

The God Who Kneled

Did you know the Creator kneled before His creatures?

John 13.1–17

Sermon prompted by Prayson Daniel at: <http://withalliamgod.wordpress.com/2013/10/25/the-god-who-kneled/>

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Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Larry Amberg – Anything about the amazing Jesus!

Prelude:

I. Many demand service, but few give it. Think about yourself:

- A. Do you want to *be* served?
- B. Are you willing *to* serve?
 - 1. If you are not served generally,
 - 2. are you simply reaping what you have sown, because
 - a) you cannot reap
 - b) what you have not sown.

II. Still on the subject: Why do you love Jesus?

- A. Do you love Him because He is demanding? Or,
- B. do you love Him because He is humble?

III. Before I show you something beautiful about Jesus,

- A. consider that there is a God in heaven, and
- B. see His glory.

Persuasion:

I. There Is a God in Heaven

- A. The next time you eat a meal, think of
 - 1. how that food just happens to be made perfectly for your body,
 - 2. how your body processes that food perfectly,
 - 3. how your body lives in a perfect environment, and
 - 4. consider whether it all could have just been an accident.

B. Life on Earth cannot be coincidental, but

1. someone wants us here, and
2. He wants us to think about it.

C. Truly, there is a God in heaven.

II. The Glory of the God of Heaven

A. Isaiah 6 presents a spectacular display of the glory of God

1. by what we see in a vision,
2. by what we hear in the vision, and
3. by what we feel from the vision,

1 In the year that King Uzziah died, *I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.* 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
The whole earth is full of His glory!”

4 And the posts of the door were *shaken* by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 So I said:

“Woe is me, for I am undone!
Because I am a man of unclean lips,
And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;
For my eyes have *seen* the King,
The LORD of hosts.”
(Isa 6.1–5)

B. Next, John 12 identifies the One Isaiah saw,

37 But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, 38 that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke:

“Lord, who has believed our report?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?”

39 Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

40 “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts,
Lest they should see with their eyes,
Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them.”

41 These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him (John 12.37–41).

C. Now, I want you to see this God

1. coming down off His throne,
2. allowing Himself
 - a) to be implanted in a woman’s womb,
 - b) to be born in a stable,
 - c) to be placed in a manger,
3. to live as an ordinary man,
4. to live work as a carpenter,
5. to quit carpentry and
6. to start preaching.
 - a) He gathers disciples,
 - b) who follow Him around Israel for three and a half years, then
 - (1) the night before He dies,
 - (2) He does something you would never expect a God to do.

III. John 13.1–17 – The God Who Knelt

A. Jesus knew what was coming in the next several hours,

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 (John 13.1).

1. He knew what the Jews and the Romans would do to Him.
2. He knew what all of these men eating with Him would do.
 - a) He knew that Judas would betray Him.
 - b) He knew that Peter would deny Him.
 - c) He knew that all of them would forsake Him.
3. Nevertheless, John wrote
 - a) that Jesus loved these men, and
 - b) that He loved them to the end.
 - (1) He never stopped loving them.
 - (2) Regardless of what they were about to do,
 - (a) He still loved them.
 - (b) Shortly, He would show that love in an amazing way.
 - i) You see, before He died as a criminal,
 - ii) He knelt as a servant.

B. Behold, the God of the towel,

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, 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* (John 13.2–5).

1. Did I read that correctly?
 - a) Did I read that the One Isaiah saw on the throne,

- (1) knew that He was going to God and
- (2) knew the manner in which He was going,
 - (a) that He stood up,
 - (b) laid aside His garments,
 - (c) took a towel,
 - (d) girded Himself,
 - (e) poured water into a basin,
 - (f) washed the feet of His disciples, and
 - (g) He wiped their feet with the towel?

b) Is that what I read?

- (1) Is that what John wrote?
- (2) Whoever could have invented a God such as this?
 - (a) He leaves His glory-encircled throne
 - (b) to live as a mere creature,
 - i) building things out of wood,
 - ii) walking the land,
 - (1) then knowing of the suffering coming His way,
 - (2) He takes water and a towel, and
 - (a) kneels down to wash the feet of His loyal, but
 - (b) sometimes bubbling, followers?

2. None of them had offered to wash feet.

- a) Then instead of demanding that one of them do it,
- b) He does it.

C. At least Peter seemed to know somewhat of who was washing his feet,

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.” 9 Simon Peter said to Him, “*Lord*, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!” (John 13.6–9).

1. Peter saw the awkwardness of Jesus washing the feet of Peter, but
 - a) he did not in turn offer to wash the feet of Jesus and his fellow-disciples.
 - b) He was shocked that the Lord would do such a thing.
2. Remember what Peter had done.
 - a) He confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.
 - b) He challenged Jesus to make him walk on water.
3. Peter knew full well who Jesus was.

