

December 11th, 2016

# JESUS CAME TO WASH AWAY OUR SINS

John 13:1-17

John 13 marks a decisive turning point in this gospel. Completing His public ministry, Jesus now turns to His disciples and for five chapters (through 17) Jesus instructs them. And this long block of Scripture is bookended on both sides by the love that Jesus has for His people. The first bookend is in v.1 “Now before the Feast of the Passover, [this is the evening before Jesus was crucified]<sup>1</sup> when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, **having loved *his own*** who were in the world, **he loved them to the end.**

This should make us gasp for breath. The hour had come for Jesus to suffer under the righteous wrath of God for sinners. The very thought of it made Jesus sweat blood. His soul was troubled indeed. Yet, where are His thoughts and affections? Fixated on *His people* [and this includes you, if you belong to Christ]. The Shepherd is going to His death, and yet His thoughts are with His sheep.

---

<sup>1</sup> There *seems* here to be a contradiction between John’s chronology of this meal and the synoptic gospels. In the Synoptic gospels, it is pretty clear that the Last Supper was the Passover meal (Matt. 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-15), but here in John’s gospel it appears that Passover happened after the last supper (13:1, 27; 18:28; 19:14, 31, 36, 42). I think John MacArthur’s explanation is very helpful: “The answer lies in understanding that the Jews had two different methods of reckoning days. Ancient Jewish sources suggest that Jews from the northern part of Israel (including Galilee, where Jesus and most of the the Twelve were from) counted days from sunrise to sunrise. Most of the Pharisees apparently also used that method. On the other hand, the Jews in the southern region of Israel counted days from sunset to sunset. That would include the Sadducees (who of necessity lived in the vicinity of Jerusalem because of their connection with the temple). Though no doubt confusing at times, that dual method of reckoning days would have had practical benefits at Passover, allowing the feast to be celebrated on two consecutive days. That would have eased the crowded conditions in Jerusalem, especially in the temple, where all the lambs would have had to be killed on the same day. Thus there is no contradiction between John and the Synoptics. Being Galileans, Jesus and the Twelve would have viewed Passover day as running from sunrise on Thursday to sunrise on Friday. They would have eaten their Passover meal on Thursday evening. The Jewish leaders (the Sadducees), however, would have viewed it as beginning at sunset on Thursday and ending at sunset on Friday. They would have eaten their Passover meal on Friday evening.” John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: John 12-21*, (Chicago, IL.: Moody Publishers, 2008), pg. 62-63

But there's more. Jesus was going to return to the Father. Very soon He would be sitting at the right hand of God, blasted with the admiration of all the angels in unceasing song. What anticipation, what joy! Yet, where are His thoughts and affections? Fixated on *His people*.

v.1 says that Jesus “...loved *His own*.” Jesus has a people that *belong* to Him. By election. “I have manifested your name to the people whom *you gave me* out of the world. *Yours they were, and you gave them to me.*” (John 17:6). And this love for His own, is not interrupted by the thought of suffering infinite wrath on the cross, or the thought of enjoying infinite joy when He returns to His Father. Rather we are told “...having loved *his own* who were in the world, he loved them to the end.”<sup>2</sup> That's the first bookend.

The last bookend is when Jesus finishes His prayer in **John 17:26** “O righteous Father...I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the *love* with which you have *loved me* may be in them, and I in them.” Did you hear what Jesus prayed? He asked Holy Father, that the *same love* with which the Father loves Jesus, would be in us! That is how ch. 13-17 begins and ends—with demonstration of Jesus' unfailing love towards us, His people.<sup>3</sup>

On our third Sunday during Advent, Jesus gives us a practical picture of why He came into the world: Jesus came into the world to wash away our sins.

---

<sup>2</sup> The *end, telos* in the Greek, meaning not *merely* chronologically, but completely, fully, “For it was to this end—is the Apostle's meaning—that He associated with sinners, that He might bear them eternally on His heart.” F.W. Krummacher, *The Suffering Savior*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2004), pg. 29-30

<sup>3</sup> “In chapters 13-17, Jesus turned from public ministry to those who rejected Him to private ministry to those who received Him. He gave a practical demonstration of His continuing love for the disciples (13:1-17), assured them of the hope of heaven (14:1-3); guaranteed them power for ministry (14:12) and provision for their needs (14:13-14), and promised them the Holy Spirit (14:16-17; 15:26; 16:7), divine truth in the Word of God (14:26; 16:13), peace (14:27\_), and joy (15:11; 16:22). The common theme that runs throughout these five chapters is Christ's love for His own. As His earthly ministry drew to a close on the night before His crucifixion, Jesus sought to reassure them of that enduring love He had for them.” John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: John 12-21*, (Chicago, IL.: Moody Publishers, 2008), pg. 61

This foot washing episode is not some random act of kindness meant *merely* as a moral lesson on how we ought to treat each other. This event is like the Exodus out of Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, the manna from Heaven, the water from the rock. It is a gospel sign. Jesus became a servant—a slave—so that He could wash away the filth of our sins. Just as the Israelites would place their hands on the scapegoat symbolically transferring their sin to it, so Jesus laid his hands on His disciples feet, and transferred their filth to Himself. And He has taken on your guilt and shame if you believe.

