



Discipling Disciple

Session 7: Washing Feet – John 13: 1-35



CHRIST CENTRAL

Part 1(looking back: Hospitality/Catching up/Review/)

identity

worship

community

Spend time catching up with everyone's week – consider that eating food together can be a good context of building friendship and trust in the group.

After everyone has shared a bit, ask how everyone found crafting and telling the story.

This is the time for caring for those in your group, hearing about what's going on in their lives, asking questions, listening, and praying.

Part 2 (story)

identity

mission

worship

(John 13: 1-35)

Story Crafting Through the Week

Part of Discipling Disciple stage will involve participants learning how to dive deep into the scriptures and craft the story for themselves. This will involve them learning a devotional story crafting process which they can follow through the week. In the 1st Session, the group leader will explain and model this process with the group so each participant is equipped to take into their week.

Day 1 & 2– Finding the Central Image of the Story

Day 1 - Read the story in the scripture 3 times in 3 different translations. (e.g ESV, NIV, NLT)

Day 2 - Speak out the scripture, and record it on your phone, then listen to the story 3 times.

Meditate on the story and note down what you think is the main point or the main image of the story.

Day 3 – Experiencing the Story

After reading and listening to the story and meditating on the main point or image, the next day will be given to walking through the story slowly, listening to the recorded story and putting yourself in the shoes of Peter/the disciples, contemplating on the emotions and experience of that character through the narrative. For example, in the story of Jesus calling Peter, you will imagine yourself as Peter, who has been fishing all night and caught nothing, hearing Jesus teach from his boat, obey his command to throw his net on the other side of the boat, receiving the huge catch of fish, kneeling at the feet of Jesus.

As you are doing that, you are asking yourself the questions

- i) How is Peter feeling at this moment?
- ii) How would you feel if that was you?

This process should be done prayerfully in conversation and communion with the Holy Spirit asking Him to guide you and to reveal things to your heart and mind. You will want to note down any things that come to light for you.



CHRIST CENTRAL

Day 4 – Research the Story

At this point, after reading and internalising the story we can begin to ask questions concerning the contextual/literary gaps in our comprehension of the story which we can research with the help of study notes/commentaries etc.

These materials will provide some studies notes on some of the main points where a bit of information relating to (language meaning/ phrasing/ literary context and design patterns/geography/historical context etc.) can serve to really aid one's comprehension of the story as a whole. We have also provided a list of commentaries that have been used in the crafting of these stories and their accompanying notes to go deeper with.

Day 5 – Group Session

Read the Scripture, Act out the story, Re-tell the story, Questions.

The hope is that when the group gathers, through this crafting process each participant has engaged with story at a deep level. It is helpful to complete this process together, so the middle section of the session will include telling the story and then getting the group to act out the story. (This may feel odd for a few, but even if all the group does is physically act out the movements of the story, engaging the whole body really helps internalise the story). After acting out the story, it is helpful then for each person to retell the story before moving in to the questions section.

- i) **Ask each person to read the passage in a different version (E.G ESV, NLT, NIV)**
- i) **Act out the Story** - Talk about the characters in the story and choose them. If you know anything about the characters, talk about the person.
 - a. Determine where the scenes will be acted out and the spacing of the story.
 - b. Act out the story with one person narrating.
 - c. Act out the story at least one more time, with people switching parts. This time, stop at crucial points in the story, and certainly at the main action(s) of the story that illustrate the main point of the story. Each time you stop consider how each of the characters must have felt. Describe the scene to each other a bit more, describing what everyone in the scene is doing.
 - d. If you forget parts of the story, the entire group can work together to remember what happened next, or what was said.
- ii) **Ask the questions**
 - 1. What do you like about this story/What stood out to you?
 - 2. What bothered you about this story?
 - 3. What does this story show you about God?
 - 4. What does this story show you about people?