D. Before we go further into this narration,

1. I want to show you something from Luke 12,
2. that may fascinate you as much as John 13.
 - a) In Luke 12, Jesus presented a parable illustrating His return.
 - b) The parable shows that Jesus came and lived here.
 - (1) He would die and return to heaven.
 - (2) Then He would return to Earth to retrieve His followers.
3. He will bring them back with Him to heaven.
 - a) What will He do with us when we get there?
 - b) Remember John 13, as I read Luke 12,

35 “Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; 36 and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately.”

- (1) He began the parable by saying that we are like the men in the story.
- (2) That means He is the master in the story.
 - (a) Therefore, Jesus is returning, and
 - (b) we must prepare to receive Him.
 - i) If the master finds them (us), anticipating his return,
 - ii) see what the master in the story does for his servants.
- c) Remember, Jesus is the master, and we are the men,

37 “Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you *that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them.*”

- (1) What blessing awaited those men?
- (2) By watching, the Lord meant that they were living as He expected.
 - (a) The blessing that awaited those men was
 - (b) that the master would gird himself,
 - i) have them sit down, then
 - ii) he would go to them, and
 - iii) serve them.
- (3) Do you get the connection?
 - (a) If we live life with the expectation of the Lord’s return,
 - (b) He will take us to His blessed home.
 - i) He will seat us.
 - ii) He will come to us.
 - iii) He will serve us.
- (4) Although we were not with those 12 disciples
 - (a) on the night when Jesus washed their feet,

- (b) we can be present in an even better circumstance and
 - i) have the Lord of all creation,
 - ii) the One whom all of heaven worships,
 - (i) we can have Him come to us,
 - (2) playing the part of the servant!
- 4. Who wants to miss that meal?
 - a) So we logically wonder when He will return, but
 - b) we do not know the time of His return.
 - (i) Someone says, Well then we had better be prepared all the time!
 - (2) That is exactly what Jesus taught next,

38 “And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. 39 But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. 40 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Luke 12.35–40).

E. Back to John 13.

- 1. Suddenly, we learn that one of the 12 was not clean spiritually.
- 2. We do not want to be like him,

10 Jesus said to him, “He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.” 11 For He *knew* who would betray Him; therefore He said, “You are not all clean” (John 13.10–11).

- a) Therefore, while Jesus washed their feet,
- b) teaching them humility,
 - (i) He also taught something spiritual.
 - (2) Jesus only washed part of their bodies, because

- (a) for the most part they were clean inwardly, but
- (b) one of them had evil living in His heart.
 - i) Therefore, even as Jesus removed the dirt from their feet,
 - ii) so He would remove the spiritual dirt from among them.
 - (1) Shortly after this, Judas Iscariot left the group
 - (2) to do his evil deed and receive his harsh punishment.

F. Jesus went back to teaching about humble service toward one another,

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” (John 13.12–17).

- 1. After reading and seeing that,
 - a) how can we think we are too good to serve one another?
 - b) How can we think that something is beneath us?
- 2. If we cannot humbly serve one another,
 - a) the Lord will not humbly serve us, but
 - b) He will cast us from Him even as He did Judas Iscariot.

Exhortation:

I. See the love and humility of Jesus Christ

A. poured out in a simple, but despised task.

B. See Jesus at your feet,

- 1. holding them in His hand,
- 2. pouring water over them,

3. drying them with a towel, and then
 - a) He moves on to the next person.
 - b) What do you think?
 - (1) How does that make you feel?
 - (2) What does that make you want to do?

II. See a King, but not an ordinary king,

- A. see the King of kings,
- B. the Ruler of the universe,
- C. the Creator of all things,
 1. going from riches to rags,
 2. that you might go from rags to riches.

III. See the Commander of the armies of heaven

- A. humbling Himself before you
- B. that you might follow Him
 1. rather than Him whipping you into service, but
 2. with love and humility He does the unimaginable.

IV. People want to know what God has done for them, or

- A. they want to know why He does not stop suffering, and
- B. dozens of other things they hold against Him.
 1. However, see the glorious God of heaven
 2. stepping down from His throne,
 - a) living on the Earth,
 - b) doing the job of a servant.
 - (1) He knows what life here is all about.
 - (2) He knows the dirt of life.

- (a) He held the dirty feet of His disciples in His kingly carpenter hands.
- (b) He washed the dirt off.
 - i) He did not order someone else to do it.
 - ii) He did not even wonder why someone else had not done it.

V. How can we not kneel before the God who knelt before us?

- A. Shortly after kneeling before His disciples,
- B. He allowed men to make Him stand up straight
 - 1. by nailing Him to a cross,
 - 2. leaving Him there until He died
 - a) for them and
 - b) for you.

VI. Why do you wait?

- A. What other act of kindness shall He do before you submit to Him?
- B. You have seen what He did.
 - 1. You have heard what He promised to do in heaven.
 - 2. Now let him see you and hear you
 - a) humble yourself as He did and
 - b) accept Him as the Lord, showing it by your obedience.