That is where we are going this morning. This foot washing is a gospel sign, that is full of gospel substance, that informs our gospel service.

- ☆The Gospel Sign of Washing
- ☆The Gospel Substance of Washing
- ☆The Gospel Service of Washing

### *The Big Idea...*

Jesus became a servant to wash away all our sin, therefore we ought to serve and wash each other

## I. The Gospel Sign of Washing

### **Footwashing: An ordinance? Baptism?**

Historically, there have been some in the church that have taken this foot-washing account to point to baptism.<sup>4</sup> Others, such as the Roman Catholic church<sup>5</sup> see Jesus instituting a perpetual ordinance for saints to literally wash

<sup>4</sup> Even modern day pastors, see R.C. Sproul, *St. Andrew's Expository Commentary: John*, (Orlando, FL.: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2009), pg. 242-243

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*, pg. 242

the feet of others (they would point to v.14— “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.”

But both of these interpretations fail to grasp the deeper significance of what Jesus is saying. Those who see this as literal foot-washing ordinance fail to see the deeper meaning of what Jesus is saying. And those who see it as baptism, give the wrong meaning to the sign. There are four clues in our text that show what Jesus is doing here is a sign — pointing to something else.

**Clue #1:** Jesus said in v.7: “What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.” Certainly they could understand what Jesus was doing at that moment. But Jesus is saying that afterward, after He is glorified, then they will grasp the true meaning of the event.

**Clue #2:** Jesus said in v.8 “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me.” What an odd thing to say if Jesus’ main point was a literal foot washing. He’s hanging eternity on this washing.

**Clue #3:** Jesus said in v.10 “The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you.” He’s speaking about Judas here. And his point is not about Judas’s hygiene but rather that Judas is the betrayer, and therefore is spiritually unclean.

**Clue #4:** Jesus says in v.15 “For I have given you an *example*, that you also should do just as I have done to you.” That word *example* in the Greek is ὑπόδειγμα [hü-po'-däg-mä], and it has a double meaning. ὑπόδειγμα first means a sign or representation of another thing [So Jesus is saying “I have given you a *sign*...] Secondly it means an example for imitation.<sup>6</sup> I’m not aware of an English word that means both a sign and example, and so our translators gave

---

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G5262&t=KJV>

us sign. But the Greek means both. And Jesus means both. He not only gave us a sign with this foot-washing, but He gave us something to imitate.

And so the question is, what does this sign of foot-washing point to?

## II. The Gospel Substance of Washing

### Three different meanings of the foot-washing sign

There are three different meanings that this foot-washing event is going to point to. 1) It's going to point to the gospel. 2) It's going to point to the ongoing washing that Christians need in their lives. 3) It's going to point to the service that we owe each other.

### Foot-washing: A Sign of The Gospel

Jesus said in v.8 "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." In other words, eternity rests upon Jesus doing this to you. v.8 is the key to understanding v.2-6. Though the disciples did not understand it at the time (v. 7), Jesus was showing them what He would accomplish at Golgotha the very next day.

So let's walk through this starting in v.2 "During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, [*we'll come back to this, but note that Judas the betrayer—the "devil" is at the table*] (v.3) Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper."

John tells us what Jesus is *thinking*. Jesus is, at this moment, conscious of the fact that His Father has given Him the universe—the Father has committed *all things* into His hands. At that paschal meal, between the flickering of the candlelight on the walls, Jesus *knows* that He is King—over all. He *knows* He has the right to condemn sinners and the right to forgive sinners. He *knows* He has the power to destroy all His enemies at once. He *knows* that He has the right to be worshipped and adored by everything that has breath. And He *knows* that soon He would return to that Heavenly Throne Room to His Father, to all the

admiration of all of heaven. John is stressing this consciousness of Jesus. Why?

