

LESSON 9

THE SACRAMENT OF FOOTWASHING

BEFORE YOU TEACH

Footwashing

During Biblical times, the poor often walked barefoot, while those with money wore simple sandals, usually made of cowhide. With the dirty and sandy roads, a person's feet would become dirty easily.

According to Jewish custom, footwashing was a way to welcome a guest into your home. Prior to leaving for a dinner or feast, the guests would first bathe in their own home. When they arrived at the feast, the host would greet them and have a servant wash their feet. First, the servant would remove the guest's sandals to prevent the sandals from bringing dirt into the house. Then, the servant would pour water over the guest's feet in a basin, rub the feet with his hands, and then dry them with a towel.

The Bible made several references to footwashing. Abraham and Lot had their guests' feet washed (Gen 18:4; 19:2). Rebekah's family welcomed Abraham's servant by washing his feet (Gen 24:32). Abigail agreed to be David's wife by stating that she would wash his feet (1 Sam 25:41). Paul instructed Timothy that a true widow washed the feet of the saints (1 Tim 5:10).

What makes the customary Jewish ritual different from the Footwashing Sacrament, recorded in John 13, is that the master and host, Lord Jesus, washed His disciples' feet. The Lord Jesus established a beautiful example of servitude, love, humility, forgiveness, and holiness. The Lord Jesus also said to Peter that if He did not wash his feet, he would have no part with the Lord. The Footwashing Sacrament therefore has a direct relationship with salvation. Today, footwashing is one of the three important holy sacraments performed in the True Jesus Church.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

As with the other sacraments, your students may have difficulty comprehending the spiritual mysteries of the Sacrament of Footwashing. However, its spiritual lessons may be readily understood and applied to their daily lives. Help the students understand how Jesus was an example of love, humility, forgiveness, holiness, and servitude.

BIBLE TEXT

John 13

BIBLE TRUTHS

1. The Sacrament of Footwashing is essential for salvation and allows us to have a part with the Lord.
2. The Lord Jesus was an example of love, forgiveness, holiness, humility, and servitude.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To understand that the Sacrament of Footwashing allows us to have a part with the Lord Jesus and eternal life.
2. To follow Jesus' example in living a life of love and forgiveness, holiness, humility, and servitude.

MEMORY VERSE

"If I do not wash you,
you have no part with Me."

(John 13:8b)

PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Thank You, Lord, for bringing us safely through another week and guiding us here to worship You. Today, we will learn the importance of footwashing. Footwashing allows us to have a part with You, but also teaches us about humility and forgiveness. We hope to follow in all Your examples that we learn today. May all glory be onto Your name. Hallelujah! Amen.

VOCABULARY

humility: the quality of not being proud or arrogant

forgive: to stop feeling negative toward a person for something he has done

REVIEW

Last week, we learned about the Sacrament of Water Baptism. Let's review some of the things we learned about water baptism.

Why do we need to get baptized?

- a. To have our sins washed away
- b. To become children of God
- c. To be saved
- d. To put on Christ

What are the requirements of the biblical water baptism?

- a. Performed in natural living water
- b. Person receiving baptism must be fully immersed in the water
- c. Person receiving baptism must bow their head
- d. Performed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ
- e. Baptist must have received the correct baptism
- f. Baptist must have the Holy Spirit

BIBLE STORY

Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

The night before Jesus was handed over to his enemies to be tried and crucified, Jesus had a final supper with His disciples. After the meal, Jesus did something extraordinary. First, He removed His outer garment, and then wrapped a towel around His waist. After pouring water into a basin, He began to wash His disciples' feet, drying them with the towel when He was done.

When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter asked, "Lord, are You going to wash my feet?"

Jesus was his Master and Teacher. How could he let Jesus, who was greater than him, wash his feet? Footwashing was a job for the lowest servants. Peter felt that he was not worthy of receiving footwashing from Jesus.

Jesus answered, "You do not understand what I am doing, but later you will understand."

Peter replied, "No! You shall never wash my feet!" "If I don't wash you, you have no part with Me," Jesus explained.

