOT KNOW NOW WHAT I AM DOING, BUT LATER YOU WILL UNDERSTAND.”

Recall times in Peter's life when he misunderstood what Jesus was doing:

	WHAT WAS PETER'S IDEA?	WHAT WAS JESUS'?
Luke 5:4-11: The response to the catch of fish		
Mark 8:27-38: Jesus' identity		
Mark 9:2-8: the transfiguration		
Mark 14:27-31: "You will all fall away"		
John 18:10-12: the scene in the garden		
Acts 10:9-16: praying on the roof		
Others?		



Reflect

on times recently when you saw Jesus at work but did not know what he was up to. Or when you disregarded Jesus' work because you didn't understand it. Or when you labeled what was happening one way until you came to see it another.

How did Jesus get through? How attentive are you to his work in ways you don't immediately understand?



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Why is Peter so resistant to Jesus' leadership in this scene? How do you read Peter? (sympathetically, critically, identifying with him or not, etc.)

Peter has declared that Jesus is the messiah but he has never really comprehended what that means. Peter thinks that Jesus is going to release Palestine from Roman oppression through impressive displays of power, which is why he is so impatient at Jesus' characteristic but annoying posture of servanthood. It is also possible that Peter sees more quickly than others that (since servants are no greater than their masters) if Jesus washes their feet, they will likely have to do so as well.

How does Jesus deal with Peter's misunderstanding?

Jesus is patient but firm. He has compassion on Peter, but he isn't going to let Peter's idea about what should happen win out. Peter's loyalty ("You shall never wash my feet!" "Lord, not my feet only but also...!") is cute, but misguided. Ultimately, Peter had an easier time thinking of himself washing Jesus' feet rather than the other way around. But that kind of relationship was not what Jesus was offering. "Peter, if I don't serve you, you have nothing to do with me." Without force or manipulation, Jesus persuades Peter that the kind of resistance he was offering was ill-informed.

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Luke 5:4-11: The response to the catch of fish	Lord depart from me, for I am a sinful man.	You are going to be following me.
Mark 8:27-38: Jesus' identity	The Christ: conquering hero, able to kick out Romans	Suffering messiah, preparing to die to save people
Mark 9:2-8: the transfiguration	I've got a good idea: let's build three booths and just stay up here!	God: Just be silent, Peter, and listen to Jesus (about being the Christ)
Mark 14:27-31: "You will all fall away"	I won't fall away—I'm prepared to die for you.	No Peter—I will die for you. You will even deny you know me 3 times.
John 18:10-12: the scene in the garden	Takes off a sword and ineptly flails at an unarmed servant	Heals the servant and tells Peter that swords aren't necessary
Acts 10:9-16: praying on the roof	"Never, Lord, do I eat unclean foods!"	What I've declared clean is no longer unclean! Consider these Gentiles ...
Others?		



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