Fully You – Part 4

# Experiencing the Good Life

# (John 13:1-17)

Welcome to Christ’s Community Church. Thank you for joining us. As we continue in this message series, we're looking at being “Fully you” recognizing that we have a new identity in Christ. And so, we’re looking at spiritual disciplines that we can apply to our lives, seeking to maximize the power of intentional living, not just in this season of Lent but 365 days a year. You see, what we’re experiencing today, this 24-hour period is not a dress rehearsal, this isn’t a dry run, this is the real thing.

And so, what I want to talk about today is Experiencing the Good Life, because every day, day after day, it’s game on for all of us. The problem is, that we have a tendency to live as if today doesn’t count. You know, we roll out of bed in the morning and begin our day living according to our own agenda, living as if we’ll have another chance, another opportunity to do the things the way they ought to be done. And so today we coast, but the Bible teaches again and again that as long as it’s called today, this is your moment, this is the day, and it matters more than any other day in your life. And that’s why I want to encourage, as the Bible says, to “fix our eyes on Jesus” (Hebrews 12:2).

Now last week, we saw Jesus illustrating the power of community, loving others and fellowshipping in a way that many people just don’t have today. And so this morning, as we turn to the Word of God, we’re going to discover Jesus once again gathered around a table with his friends, but this time we’re going to discover him taking an unusual role.

On Wednesday nights, we’ve been studying the first letter of Peter, and we’ve been talking about the command to love one another. We’ve been digging into the meaning behind some of the words related to this command and we’ve gained a better understanding of what it means to love, how we’re to love, and who we’re to love. This is so important because love is the defining characteristic of you and I. Love is the quality that separates us from every other religion and ideology, and it’s for that reason that we find this command repeated over and over and over again. Moses said it, Jesus said it, and each of the apostles said it.

In this passage of Scripture that we’re going to look at today, Jesus is going to begin unrolling before his disciples a demonstration of the full extent of his love, giving us a practical example of loving one another and even promising a blessing to those who would follow his example.

Now, last week as we looked at Luke’s gospel, we discovered Jesus enjoying life in the context of community. We saw how he was always mingling with the people, that Jesus was the party guy, and Luke tells us that,

“The Son of Man came eating and drinking..." (Luke 7:34).

Of course, the religious people, the Pharisees, the people who want to avoid the truth about themselves can always find something about Jesus to criticize. You know, no matter how far they have to stretch the truth to make their point, what they can’t exaggerate, they fabricate, but Jesus redirected them saying,

“John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and "sinners." ' But wisdom is proved right by all her children” (Luke 7:33-35).

Just imagine the arrogance of these religious people proclaiming that Abraham is their father and that they alone are the people of God. You know, they had the privilege to first hear John the Baptist and then hear Jesus teaching and preaching on the coming kingdom of God. Just imagine even seeing miracles performed before your very eyes and then to come to the conclusion that John the Baptist had a demon and that Jesus was a sinner.

Fortunately for us, the disciples were able to hear and understand the implications of God’s kingdom in our lives today. They chose to give up everything and follow Jesus, and so we can learn a lot from them. Not because they were perfect, not that they weren’t slow to learn, but because they knew Jesus personally.

Today as we talk about being Fully You, I want to share with you a message about Experiencing the Good Life, because so often we find ourselves caught up in our daily routine, so easily distracted in our pursuit of greatness, and forgetting the priority that Jesus places on loving one another. And so, as we look at John’s gospel in chapter 13, Jesus is going to give his disciples an example of love that was 180° from what they had grown up understanding, what culture teaches, and what we know today. We’re going to learn a lesson from Peter who was singled out, not because of his greatness, but because of his ability to put his foot in his mouth. And so, it’s from Peter that we can learn some very important lessons, fixing our eyes on Jesus, looking to Jesus example, embracing our identity in him, so that number one, we know the one who serves.

## 1. Knowing the One Who Serves

Now, we can learn a lot from Peter, because Peter was familiar with Jesus lifestyle, he was part of Jesus inner circle. It was Peter, James, and John who went up the mountain when Jesus was transfigured before them. They saw him in all his heavenly glory. It was Peter, James, and John who went into the house of Jairus when Jesus raised his daughter from the dead. It was Peter, James, and John, who were closest, who went deeper into the garden to pray with Jesus the night of his arrest. And it’s from Peter that we learn that because of everything that Jesus has poured into our lives, we too are able to pour into the lives of others. This is what we’re going to see as we look at this story John tells us beginning in verse one, he said,

“It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love. The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus” (John 13:1-2).

