Devotional Scripture: Matt 20:20-28

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW AND APPROACH TO LESSON
LESSON INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND
From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary
From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

MOTIVATION OF A SERVANT (JOHN 13:1-3)

A servant should love (1)
Servants should love by serving God with all their might (Deut 10:12)
Servants should love by binding themselves to God (Isa 56:6-7)
Servants should love by serving one Master - God (Matt 6:24)
Servants should love by serving their fellow man (Gal 5:13)
Servants should love by committing themselves to God (1 Sam 7:3)
Servants should love by being faithful and committed in service (1 Pet 4:18-19)

Victory of a servant (3)
Victory because of being obedient (Matt 24:45-46)
Victory because of telling the truth (2 Kings 5:9-14)
Victory through prayer (Neh 2:4-9)
Victory because of being godly and committed (Gen 24:12-21)

NATURE OF A SERVANT (JOHN 13:4-8)

A servant is cleansed (4-5)
Cleansed of iniquity and sin (Ps 51:2, 7)
Cleansed through sanctification (1 Cor 6:11)
Cleansed through the rebirth by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:4-6)
Cleansed of a guilty conscience (Heb 10:22)
Cleansed through the blood of Jesus (1 John 1:7)

A servant is humble (6-8)
Humility through doing good deeds (James 3:13)
Humility that brings grace (James 4:6)
Humility before God (James 4:10)
Humility by considering others interest before ours (Phil 2:2-4)
Humility that is not false (Col 2:17-19)
Humility that comes from godly wisdom (James 3:13)
Humility is a requirement of God (Mic 6:8)
Those who are humble enjoy the presence of God (Isa 57:15)
Humility means to be submissive to God and those in authority over us (1 Peter 5:5)
Saints should live with humility (Eph 4:2)

MEANING OF A SERVANT (JOHN 13:12-20)

A servant has a different mindset from the world (12)
A different mindset from the world by not being conformed to this world (Rom 12:2)
A different mindset from the world by being delivered from this evil age (Gal 1:4)
A different mindset from the world by not being friends with the world (James 4:4)
A different mindset from the world by not loving the world (1 John 2:15-17)
A different mindset from the world by overcoming the world (1 John 5:4-5)
A different mindset from the world by being born of God (1 John 5:18)

A servant should be an example to follow (13-15)
Be an example of godly speech, life, love and purity (1 Tim 4:12)
Be an example of following the example of Jesus (1 Cor 11:1)
Be an example of God's patience and grace (1 Tim 1:16)
Be an example by doing good (Titus 2:7-8)
Be an example by having perseverance in trials and persecutions (2 Thess 1:4)
Be an example by being a godly hard worker (2 Thess 3:7-10)
Be an example by serving (1 Peter 5:2-4)

A servant should be obedient (16-17)
  Obedient to the things we have seen and heard of God (Deut 4:9)
  Obedient to God's word (Ps 119:9)
  Obedient by seeking and accepting God's word (Prov 2:1-5)
  Obedient by retaining the word of God and letting it produce fruit (Luke 8:15)
  Obedient by remaining in Jesus (1 John 2:24)
  Obedient even in our thoughts (2 Cor 10:5)
  Obedient because that is our duty (Eccl 12:13)
  Obedient because it is better than sacrifices to God (1 Sam 15:22)

A servant should be loyal (18-20)
  Loyal because Jesus has the words of eternal life (John 6:67-69)
  Loyal by running the race marked out for us (Heb 12:1)
  Loyal in seeking God (Ps 27:4)
  Loyal to friends (1 Sam 18:1-4)
  Loyal in spite of other's weaknesses (Acts 15:36-39)
  Loyal by keeping the faith (2 Tim 4:6-7)

CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR
PRACTICAL POINTS FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR
HEART OF THE LESSON FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR

Jesus knew (John 13:1-5)
Peter did not know (John 13:6-8)
Did the disciples know (John 13:12-17)
The chosen known (John 13:18-20)
Introduction

Overview and Approach to Lesson

The outline of the lesson came from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator. It examines the power of Jesus as a Servant. The study's aim is to teach the importance of humble service to those who would follow Jesus. The study's application is to follow the example of Jesus our Lord as He humbled Himself to serve others.