CHRIST CENTRAL

Part 3 (application and commission)

identity

worship

mission

Ask the remaining questions:

5. If this story is true, what does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story? What is God showing you? What does this story show us about what it means to be a follower of Jesus? How will you respond? (it is really important to give time in this section for reflection and response. Don't settle for superficial answers, hopefully as you model honesty and vulnerability this will be imbibed by the group. However, you may want to help people go deeper, by asking some follow on questions. Don't be afraid to do so.)
6. Who are you able to tell this story to?

iii) Now, Get each person to tell the story they have crafted

Encourage everyone in the group to think of people in their life whom they could retell the story to; mention that at the next session we will recap the story and ask who remembered to tell the story. Again it is helpful to emphasise the reason for going and telling the story ourselves is that it is the best way for us to remember the story and we are learning these stories to share the gospel with others.

Responding in Prayer and Worship

Make sure time is guarded to pray and worship (at least 20 mins). This time is key for responding to God after a deep dive into his word. This should be led sensitively, being aware of who is in the room and what has come out in each session.

This time can be led in a variety of ways,

- i) Listening to worship music
- ii) Singing
- iii) Sharing the Lord's Supper
- iv) Silence
- v) Each person sharing a psalm or a verse of scripture
- vi) Each person thanking God
- vii) Praying for one another: bringing words of encouragement and prophecy



CHRIST CENTRAL

A Note on Storying

In our discipleship materials, we have chosen to craft the stories of scripture into an oral format to be learnt, internalised and re-told. This process is done carefully and seeks to faithfully represent the heart, meaning and narrative of the biblical text in spoken form. We have done this for the following reasons;

- 1.) The spoken story format requires those in the group to internalise the scripture to some degree. We believe that scripture tells God's unified story that leads to the person of Jesus. God invites us to encounter and respond to him through the hearing, believing and living out in accordance with the truth of his story and the good news that it tells. The process of learning and retelling the story requires and allows the scripture to 'live within us', to shape and guide us, to convict and challenge, to comfort and encourage us. Storying is not the only way this can happen of course, but we have found it to be an especially helpful and intuitive way of forming our worldview to that of Jesus Christ through the internalising the story that reveals him.
- 2.) Once this story is learnt and internalised, those in the group have it to share with others. This can be especially engaging when sharing with people with who don't know Jesus, and even more so in age of authenticity. By sharing a story that is 'living within you', you are imparting to someone something that has changed and/or encouraged you, and therefore it comes with more weight and significance.

How to lead a group in internalizing and retelling the story

These are a few creative ways that people can delve into the Story. Use discernment as to what would best help your group and what they'd be comfortable with.

1. Retell the story: as a group, each person tells as much as they can remember and passes on to someone else. Or.... split up the group in pairs, get each pair to tell the story to each other
2. Scenes: ask the group to think of the story in scenes like a movie, ask each person what is scene 1, 2 etc. Try and see if you can get people to visualise each scene, the geography, the movements, which characters are doing what etc. This will help internalise the story.
3. Feeling the emotions of the story: Retell the story in sections, or re-read the story in sections b. For each section, talk about the feelings of each character in that section...
4. Being a character in the story: ask each person which character they are in the story, as well as helping to remember the story, this will also help your group engage personally with the story from God's word.
5. Art: Draw a picture of the key theme or key feeling in the story/passage.
6. Music: Listen to a song related to the key theme of the passage and draw your feelings about it/or about God. (Art and Music are especially helpful mediums for people who may struggle with oral learning, and appreciate creative outlets)
7. Act out the story: Get everyone to act out the story as a group



CHRIST CENTRAL

Day 4 Study Notes for Session 7 John 13: 1-30– to be sent out to the group

What does it mean that ‘Satan entered Judas’ does this mean Judas is not to blame?

Before Jesus washes his disciples’ feet, we have this detail emphasised by John, that the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas to betray Jesus. Commentator A. Schlatter, points out that this does not mean that Judas was not responsible for his betrayal because a heart incited by Satan, is a heart that actually desires what the devil desires.¹

However, though already incited by the evil one, a final surrender to darkness happens in the heart of Judas when taking the morsel of bread that Jesus offers, Satan enters in to Judas. Though some scholars see this as an act of judgement by Jesus, it is perhaps more accurate to see Jesus giving the morsel to Judas as a decisive turning point; an act of pure love that if rejected becomes a damning judgement. Leslie Newbigin writes of this event ‘that final act of love, becomes with terrible immediacy the decisive movement of judgement. At this moment we are witnessing the climax of that action of sifting, of separation, of judgement which has been the central theme of John’s account of the public ministry of Jesus...(3:16-19). So the final gesture of affection precipitates the final surrender of Judas to the power of darkness. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has neither understood it nor mastered it.’²

Judas received the bread but not the grace, instead of being broken to repentance, his heart solidifies in his resolve to betray his Rabbi. It is at this point that John states ‘Satan enters into John’ an expression that D.A Carson notes Signifies ‘thorough possession’. The point of no return has been crossed in Judas’ heart.

