

# FOOTWASHING AND DAILY CLEANSING

## John 13:6–11

### PETER'S OBJECTION (JOHN 13:6–8a)

- Jesus has already washed some of the disciples' feet and Peter has been watching (cf. 13:5 and emphatic "my" in 13:8)
  - the disciples were stunned, embarrassed, and silent...until Peter spoke:
    - their Lord was doing for them what they should have done for him and for each other (cf. Luke 12:37)
- it is more than the well-known custom of footwashing: it has hidden spiritual meaning ("What I do you do not realize now...")
- Peter will understand after Pentecost when the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit begins (John 14:26; 16:13; cf. 2:22; 12:16)
  - Peter strongly protested ("never...not in all eternity") having his feet washed and perhaps drew up his feet as he spoke

### NO INHERITANCE IN THE KINGDOM (JOHN 13:8b–9)

- to have no part (*meros*) with Jesus has been interpreted as a denial of (1) eating the Last Supper with Jesus, (2) intimate daily fellowship with Jesus, (3) fellowship with Jesus in the Kingdom, (4) baptism, (5) an inheritance in the millennial Kingdom
  - in the Old Testament a *portion* (*heleq*) is part of an inheritance (*nahalah*) divided between several children (Gen 31:14) or part of the promised land divided by lot between the tribes and families of Israel (Num 26:53–56; Josh 14:1–5; 19:51)
  - *meros* is a "part, in contrast to the whole...share" and is used of sharing part of an inheritance (Prov 17:2 LXX; Luke 15:12); a synonym *meris* "part of a whole that has been divided...share, portion" (BAG) also refers to an inheritance (Gen 31:14 LXX) but more often to the inheritance of a portion of land in Canaan (LXX of Num 18:20; Deut 12:12; 14:27; Josh 14:4; cf. Josh 13:7)
    - in context "part" refers to a portion or share of "all things" the Father has given to Jesus (compare John 13:3 with 13:8): *meros* is a part of the inheritance given to Jesus by the Father, who "has given all things into His hand" (John 3:35; 13:3)—to be given possession of everything owned by the Father is an inheritance, and Jesus received his inheritance early at his anointing since his Father will never die (the prodigal son received his inheritance while his father was still living in Luke 15:12)
      - to "have no part with someone" is to be denied a portion or share of the whole (LXX of Deut 10:9a; 18:1; cf. Josh 15:13)
  - inheriting the promised land (Gen 15:7; Exod 32:13; Num 33:53–54) is a type of inheriting the Kingdom (Matt 5:3, 5, 10; 25:34)
    - to refuse is to forfeit his inheritance in the Kingdom—his rule over one of the tribes of Israel (Matt 19:28; Luke 22:30)
      - with humor Peter consents to let Jesus wash his feet: "In that case wash my hands and my face too!" (John 13:9)

### MEANING OF THE FOOTWASHING (JOHN 13:10–11)

- two levels of meaning: a picture of daily cleansing from sin (13:7–11) and an example of humility, service, and love (13:12–14)
- footwashing is an illustration of confession of sin—the need for daily cleansing to have fellowship with God (cf. 1 John 1:9)
  - to wash means to wash a part of the body (*nipto*); to bathe means to wash the whole body (*louo*)
    - people bathed at home and at feasts only needed to wash their feet to be wholly clean
    - all of the disciples were bathed (saved) and completely clean (John 13:10)—except Judas (13:11)
  - bathed (saved) people need to wash their feet daily (confess sins): we are defiled daily by sin as we walk in this sinful world
    - a refusal to be washed (confess his sins) is to have no part (portion, share, inheritance) with Christ (13:8)
- carnal Christians will have no inheritance (portion of land to rule over) in the Kingdom (1 Cor 6:9–10; cf. 2 Tim 2:12; Rev 3:11)
  - Jesus is saying, "You are all clean (saved) except Judas, and I want you to keep your feet clean (confession of sin) in order to receive a portion of land and to rule with me in my Kingdom" (cf. Rev 2:26–27; 3:21; 20:4, 6)
    - Jesus knew but did not reveal to the twelve who the unclean disciple was (John 13:11)
  - Judas needed a bath: he did not have eternal life ("Not all of you are clean" John 13:11; cf. "the son of perdition" 17:12)