

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying Message Five : Life's Washing in Love to Maintain Fellowship

I. Overview:

The book of John records foot-washing with spiritual significance. In John 1—12 the Lord as life came and brought forth the church, but disciples are still living in the flesh; this shows us the necessity of the Lord's fellowship in John 13. The Lord washed His disciples' feet to show them that He loved them to the uttermost, and He charged them to do the same to one another in love. Today the world is dirty, and we, the saints, are easily contaminated; for us to maintain pleasant fellowship with the Lord and with one another, we need spiritual foot-washing carried out both by the Lord in His love and by one another in love. For us to experience the washing, we need to spend time in the Lord's presence and with the saints who are full of the Spirit, the word, and the divine life. Whenever we are about to wash others' feet, we need to follow the Lord's pattern by laying aside our garments to dethrone ourselves, being girded with a towel, willing to lose our liberty to be bound for the purpose of ministering life to other saints. In order to wash others' feet, we must have the water to be filled with the Holy Spirit daily, be in constant fellowship with the Lord, and live in the mingling Spirit.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Explain the Lord washing the disciples' feet with water, what the water signifies.

The Lord washed the disciples' feet with water. Here water signifies the Holy Spirit, the word, and the life. The Lord washes us spiritually by the working of the Holy Spirit, by the enlightening of the word, and by the operating of the inner law of life. In the Scriptures each of these three items is symbolized by water.

B. Expound foot-washing being a necessity, we are living on earth gotten dirty easily.

Living in the spirit, we are joined something heavenly, spiritual, and eternal, but in our body we are still on the earth. However, as far as our body is concerned, we are still in the old creation and on the earth. Through the earthly touch, we are often dirtied. Consequently, foot-washing was a necessity for them to make them renewed and refreshed.

Day 2 —

A. Expound since foot-washing is a sign, how to get its meaning more profoundly.

Since the Gospel of John is a book of signs, what is here concerning foot-washing must also be considered a sign having a spiritual significance. We should not take foot-washing merely in a physical sense but rather in a spiritual sense. Since this is a sign, the significance of foot-washing is that it is for fellowship with the Lord and with one another. For this cause we need spiritual foot-washing.

B. Explain what the difference between these two kinds of washing.

For things that are sinful we need the cleansing of the blood, but for things that are dirty and not sinful we need the spiritual washing. We need a washing by the Holy Spirit, the living word, and the inner life. There are many things which separate us from God. These things may not be sin, but there may be worldly elements that are produced through our contact with the world, so we need spiritual foot-washing.

Day 3 —

A. Expound how we should do in order to be washed by the Lord.

You need to spend time in the Lord's presence. Remain in the Lord's presence, and the Lord will come to you and wash you, not with the blood but with the Spirit, the living word, and the inner life. Whenever you are in need of such a washing, just open yourself up to the Lord, and allow the inner life to flow within you. Spontaneously, something living will flow, water, and wash you, and you will become clean again.

B. Explain how we should do as the Lord told us to wash one another's feet.

We must wash one another's feet by ministering the work of the Holy Spirit, by ministering the enlightenment of the Word, and by ministering the operation of the inner life. Whenever you are in need of such a washing, just open yourself up to the Lord as you spend time in His presence, and allow the inner life to flow within you. Spontaneously, something living will flow, water, and wash you, and you will become clean again.

Day 4 —

A. Explain that we need to be girded with a towel for a foot-washing.

This means that we must be bound, that we must lose our liberty. The feet were washed with water and also wiped with the towel with which the Lord was girded. In other words, the more we are willing to be bound for the sake of others, the more we shall be able to minister to others and wipe their feet. Otherwise, the more we are free, the more we shall damage others.

B. Expound that we need foot-washing to maintain the fellowship between saints.

Each of us must learn how to love the brothers and sisters by ministering the spiritual foot-washing to them. Sometimes when I come to visit you, you can minister some sort of foot-washing to me by showing your love toward me, and I have to show the same love toward you so that some foot-washing will be ministered to you to cleanse you from the earthly touch. We must do this, otherwise the fellowship between us could not be maintained.

Day 5 —

A. Expound the testimony that the serving ones need to show.

God has put us in the world so that our presence would create a hunger and thirst for righteousness in sinners, believers, and the world. There must be an enigmatic freshness, power, nourishment, and supply within us that will drive others to seek after God by our presence. Others should have a desire to seek after God as a result of meeting us and speaking to us.

B. Describe Miss Barber's testimony of washing in life.

Whenever someone went to her and sat in front of her, spontaneously he would realize how much he was off. He would realize that he did not have what she had and would aspire for what she had. Fifteen years ago (1921) when I first became a Christian, I was very proud. After I prayed a few words with her, I saw my pride. I knew that I did not have what she had. This is foot-washing.

Day 6 —

A. How can we wash one another's feet?

Suppose you have completed your day's work and feel tired. You cannot utter any praises from your mouth. In the evening when you come to the meeting, one brother in the meeting has a fresh spirit, and his prayer refreshes your spirit. Your spiritual energy is renewed. This is washing one another's feet. This is washing one another's feet. Those who do this are precious in the Lord's eyes.

B. Expound having an ambition before the Lord in order to wash others' feet.

In order to wash others' feet, we must have the water; that is, we must be filled with the Holy Spirit and be in constant fellowship with the Lord. For this cause we must live in the Holy Spirit daily. Only then will we have the living water to wash others' feet. We should never try to wash others' feet without water; that will only defile their feet even more. We must all learn to be those who can wash one another's feet.

III. Conclusion:

The Gospel of John is divided into two sections. The first section, chapters 1 through 13, talks about the incarnation of the Lord, bringing God into man, being man's life, and producing the church. The second passage, from chapters 14 through 21, reveals that the Lord rose from the dead to bring man to God, so that man and God may become mutual dwellings. John 13 plays a key role as a bridge between these two sections, speaking of life's washing in love to maintain fellowship. Because the world is filthy, believers live in the world, and their feet are easily defiled, so that there is separation from God and from one another, and they lose their spiritual freshness and vitality, and fall into an old state. Therefore, the Lord took the opportunity to wash the feet of His disciples before His crucifixion, and asked them to wash one another's feet. To maintain spiritual freshness, newness and living, how we need to be washed daily by the Lord and to wash one another's feet with water, which signifies the Holy Spirit, to maintain an excellent fellowship with the Lord, and live in the mingled spirit. In order to follow the Lord's pattern of foot-washing, we need to lay aside our garments to dethrone ourselves, being girded with a towel, willing to lose our liberty to be bound.