When Peter heard this, he was shocked. If Jesus didn't wash his feet, he would be separated from Jesus and have no part in the heavenly kingdom. Peter quickly changed his mind.

"Lord, not just my feet then, but wash my hands and my head, too," Peter cried.

Jesus responded, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean."

After Jesus had finished washing all twelve disciples' feet, He put His outer garment back on. Returning to the table, Jesus began to explain to the disciples what He had just done.

What Does Footwashing Teach Us?

1. To Have a Part with the Lord

In Jesus' time, footwashing was very common. People wore sandals, which meant their feet got dirty from walking on the dusty, dirty roads. When they entered a house, a slave or servant would wash their feet. Today, we wear closed shoes and walk on paved roads. As a result, our feet are less dirty and we do not need to wash our feet when entering a house.

In the True Jesus Church, we practice the Sacrament of Footwashing. This differs from the custom of footwashing in biblical times. Customarily, a servant would perform footwashing. Contrastingly, the Sacrament of Footwashing was established by Jesus and has very special teachings.

When Peter refused to let Jesus wash his feet, what was Jesus' reply? [Allow students to respond.] Yes, Jesus said that if He did not wash Peter's feet, Peter would have no part with Him. This meant that Peter would have no part of the eternal life that Jesus was going to prepare for him. That's why Peter was shocked and quickly changed his mind. From this, we know that Footwashing is needed for salvation and that we cannot be saved without it.

2. Love and Forgive One Another

The duty of washing the guests' feet was given to slaves, because it was a lowly and unpleasant task. Jesus was not a slave; He is the Master and Lord of all Creation. Yet, He humbled Himself to do the job of a slave and wash His disciples' feet. His love for His disciples was so great that He even washed the feet of Judas. The Lord Jesus knew that Judas was going to hurt and betray Him but still, Jesus

was willing to bow down before Judas and lovingly wash his feet. To love and do something nice for someone who is going to hurt you is extremely difficult. Jesus shows us that we need to love and forgive others, even when it is difficult.

Discussion

1. Share a time when a friend or a sibling offended you. What did you do?
2. What does Jesus' example teach us about how we should treat those who have hurt us?
- 3c. How often should we forgive people who have hurt us? (In Matthew 18:21-22, Jesus teaches us that we should forgive others every time.)
4. What should we do if we find it difficult to forgive or love those who have hurt us? (We should be determined and make every effort to forgive them, since it is what the Lord wants us to do. We can pray and ask God to heal our pain and give us strength to forgive others.)

Be Holy and Pure

During biblical times, houses did not have indoor plumbing or running water. The people had to gather their water from city wells. This was very laborious. Thus, people could not shower daily. To clean themselves, people would only wash their feet, especially before going to bed.

Jesus' blood cleanses us of our sins when we receive baptism. Thus, we are clean and holy. Jesus wants us to maintain our holiness by following in His footsteps. To do this, we must adhere to the teachings of the Bible. By doing so, we keep ourselves holy and pure.

Discussion

1. What things can cause us to become unclean?
2. Why do we need to keep our feet clean? God is holy and He wants His children to be holy, too (1 Pet 1:16).
3. How we can keep our feet clean? We keep our feet clean by walking in the way of the Lord and following the teachings of the Bible (Ps 119:9).

Be Humble and Serve Others

One day, the disciples were arguing over who was the greatest among them. Jesus used this opportunity to teach them about humility. Jesus told them that only humble people who served others would be great in heaven. Jesus demonstrated this teaching when He established the Sacrament of Footwashing. Jesus was the Lord and Master, yet He was willing to perform the duty of a servant and wash His disciples' feet. We must also follow Jesus' example and serve others with humility and love. Jesus reminds us that "if you know these things, blessed are you if you do them" (Jn 13:17).

Discussion

1. At home, our parents set a good example of serving with humility. Share something your parents have done for you.
2. Think of ways to serve our family members. (We can help our parents with the chores or show kindness to our younger siblings by reading a story to them or helping them put on their shoes. Have students think of some concrete examples.)
3. How can you show your humility and service in church? (We can clean up our classrooms, greet the elderly, allow others to go ahead of us in the lunch line, or bring food to someone.)