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

An early misconception held by the Romans was that Christians engaged in cannibalism. This misunderstanding was based on the “eating of the body” and the “drinking of the blood” of the Lord’s Supper. The charge, of course, was unfounded and even a little ironic because the leaders who met in Jerusalem in Acts 15 explicitly forbade the drinking of blood (v. 20). This issue does illustrate, however, that understanding symbols and symbolic language can be a tricky business. First, one has to understand that something is meant to be a symbol and not to be taken literally. Thankfully, the literary and historical contexts usually provide the information necessary to make this determination. In today’s passage, Jesus washes the disciples’ feet. This act of service was viewed as menial by the Greco-Roman culture of the first century. As a task for low-level servants, it was not a job that anyone would embrace voluntarily and eagerly. Yet in so doing Jesus created for the church a symbol of loving service. The Passover was one of the great pilgrimage festivals of Jewish antiquity. Its observance recalled God’s first deliverance of (what would become) the nation of Israel from slavery (Exodus 12). By Jesus’ day, several symbols were used to commemorate the original deliverance: bitter herbs, unleavened bread, etc. Unlike the other Gospel accounts of Jesus’ last supper, John’s doesn’t elaborate on any of these symbols (compare Matthew 26:17–30; Mark 14:12–26; Luke 22:7–23). However, by mentioning the Feast of the Passover, John probably seeks to evoke the symbolic meaning of the total Passover event itself in the light of Christ. Jesus took two of these symbols—unleavened bread and fruit of the vine—in instituting the Lord’s Supper. But that is not the subject of today’s lesson. Instead, we will focus on an additional imagery that Christ created on that fateful night: an imagery of service.

From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

When we eat at a restaurant, we wait for our food to be delivered to our table. The server will usually stop by during our meal to see whether the food is to our liking. If we have a problem, the server will try to correct it. We watch servers carrying heavy trays of plates and comment that they have a hard job. But servers in restaurants do get paid, and if they work well, they get generous tips. They work their shift, go home, and enjoy the amenities that most other persons in society possess. How different was the status of those who served in Jesus’ day! Although there were varying levels of servants and slaves in the Roman Empire and their treatment varied accordingly, they were always a distinct class that was expected to serve. Jesus’ disciples were aware of these distinctions. Even in their informal group of twelve, they strove to establish themselves in positions in which they could be served, not serve others. Jesus periodically had to confront them about this attitude, and as they gathered for their last meal together, He confronted them again—this time by personal example. As humans, it is natural for us to desire service from others. We can easily become filled with delusions of our own importance. In this lesson we have been reminded that Jesus expects us to humble ourselves and serve others. Jesus, the One the disciples readily conceded to be Lord and Master, took off His outer clothing and washed their feet. The lesson from His example is inescapable. In our world we are told that we should be assertive. We are reminded of our rights and how we should demand them. A person's value is often measured in terms of the service he can extract from others. Jesus, however, has taught us the opposite. Those who are truly the greatest are those who are the greatest servants.
Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Motivation of a Servant (John 13:1-3)

1 Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.
2 And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him,
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,

A servant should love (1)

Servants should love by serving God with all their might (Deut 10:12)

12 And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,

Servants should love by binding themselves to God (Isa 56:6-7)

6 And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to serve him, to love the name of the LORD, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant-- 7 these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations."

Servants should love by serving one Master - God (Matt 6:24)

24 "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

Servants should love by serving their fellow man (Gal 5:13)

13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

Servants should love by committing themselves to God (1 Sam 7:3)

3 And Samuel said to the whole house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."

Servants should love by being faithful and committed in service (1 Pet 4:18-19)

18 And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" 19 So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

Victory of a servant (3)

Victory because of being obedient (Matt 24:45-46)

45 "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? 46 It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.
Victory because of telling the truth (2 Kings 5:9-14)

9 So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house. 10 Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed." 11 But Naaman went away angry and said, "I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. 12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than any of the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?"

So he turned and went off in a rage. 13 Naaman's servants went to him and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed!'" 14 So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.

Victory through prayer (Neh 2:4-9)

5 and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it." 6 Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, "How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?" It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time. 7 I also said to him, "If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah? 8 And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the king's forest, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?" And because the gracious hand of my God was upon me, the king granted my requests. 9 So I went to the governors of Trans-Euphrates and gave them the king's letters. The king had also sent army officers and cavalry with me.

Victory because of being godly and committed (Gen 24:12-21)

12 Then he prayed, "O Lord, God of my master Abraham, give me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. 13 See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. 14 May it be that when I say to a girl, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too' — let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master." 15 Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, who was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor. 16 The girl was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever lain with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again. 17 The servant hurried to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water from your jar." 18 "Drink, my lord," she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink. 19 After she had given him a drink, she said, "I'll draw water for your camels too, until they have finished drinking." 20 So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, ran back to the well to draw more water, and drew enough for all his camels. 21 Without saying a word, the man watched her closely to learn whether or not the Lord had made his journey successful.