Because He wants to overwhelm our minds with what Jesus did. Jesus could have wiped out the devil and his lackey Judas right here. But He doesn't. What does He do? He rose from supper. For what purpose? To display the awesomeness of His majesty? To blind the disciples with His Heavenly glory, and have them bow the knee in the dust before Him?<sup>7</sup> That's what He deserved, but He has a different end in view.

v.4 "He laid aside his outer garments, [*Jesus laid aside His heavenly dignity*] and taking a towel, tied it around his waist [*Jesus dressed Himself as the lowliest slave*] (v.5) Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him."

Can you imagine the astonishment and shame of the disciples in this moment? Astonishment because the act of feet washing was only reserved for the lowliest of slaves. Not even Jewish servants were permitted to do such a thing.<sup>8</sup> D.A. Carson tells one well-known story in Jewish antiquity in which "Rabbi Ishmael returned home from synagogue one day and his mother wished to wash his feet...[Rabbi Ishmael] *refused* on the ground that the task was too demeaning."<sup>9</sup> Only slaves wash feet. The disciples were astonished into silence.

But they were also shamed. Luke's gospel records that it was at this very meal that the disciples were quibbling over who was the greatest in the Kingdom (Luke 22:24). And now—Jesus who is the Greatest in every Kingdom—is abasing themselves before their eyes, handling the most filthy parts of their body. Whoever heard of such a thing? Whoever heard of a God who would wash the filth and feces off of the feet of His creatures? Whoever heard of a God who became a slave?

---

<sup>7</sup> F.W. Krummacher, *The Suffering Savior*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2004), pg. 31

<sup>8</sup> D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), pg. 462

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*

The old Negro Spirituals were born from such truths. During the first Great Awakening in the 1700's, George Whitefield began preaching to the slaves in America. His biographer reports that because Whitefield was easy to understand, the poor black people heard his words and were "...led into a rich new realm."<sup>10</sup> As the gospel was unfolded to them, they were quickly able to identify with this Christ —this God who became a slave. They "...heard a message that lightened their burden and ennobled their souls."<sup>11</sup> Their God became a slave. (Mark 10:45) And oh the songs that were born!

But the disciples were too astonished and shamefaced to sing. Finally one of them spoke up. Peter said to Jesus in v.6 "Lord, do you wash my feet?" [*There is an indignant tone to Peter's question*]<sup>12</sup> (v.7) Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me."

Now Jesus' act comes into full view. Jesus is talking about the blood of His cross. 'Peter if I don't wash you with the blood of my cross, if you're sins are not forgiven, you have no part of me. You need to be purified, because your sins have defiled you. You need to be justified before God, otherwise you will be damned. If I don't clean you, you will be like Judas. You will have no part of me, forever cut off from union with the Savior.'

If you have not been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ, you have no part with Him—no share of the blessings of His Kingdom.<sup>13</sup> Learning moral principles is not enough. Loving your neighbor is not enough. Being a law abiding citizen is not enough. If you are not washed, you are lost.

---

<sup>10</sup> Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival Vol. 1*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2014), pg. 508

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

<sup>12</sup> D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), pg. 463

<sup>13</sup> F.W. Krummacher, *The Suffering Savior*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2004), pg. 34

Jesus Christ became a slave—a servant—in order to wash away sins. That’s what His foot-washing pointed to. And you can have your sins washed away if you believe.<sup>14</sup>

### **Foot-washing: A Sign of Continual Cleansing**

There is a second meaning behind what Jesus does. After Jesus tells Peter “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me,” Peter responds in v.9 “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!” [*The thought of not being united to Christ terrifies Peter, he now asks for his whole body to be washed.*] (v.10) Jesus said to him, “The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean.”

We have seen Jesus change the meaning of His metaphors mid-stream in this gospel. In John 10, Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd *because* He enters through the door—v.2, but then He calls Himself the door in v.7. Here Jesus does the same thing. He gives a second meaning to the sign to accommodate Peter’s response—“The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean.” In other words, ‘...if you are united to me by faith, you are clean. You have been justified. That work never needs to be done again. Your debts have been paid.

But you do need your feet cleaned. We have been called “...*walk* in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,” (Ephesians 4:1). And what happens in our day to day walk? We often become polluted. We sin. What do we need? Cleansing. Not re-birth. We need to come to the Lord who is eager to wash our feet afresh. **1 John 1:9** says “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to *cleanse* us from all unrighteousness.” This is why Christians need the gospel. Christ’s work of washing needs to be applied daily. This is the mark of a true believer, recognizing that we still need cleansing. Feeling the need for constant cleansing is not a mark of apostasy but a mark of being saved.

