

John 13:1-17 | Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

¹It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

²The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

⁸"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

⁹"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

¹⁰Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." ¹¹For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not everyone was clean.

¹²When 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. ¹³"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."

The Washing of the feet

Ghislaine Howard

from the Methodist Modern Art Collection © TMCP

Methodist Modern
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Commentary (Based on 'A guide to the Methodist Art Collection')

John 13:2-9, 12-15 "The figures, set against a rich green/blue background, completely dominate the composition. Their gestures and the rhythms of their bodies focus attention on the crucial moment of the narrative. Howard has mixed sand with the paint to create a sculptural surface texture which unifies and heightens the intensity and intimacy of the scene. The importance of the event is conveyed by the classical and monumental style which echoes earlier interpretations of the theme. The shape of the bowl and the warmth of the skin tones suggest Christianity's Middle Eastern origins. The dress is simple and workman-like; these figures could be from any age and country. The simple, everyday act of washing a guest's feet before offering hospitality becomes, through the words and actions of Jesus, pregnant with significance."

Commentary from <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/reflecting-on-faith/the-methodist-modern-art-collection/index-of-works/the-washing-of-the-feet-ghislaine-howard/>