Now Jesus will say, ‘what you are about to do, do quickly’ – if Judas descent into darkness is complete, he may as well get on with his betrayal.

The nature of Judas’s interaction with the Satan in betraying Jesus shows that though he is incited and ultimately fully surrendered to the evil one, and even though Jesus knows this will happen and is the path to the cross he was always going to take, nonetheless, Judas remains a willing participant. The Gospel writer of John also wants us to see the demonic powers of darkness running parallel to the free will decisions of the treacherous disciple.

Why does Jesus say ‘if I don’t wash you, you have no share with me’?

In his commentary, D.A Carson, points out that this foot washing service of Jesus is both an example to followed (13:15) but also serves a symbolic representation of the humility of Christ that he will experience in the crucifixion. He writes ‘As with the crucifixion, so with the foot washing : each is simultaneously an act of God by which human beings are freed or cleansed – whether in reality (the cross) or in symbol (the foot washing) – and an example the Jesus’ followers are to emulate.’

By washing his disciples’ feet, Jesus is symbolically acting out for his disciples what his atoning death will accomplish for them. The phrase ‘no share with me’ has to do with

¹ A. Schlatter. *Der Evangelist Johannes* (Stuttgart: Calweier, 1975)

² Leslie Newbigin, *The Light Has Come: An Exposition of the Fourth Gospel* (Handsel/Eerdmans, 1982)



CHRIST CENTRAL

inheritance but also of belonging, to be washed by Jesus is to become a partaker in his inheritance and as a mark that we belong to him. Those who want to serve Jesus and be joined to Him must first receive his self-sacrificing service. The symbol of washing, similar to baptism, points to being washed clean of evil and sin and becoming joined to Christ.

What does the Gospel writer John want us to understand by the command 'love one another'? And why does Jesus call this a new command?

The expression of love – *Agape* – is a prominent theme in both John's Gospel and in 1,2 and 3 John. This story starts by stating the love that Jesus had for his disciples in the world would endure to the very bitter end of his earthly life. A helpful video on the nature of the NT writer's definition of *Agape* love can be found here,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=slyevQ1LW7A>

The model of love that Jesus calls for his disciples is in the immediate context of washing their feet; a form service of typically done by the lowest slave of the household. This serves as a symbol for the manner of love that not only Jesus has demonstrated to his disciples over the past 3 years but also the love within the Godhead before the foundation of the world. This is surely the grand goal of Jesus high priestly prayer 4 chapters later, that the love between God the Father and God the Son may be in and between this new community of disciples, the church. For the writers of the New Testament, the climax of this love is the death of Jesus upon the cross, where the feet washing symbol finds fulfilment. John sees this as the model by which we are to love each other, in 1 John 3:16 he writes 'by this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.'

This brings us to the point of in what way is this a new command from Jesus? The rich young ruler in Mt 19, was able after understand the Torah as pointing towards the love of God and the love of neighbour. Jesus himself has already claimed at the 'Sermon on the Mount' that all the law and the prophets hang on these two commands. So why is it now a new command? D.A Carson in his commentary writes 'its newness is bound up not only with a new standard ('as I have loved you') but with the new order it both mandates and exemplifies...the new covenant that promised the transformation of heart and mind (Jer 31:29-34, Eze 36:24-26)³.

³ D.A Carson, The Gospel According To John (PNTC) (Pillar New Testament Commentary) p484



CHRIST **CENTRAL**

Feedback from Group Leader

In our vision for discipleship, we have identified 4 key ingredients to healthy and growing disciples. As you are leading your group, for each session, make some notes under each heading for how the group is faring in each of these areas.

identity

worship

community

mission