---

<sup>14</sup> “...these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” John 20:31

The one who is in danger is the one who feels no need for cleansing. And Jesus points this out. He says halfway through v.10 “And you are clean, but not every one of you.” For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, “Not all of you are clean.”

He was speaking of Judas. Lord willing, we are going to see more of Judas next week, but for now consider that Jesus washed Judas feet. But he was not clean—Judas was the son of destruction (John 17:12). And this provides us with a grave warning. Being around Jesus, or His people cannot rescue you from the wrath to come. All religious sacraments—even if Jesus were to baptize you Himself—are utterly bankrupt, apart from the new birth.

Judas didn’t feel the need to be cleansed like Peter did. His heart was hardened to Jesus words. And Jesus said it was because he was unclean.

### III. The Gospel Service of Washing

#### **Foot-washing: A Sign of the Service We Owe Each Other**

The third meaning of this foot-washing is found in v.12-17. Jesus says that this is a service that we owe each other. Look at v.12

“When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you? (v.13) You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. (v.14) If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. (v.15) For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.

Now it’s clear that this third meaning is different from the first two. Jesus didn’t intend for us to atone for one another’s sins (1st meaning), or that we are capable of spiritually cleansing each other (2nd meaning).

And yet there is something that Jesus did, that we are to imitate with each other. Jesus became a servant to all. And this is something that disciples *then*,

and disciples *now* need to hear. As Paul says in Phil. 2:3-7 “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, [*this is what the disciples weren’t doing as they were arguing over who was the greatest*] but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. [4] Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. [5] Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, [6] who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but emptied himself, **by taking the form of a servant,**”

In spite of the Jesus’ perfect teaching during the three years He was with the disciples, they had still become puffed up, and proud. There were stinky feet around that table—offensive feet—yet not one of the disciples took the initiative to serve. **They saw themselves as obtaining too high a rank for such a menial task.** But Jesus says in v.16 “Truly, truly, [*Most solemnly, Amen, and amen, Yes and Yes*] I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.”

Jesus is saying ‘No one has a higher rank than I—I’m the Master—and yet I stooped to be a servant to all of you. Are you greater than I?’ That’s what we are telling Jesus if we are unwilling to humble ourselves and serve others. D.A. Carson said here that we need to beware of that “...form of religious piety that utters a hearty ‘Amen!’ to the most stringent demands of discipleship, but which rarely does anything about them.”<sup>15</sup> Or as Jesus said “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?” (Luke 6:46)

Jesus doesn’t give us the command to be a servant because He wants us to be miserable. On the contrary, He says in v. 17 “If you know these things, **blessed** are you if you do them.” Blessed—meaning happy! It is not those that rise and rule who are happy in Jesus’ Kingdom. It is those who stoop and obey.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), pg. 469

<sup>16</sup> Matthew Henry, *A Commentary on the Whole Bible: Volume 5: Matthew to John*, (Iowa Fall, IA.,: World Bible Publishers), pg. 1096

# Application

## Our Doctrine: Christians Need Constant Washing

I want to re-visit how Peter responded to Jesus after Jesus told him “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me.” Peter responded in v.9 “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!” Then Jesus said “The one who bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean.”

Peter responded wrongly twice in this event, and likewise there are two responses that we can have towards our sin that are wrong. **The first response is excessive guilt.** We know we’ve done wrong, and we are struck with a feeling of overwhelming condemnation. We cry out with the leper ‘Unclean, unclean,’ and we flee to Jesus to have him wash not just our feet but our whole body, because we think we have fallen from grace. Some of you look around the room and think, ‘man I am the worst sinner in this room, if people knew who I am, I would never be accepted.’ You constantly are feeling contaminated by your own sin, and you walk around feeling guilty. Listen to the words of Christ: “The one who is bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean.” Oh dear beloved. If you have believed upon Christ, then you are clean. “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1). Jesus loves you. He loves you so much that He became a slave and died so that He could make you His possession. Be free from excessive guilt. Jesus took on your guilt, and said “It is finished.”

The second response that we can have towards our sin that is equally wrong is flippancy. Christians can often look at sin they are committing and persuade themselves that it is not really a big deal. As F.W. Krummacher says, in this case, the Christian esteems his sin too lightly, “...and by an arbitrary act of the understanding, the man forgives himself, instead of letting himself be forgiven.”<sup>17</sup> When we esteem our sin too lightly, we need to remember that

---

<sup>17</sup> F.W. Krummacher, *The Suffering Savior*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2004), pg. 36

Jesus was punished for it. It was not a flippant thing that Jesus took on the wrath of God in order bring us peace.