Nature of a Servant (John 13:4-8)

4 rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. 5 After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. 6 Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?" 7 Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this." 8 Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."
A servant is cleansed (4-5)

Cleansed of iniquity and sin (Ps 51:2, 7)
2 Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. 7 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

Cleansed through sanctification (1 Cor 6:11)
11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Cleansed through the rebirth by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:4-6)
4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior

Cleansed of a guilty conscience (Heb 10:22)
22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

Cleansed through the blood of Jesus (1 John 1:7)
7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

A servant is humble (6-8)

Humility through doing good deeds (James 3:13)
13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

Humility that brings grace (James 4:6)
6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

Humility before God (James 4:10)
10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

Humility by considering others interest before ours (Phil 2:2-4)
2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Humility that is not false (Col 2:17-19)
17 These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. 18 Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. 19 He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.
Humility that comes from godly wisdom (James 3:13)
13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

Humility is a requirement of God (Mic 6:8)
8 He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Those who are humble enjoy the presence of God (Isa 57:15)
15 For this is what the high and lofty One says — he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.

Humility means to be submissive to God and those in authority over us (1 Peter 5:5)
5 Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

Saints should live with humility (Eph 4:2)
2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Meaning of a Servant (John 13:12-20)
12 So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?
13 "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.
14 "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.
15 "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.
16 "Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.
17 "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.
18 "I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.'
19 "Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He.
20 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

A servant has a different mindset from the world (12)

A different mindset from the world by not being conformed to this world (Rom 12:2)
2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.

A different mindset from the world by being delivered from this evil age (Gal 1:4)
4 who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

A different mindset from the world by not being friends with the world (James 4:4)
4 You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.
A different mindset from the world by not loving the world (1 John 2:15-17)

15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

A different mindset from the world by overcoming the world (1 John 5:4-5)

4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

A different mindset from the world by being born of God (1 John 5:18)

18 We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.

A servant should be an example to follow (13-15)

Be an example of godly speech, life, love and purity (1 Tim 4:12)

12 Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.

Be an example of following the example of Jesus (1 Cor 11:1)

11 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

Be an example of God's patience and grace (1 Tim 1:16)

16 But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.

Be an example by doing good (Titus 2:7-8)

7 In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

Be an example by having perseverance in trials and persecutions (2 Thess 1:4)

4 Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

Be an example by being a godly hard worker (2 Thess 3:7-10)

7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. 9 We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow. 10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."

Be an example by serving (1 Peter 5:2-4)

2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers — not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.
A servant should be obedient (16-17)

**Obedient to the things we have seen and heard of God (Deut 4:9)**

9 Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

**Obedient to God's word (Ps 119:9)**

9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.

**Obedient by seeking and accepting God's word (Prov 2:1-5)**

2 My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, 2 turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, 3 and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, 4 and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, 5 then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

**Obedient by retaining the word of God and letting it produce fruit (Luke 8:15)**

15 But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

**Obedient by remaining in Jesus (1 John 2:24)**

24 See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father.

**Obedient even in our thoughts (2 Cor 10:5)**

5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

**Obedient because that is our duty (Eccl 12:13)**

13 Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole [duty] of man.

**Obedient because it is better than sacrifices to God (1 Sam 15:22)**

22 But Samuel replied: "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

A servant should be loyal (18-20)

**Loyal because Jesus has the words of eternal life (John 6:67-69)**

67 "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

**Loyal by running the race marked out for us (Heb 12:1)**

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.
Loyal in seeking God (Ps 27:4)
4 One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.

Loyal to friends (1 Sam 18:1-4)
18 After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. 2 From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house. 3 And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. 4 Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.

Loyal in spite of other's weaknesses (Acts 15:36-39)
36 Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." 37 Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, 38 but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. 39 They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus

Loyal by keeping the faith (2 Tim 4:6-7)
6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary
Why don’t more Christians take up humble service? Is it the work involved? Work can be hard, but we go to work for pay every day. Is it time constraints? We all seem to find time for many other things. Is our time just too “valuable”? Jesus’ time was overwhelmed with his ministry (Matthew 4:23–25; John 6:24; 8:2). But he found time to do even a servant’s job. Should we do any less?

