

CHAP. 8: MUTUAL REFRESHING

1. CONTENT

a. Nee interprets Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet in Jn. 13 to be an enacted parable of restoring a believer to spiritual freshness after being tarnished, not by sin, but by everyday, necessary contact with the kosmos. This interpretation is debateable, but it has the following support:

---- Jesus' conversation with Peter (vs 7) makes it clear that the foot-washing has symbolic significance.

---- The contrast between "bathed" and "washed", and the statement that Judas is not clean (vs 10) clearly show that the foot-washing is not a picture of justification, but of some other form of spiritual cleansing which is important in order to maintain a vital relationship with Jesus (vs 8b).

---- The imagery of dust necessarily picked up by walking fits better with our own necessary contact with the kosmos than with conscious sins. Jesus does not rebuke them for having dusty feet - He only insists on washing them.

b. By saying that we should follow His example and do the same thing for each other (vs 14,15), Jesus declares this that this ministry is essential, highly significant, and for every believer to both receive and give. He promises spiritual blessing to the ones who understand His lesson and do it (vs 17).

2. APPLICATION

a. This ministry is usually seen as unimportant by most believers, but it is impossible to exaggerate its significance. It can be practiced any time two believers are together. To be able to restore a brother or sister's spirit after being weighed down by the kosmos is to release spiritual power through another member of the Body of Christ. This has incalculable impact.

b. This ministry of refreshment is essentially helping to turn the other person's focus back upward to Christ. The best way of doing this is through empathetic encouragement (I Thes. 5:14) and by reminding him of Christ's love by being a visible expression of it (Jn 13:34).