How Is Footwashing Performed?

1. An elder, pastor, or deacon performs the Footwashing sacrament. He represents the Lord Jesus in washing the feet of the newly baptized person.
2. The sacrament is performed in the name of the Lord Jesus.
3. Using a basin of water, the pastor washes the believer's feet, and then dries them with a towel.

Testimony

Once, a young Muslim woman was invited to attend service by her churchgoing sister. After seeking the truth for a while, the woman believed in the Lord Jesus and received the Holy Spirit. She decided that she wanted to be baptized. Following her baptism, she had to receive footwashing. The person who was going to wash her feet was an elderly sister. The newly-baptized sister felt that, as the younger person, she could not allow this elderly sister to wash her feet. However, the elderly sister told her to permit her to wash her feet. Suddenly, the newly-baptized sister saw a vision. Kneeling before her was not the elderly sister, but the Lord Jesus, and He was personally washing her feet. She was greatly touched by the love of God! She understood that footwashing was required for people to have a part with the Lord.

Discussion

1. From the testimony, we learned that a church minister only physically washes our feet. Who is actually washing our feet? (The Lord Jesus. He washes our feet in the spirit.)
2. Now that we know that the Lord Jesus is the one who personally washes our feet, what should we be determined to do? (We should be determined to keep our feet clean. We need to lead a life that is pleasing and holy to the Lord. We should not go back to our old sinful ways and grieve the Lord.)

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. We do not need to have our feet washed because our sins are already washed away during baptism. False.
2. Jesus washed His disciples' feet as an example for us. True.
3. The Sacrament of Footwashing is very important because it allows us to have a part with the Lord. True.
4. Jesus instituted the Sacrament of Footwashing to teach us to love and forgive others, even our enemies. True.
5. Jesus washed all His disciples' feet, except Judas'. False.
6. After we have our feet washed, we need to lead a holy life and not get our feet dirty again. True.
7. When Jesus came to wash Peter's feet, Peter gladly allowed Jesus to do so. False.
8. It was the custom for the master of the house to wash the guests' feet. False.

MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

"If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." (John 13:8b)

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

1. True
2. False; Jesus also washed Judas' feet.
3. False; it was customary for servants to perform footwashing.
4. True
5. B
6. C
7. C
8. C
9. Answers may vary.
10. "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." (John 13:8b)

SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

Hot Coals

On a piece of paper, ask the students to write some ways they have been hurt or offended by their family members, friends, or brothers or sisters at church.

Examples

- I have been bullied.
- My sister wore my favorite skirt without asking.
- Some of the people at church don't want to be friends with me.
- Some of the kids at school laugh at what I wear and how I look.

Now ask them, "If these things happened to you, what would you do?" Tell them to write their answers on the same sheet of paper.

Possible Responses

- I stop talking to them.
- I think of ways to get back at them.
- I shout at them.
- I hate them.

Now that we've shared what we would do in these situations, let's turn to Mark 11:25-26 to find out what the Bible tells us to do when someone hurts and offends us. The Lord Jesus tells us that we must forgive those that have done anything against us.

What does it mean to forgive? When we forgive a person, we are excusing that person for causing us hurt or pain. That means we no longer put blame on that person for what they have done.

Why is it important to forgive others for the wrongs that they have done? We must forgive others, because if we don't, then our heavenly Father will not forgive us. Forgiveness is like a gift from God. Each time we pray for forgiveness for a sin we have committed, God gives us this gift of forgiveness. God hopes that we can give others this gift in the same way He has given it to us.

Is it okay for us to forgive others halfheartedly? No, the Bible teaches us that it is important to sincerely forgive others. One day, Peter asked the Lord Jesus, "How many times should I forgive my brother if he sins against me?" Jesus replied that Peter should forgive seventy times seven times.

How much is seventy times seven? Does that mean that after forgiving others 490 times, we do not need to forgive them anymore? No, in the Bible, seven is a complete number. To forgive others seventy times seven times means to fully and completely forgive others each and every time they sin against us.