Now, Jesus knows that his death was imminent, this was what he’d come for, this is what he’d been living for, everything up to this point was just setting the stage. And so, now it’s the day before his crucifixion, knowing what he was about to suffer, knowing that he was about to leave this world, John tells us that Jesus showed them the full extent of his love. And in the next seven chapters John proceeds to record Jesus humbly serving his disciples, teaching them, and then in the greatest demonstration of all, dying an agonizing death on a cross for the sins of the world. All three revealing the proof of Jesus love.

John tells us that… “Jesus knew” in verse three, “that the Father had put all things under his power, that he had come from God and was returning to God” (John 13:3).

This knowledge must’ve been overwhelming, just imagine the emotion Jesus was feeling, knowing that Judas had already devised a plan to betray him, knowing that he was just hours away from giving his life, and now it’s dinner time as he's gathered together his closest friends in an upper room. He’s prepared to share the Passover meal with them, knowing that he’s going to be betrayed, beaten, tortured, and hung on a cross to die, that he’s literally going to be the Passover lamb for the sin of the world. And yet, as he’s about to give his final teaching, according to Luke's gospel a commotion broke out among the disciples. Luke tells us that,

“A dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest” (Luke 22:24).

And so, here’s Jesus, he’s planned this special dinner with his disciples, and now they’re acting like 3-year-olds. One of them asked, “Which of us is the greatest?" And all of a sudden, there's this argument, just like I hear all the time. You know, my son Jeremy’s like, “Who's ranking the highest? Who’s the best player? Which team is the best of the best?” And it doesn’t even matter how you answer, because he just wants to argue with you, proving that he knows best.

Now, we don't know exactly what happened here, but we can just imagine John saying, "I'm the greatest, I’m the beloved, I’m the one he loves!"

And knowing the impulsiveness of Peter, he probably interrupted John saying, "No, I’m the greatest, because I walked on water. You guys just sat in the boat, but I got out and walked on water."

Undoubtably, Andrew would’ve piped up like brothers always do, "Yeah, but you sank!”

And so, you could just imagine, here’s this heated argument going on, the twelve arguing which of them is the greatest and Jesus is amazed knowing this is his last meal with his closest friends. He’s invested three years in them, he’s attempted to teach them everything they need to know, and all he hears is pride, and all he sees is dirty feet. But watch what he does in verse four,

"Jesus got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him” (John 13:4-5).

Now, you may be wondering why Jesus washed their feet, but if you could just imagine walking everywhere in the sandals, their feet would be caked with dirt, dust, and grime. And so, it was a common courtesy whenever someone came into your home, that maybe a child or a servant would wash your feet when you entered. It was an act of hospitality kind of like offering to take someone’s coat, but why did Jesus do it?

As I studied this story, I recognized that as Jesus washed his disciples’ feet, he was communicating an important spiritual truth that you and I need to understand. We need to know the one who serves, receiving this truth for ourselves, because number two, we need to learn to depend on Jesus ministry as our servant.

## 2. Depending Upon His Ministry

You see, let me paint a picture for you. Jesus’ disciples are reclined at the table, they didn’t have chairs, but they’re kicked back on cushions on the floor, they’re reclined at the table with 12 pair of dirty feet right up close and personal. And so, Jesus showed them the full extent of his love by doing what was reserved for the lowest of the low. By washing their feet, he lovingly served them, because he came not to be served, but to serve (Matthew 20:28).

The Bible describes how Jesus literally set aside the privileges of being the Son of God to become a servant. The apostle Paul wrote that Jesus,

“Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant” (Philippians 2:6-7).

And so, Jesus came to serve, he lived his life on earth as a servant, and he serves us still today. He came to serve you, to minister to you, so that you could be “Fully You”. Jesus came to serve you, saving you, fulfilling what God spoke through the prophet Isaiah saying,

"Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations” (Matthew 12:17-18).