Both of these paths are wrong in dealing with our sin. If you are overtaken by excessive guilt but you have believed on Christ, then remember that Jesus loved you so much that He died for you, and He says no condemnation. If you are prone to flippancy and think very little of your sin, then remember that Jesus *had* to die for you. And it should grieve your heart to take your sin so lightly.

### Our Duty: Wash One Another's Feet

Jesus said in v.14 "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." There are two ways that we ought to wash one another's feet. **The first way is the way of brotherly love. in acts of service.** The Christianity of Jesus is not one of *mere* words, but one of self-sacrificing love and self-denial. The Christianity of Jesus is one that is willing to perform the most menial tasks. What kind of people are we? Do we look for opportunities to serve other people? Our bosses? Our spouses? Our children? Our enemies? Why do we serve? Do we serve so that our name can be made much of? If we are serving so that other people will recognizing our work and celebrate us, that not serving Christ, but self. This type of service is never blessed (v.17), but it is bondage. If you are constantly doing things to be seen by others, you will either get burned out because that fuel of self-celebration is not flowing, or because you will be overwhelmed with anxiety because you can never live up to past performances. Only when we desire to please Christ and put Him on display, only when we seek to be useful to His kingdom, and esteem others better than ourselves will our service be blessed.

**The second way to wash one another's feet is to be an agent of the gospel.** Christians forget the gospel all the time. That is why we sin. And so we need to be the type of people that regularly apply the gospel to each other.

The Apostle Peter got this lesson from Jesus loud and clear. He says in **2 Peter 1:9** "For whoever lacks *these qualities* [*what qualities? v.5-7 virtue, knowledge,*

*self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, love*] is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.” So according to Peter, we lack these fruits of the spiritual life [meaning we sin] *because* we have forgotten that we have been *cleansed* from our former sins. So washing each other’s feet means that we would remind each other of the gospel, so that we can fight our sin.

So if your brother/sister is lacking steadfastness [meaning they are starting to lose endurance]—wash their feet in the gospel. Remind them that their perseverance doesn’t rest on their own strength. It rests on Christ! **Phil. 1:6** “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”

If your brother/sister is lacking brotherly affection [perhaps they are angry with another Christian]—wash their feet in the gospel. Remind them that Christ did not wait until they were lovable before He showed them grace. **Romans 5:6-10** “While we were still weak...while we were still sinners...while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son...”

If your brother/sister is suffering from anxiety—wash their feet in the gospel. Remind them that Christ’s power and presence is an ever-present reality. **Isaiah 41:10** “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”<sup>18</sup>

That is the second way we wash each other’s feet—we become an agent of the gospel to them.

## Our Delight: Jesus Never Grows Weary Of Washing our Feet

Isn’t it wonderful that Jesus anticipates that we will need cleansing for the rest of our lives? Meaning Jesus has already factored in our sin. Jesus has already factored in our failures. He knows that we will often desire to be the Master instead of the servant. He knows that we will often act superior to

---

<sup>18</sup> If your brother/sister is lacking in self-control [perhaps they are guilt ridden because of sexual sin or chemical dependance]—wash their feet in the gospel. see <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/how-to-deal-with-the-guilt-of-sexual-failure-for-the-glory-of-christ-and-his-global-cause>

others. He knows that we will be impatient and unkind. He doesn't endorse these behaviors. On the contrary, He speaks with passion against our sins. Yet, He has a remedy.

I was praying through Isaiah 55 this morning. And God touches my heart in such tender ways. The prophet is telling the wicked to forsake His ways, and the unrighteous man His thoughts. v. 7 says "...let him return to the LORD, **that** he may have compassion on him, and to our God, **for** he will abundantly pardon. **For** my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD."

This is the logic of God's grace.

God will show compassion to the wicked when they repent **FOR** God's thoughts are not our thoughts, and His ways are not our ways.

In other words, *because* God thinks infinitely higher than us, and His ways are immeasurably greater than ours, He will show compassion to the wicked when they repent. God is telling us, that this kind of compassion is due to the fact that He is infinitely glorious in His thinking. If it were up to our thinking the wicked would not be shown compassion. If our thinking were the standard, we would lose our salvation after we became Christians. Dear congregation, would you have put up with yourself if you were in the place of God?

But thanks be to Christ Jesus! He does! He doesn't throw us away, He cleans us. He cleans us at the beginning of our salvation, and He cleans us all the way home to glory. That is the delight of this passage. Jesus never grows weary of cleansing us from our sin.

## Closing Prayer to Sermon

### Benediction:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2 Cor. 13:14)