Concluding Thoughts from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator
Christ taught by example. This shows a distinct pattern for us to follow. It is clear that we must do as He has done. The Apostle Matthew wrote regarding this same subject: "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord" (Matt. 10:24-25). Servanthood can be pleasant and enjoyable. It can also be an unhappy and even a distasteful experience. The Gospel of Mark depicts Jesus as Servant. Christ's servanthood is brought into focus in the Apostle Paul's epistle to the church at Philippi, where he wrote, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (2:5-8). Christ did not hide the fact of His servant character. Throughout the Gospel of Mark, Christ is seen doing deeds. This is emphasized in chapter 10, where Christ said, "But whosoever shall be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever shall be the chiefest, shall be the servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister: and to give his life a ransom for many" (vs. 43-45). Christ presented Himself as an example of what He said to His disciples. As believers in Him, we must follow that example. I know of an elderly man who is in his retirement years. Painting was not his trade before he retired, but he likes to paint and has the ability to do a good job. He wants to use his talents and abilities for the Lord. He has been used greatly by the Lord in major painting jobs in his church. There are many others just like this servant of the Lord. In my travels among churches down through the years, I have seen both men and women who are definitely servants. I
have often said that most churches would not be able to operate if it were not for the faithful men and women volunteers who do various jobs. A principle of servanthood was manifested by Jesus when He washed His disciples' feet. He said, "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:13-14). Jesus went on to say, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (vs. 16-17).

**Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator**

1. Jesus' love for us is constant, even when our love for Him falters (John 13:1-2)
2. God-given privileges do not exempt us from humble service but obligate us to it (vs. 3-5)
3. To presume to know better than God is to set yourself apart from Him (vs. 6-8)
4. Christlike leadership does not promote ourselves; it honors others (vs. 12-15)
5. Serving others out of love for Christ brings joy, not drudgery (vs. 16-17)
6. Knowing Jesus knows us and has chosen us will comfort us when others let us down (vs. 18-20)

**Heart of the Lesson from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator**

Have you ever read a novel or heard a story in which one person is holding secrets that are central to all that is happening, but he refuses to tell anyone? Often, once he finally lets go of the information, all the problems are resolved. Jesus finally revealed some very important information to His disciples on the night before His crucifixion. If they made use of it, many problems would vanish.

**Jesus knew (John 13:1-5)**

These verses tell us that Jesus knew three important things: that He would soon depart from this world, that His Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going back to God. Because He was so certain of these facts, He was able to do something that seems utterly inappropriate. Almighty God stooped and washed the disciples' dirty feet as if He were their slave. In this way He "loved them unto the end"; that is, He showed that His love for them was complete. Knowing that He had only a few more hours with His disciples, did He try to fill them full of doctrinal truth? No, He quietly served them. Knowing that all things were under His control, did He revel in His power? No, He shunned His power so that He could serve them. Knowing that He was the only one who had ever come or ever will come from God, did He feel proud? No, He humbly did the work of a slave.

**Peter did not know (John 13:6-8)**

Jesus' actions were fraught with meaning. Peter, however, did not understand. He was seeing only the earthly side of things. He recognized Jesus as the Messiah, as the great Leader who was to come and deliver Israel from bondage. Thus it seemed wrong to Peter for his Master to wash his feet. As a result, he earnestly voiced his objection. Jesus' reply must have seemed mysterious to Peter. Why did getting one's feet wet have anything to do with being Jesus' disciple? The reality that Peter did not understand is that being in a relationship with Christ involves accepting His kindness and service. Those who do not accept His comfort and aid cannot be His servants. If we do not allow Him to minister to our sin-sick souls, we cannot be made whole; and if we are not made whole, we cannot follow His example and minister to others.

**Did the disciples know (John 13:12-17)**

Jesus followed up His work with a question. Did they know what He had done to them? Obviously He meant that He had done more than just wash their feet. He had given them a perfect example of Heaven's love to follow. The contrast could not be any more extreme: the omnipotent God washing people's dirty feet. Therefore, the disciples could not excuse themselves from doing such service on the grounds that they were too important. By washing His disciples' feet, Jesus revealed an important secret: God's love is expressed in humble service. If they served each other in this way, God would bless them.
The chosen known (John 13:18-20)

Jesus had extended a special call to twelve men. They had followed Him and served with Him for more than three years. He knew, however, that one of those twelve was a traitor. This was a secret that He had spoken of before (6:70-71), but His disciples were still puzzled by it. Jesus was revealing this now so that they could later understand it was part of God's plan and believe wholeheartedly in Him. All who accepted Him would be accepted by God the Father and escape condemnation.