It’s so important that you understand that, that you’ve experienced Jesus serving you, blessing you, and ministering to you. You see, the fact is that you can’t give to others what you haven’t received yourself. You can’t be a blessing until you’ve been blessed. You can’t pour out your life for others until God has poured out his life into you. You can’t give away God’s love until you yourself have received God’s love.

And so, Jesus illustrated this as he wrapped a towel around his waist, poured water into a basin, and began to wash his disciples’ feet. Peter who once had fallen at Jesus feet saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man” (Luke 5:8), now watches with shock as Jesus stoops down one by one washing his friend’s feet. He begins getting more and more uncomfortable wondering how Jesus could do something that was reserved for the lowest of society, when he knelt down at Peter’s feet. In disbelief Peter said to him,

"Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet” (John 13:6-8).

Now, I just love Peter, don’t you? He so often speaks impulsively, sometimes saying the very things that we’re thinking, and here he tells the one who’s called the Alpha and the Omega, the King of kings and Lord of lords, “No… you shall never wash my feet.” But Jesus replied,

"Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well" (John 13:8-9).

You see, Peter hadn’t understood the lesson that Jesus was giving, but he was certain of his desire to be with Jesus, and so he said “wash my hands and my head as well”. Jesus replied in verse 10,

"A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not everyone was clean” (John 13:10-11).

Today, many believers make the same mistake Peter made; they want to be saved, they want to be washed all over again, when all they need is to have their feet washed. Jesus said, the disciples were clean, but not every one of them, because Judas didn’t get it, he didn’t believe Jesus was God in the flesh. And so, obviously the lesson here wasn’t about salvation, Jesus was referring to their communion, their fellowship with him. When he told Peter, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me,” he was talking about the daily ongoing relationship that we have with him as he serves us, washing us with the Word and ministering to us.

Jesus was referring to the totality of his involvement in your life so that you can be Fully You. And this is the only way it can be, because it’s his work and not ours. We come to him dirty and he makes us clean. We come to him weak and he makes a strong. We come to him empty and he fills us up. And so, you’ve got to let him serve you, coming to him day after day, coming to him empty-handed, humbling yourself and letting him wash your feet, because there’s no other way to be Fully You.

Jesus wants you to understand the full extent of his love for you, knowing him, daily depending upon his ministry, and recognizing that there is no other model for living the Christian life. Number three, he wants you to be blessed as you follow his example.

## 3. Following His Example

Jesus loved his disciples to the end by doing something that each of them thought they were too good to do. As they argued among themselves who was the greatest, refusing to humble themselves, refusing to become the servant, the Son of God knelt down and washed their feet. When he’d finished washing their feet, verse 12 tells us,

“He put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet” (John 13:12-14).

In other words, it’s not about who’s the greatest, it’s not about the actions, it’s not about the recognition, but it’s about serving with the right heart, having the right attitude. You see, when you have the right attitude, serving is not just what you do, serving is who you are. When you’re Fully You, when you’re serving God and serving others in the church, you’re not just going to church, but you are the church. Jesus continues in verse 15 saying,

“I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them” (John 13:12-17).

And so, when you recognize your identity in Christ, how he’s served you, it transforms your life. Jesus desires for you to be Fully You and so he served you, setting you an example, so that you’ll be empowered to serve others. Spiritually, you’re empowered to share the fullness that God has put into your life by serving others, that’s why he says, “Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.”

Some of you are going to see someone who needs your help, maybe an elderly neighbor, a single mom, or you might see the garbage cans overflowing because no one's gotten to it yet. Suddenly, you’ll remember that the greatest is the one who serves and you’ll step up, you’ll wrap a towel around your waist, because you can do that. This is so important because if you’re not using your gifts, if you’re not serving, you’re selling yourself short, because the Bible says it this way,

“You are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it” (1 Corinthians 12:27).

And so, each one of you are part of the body of Christ and when you’re Fully You, embracing your new identity in Christ, serving others, God is changing lives, and the first life he is going to change is yours. As you invest your life in others, you’ll experience the greatness Jesus intended for you, because the greatest is the one who serves.

Be Fully You, follow Jesus example, and allow him to use you to change those around you. Begin serving in all of your relationships, in your marriage, your community, and your church. Jesus looked around the room, he looked at his friends gathered around the table and all he saw was pride and dirty feet. When you have spiritual eyes to see, you’ll recognize those needs around you and like Jesus you’ll meet those needs because that’s what servants do.

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