Why do we need to do this? Imagine if, one day, we did something wrong and asked God for forgiveness, but God refused to give us the gift of forgiveness. How would we feel? We would probably feel sad or hurt. Fortunately, God has given us this gift each time we asked for it forgiveness. So, God wants us to be like Him. He wants us to pass this gift onto others whenever we can. Sometimes, people sin against us intentionally. Other times, they hurt us by accident. No matter what, Jesus wants us to forgive them.

Let's turn to Romans 12:20. Here, we are taught not only to forgive our enemies, but also to be nice to them. If our enemy, or someone who has hurt us, is hungry, we need to give him food; if he is thirsty, we need to give him a drink.

The Lord Jesus set a wonderful example for us to follow. Even though Judas betrayed Him, Jesus willingly and completely forgave him. Jesus did not stop there. He went on to wash Judas' feet, giving him the same promise that the other disciples received.

Looking back at our responses, what can we change about how we treat those who have done wrong to us? Besides forgiving them, can we think of other ways to show kindness to them? [Have students write down and share their answers. End the session by saying a prayer: "Lord Jesus, help me forgive those who hurt me. Help me not only to show forgiveness, but also to love others as You did."]

ACTIVITY

1

Following Jesus

Objective: To encourage students to lead a holy life.

Materials

- Roll of butcher paper
- Washable paint in several colors
- Markers
- Paint trays
- Plastic drop cloth, optional

Instructions

1. On the whiteboard, write the following, and ask the students to write their responses on a sheet of paper.

Name one way that you will:

- love and forgive a person who has hurt you
- serve a family member
- keep yourself holy

2. Take the roll of butcher paper and spread it across the floor. Optionally, take the plastic drop cloth and spread it on the floor before spreading the butcher paper.
3. Pour the paint into the trays and set them on the floor, near the paper.
4. Ask the students to remove their shoes and socks.
5. Have students carefully dip their feet into the paint and create footprints along the paper. Each student should make three footprints, one for each response.
6. Allow the paint to dry. Meanwhile, have the students wash and clean their feet.
7. Once the paint is dry, tell the students to write down their responses on the footprints using a marker.

E1 Year 3 Book 4 Lesson 9—The Sacrament of Footwashing

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Bible Truths: 1. The Sacrament of Footwashing is essential for salvation and allows us to have a part with the Lord.
2. The Lord Jesus was an example of love, forgiveness, holiness, humility, and servitude.

Lesson Objectives: 1. To understand that the Sacrament of Footwashing allows us to have a part with the Lord Jesus and eternal life.
2. To follow Jesus' example in living a life of love and forgiveness, holiness, humility, and servitude.

Bible Reading: Please put a checkmark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

Prayer: Please put a checkmark in the space on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(John 13:8b)

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Homework Assignment

Understanding What You Have Learned

True or False

1. Jesus washed His disciples' feet as an example for us. _____
2. Jesus washed the feet of every disciple, except Judas. _____
3. It was the custom for the master of the house to wash the guests' feet. _____
4. After our feet have been washed, we need to lead a holy life and not get our feet dirty again. _____

Multiple Choice

5. _____ : Footwashing is _____.
 - a. Not needed because our sins have already been washed away during baptism
 - b. Needed to have eternal life
 - c. Not needed because other churches don't practice it
6. _____ : Footwashing is very important, because _____.
 - a. It gets rid of all the dirt and gives us nice, clean feet
 - b. It washes away our sins
 - c. It allows us to have a part with the Lord
7. _____ : When Jesus came to Peter, Peter said, _____.
 - a. "Thank You, Lord Jesus, for washing my feet."
 - b. "This is a little embarrassing!"
 - c. " You shall never wash my feet!"
8. _____ : To teach His disciples the importance of love and forgiveness, Jesus _____.
 - a. Washed all the disciples' feet, except Judas'
 - b. Washed only half of the disciples' feet
 - c. Washed all the disciple' feet, including Judas'

Short Answer

9. Write down one way you will do each thing listed below.
 - Love and forgive a person who has hurt you _____
 - Serve a family member _____
 - Keep yourself holy _____
10. Write out this week's memory verse.
