

## **John 13**

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I've already given you a little bit of introduction to John 13 and John 13-17, but I've always liked the understanding of the gospels that Matthew's gospel has a focus on Christ the King, and it seems to be primarily to kind of have a Jewish emphasis. Mark's gospel is the gospel to the Roman mind, and it presents Christ the servant. It moves very fast. It's condensed. Luke's gospel, which, by the way, we start back up again this Sunday morning in chapter 14, is known as the gospel to the Gentile world, and it glorifies Christ the servant and says, "Behold, the Man." John's gospel, separate from the three synoptics, presents Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Matthew says, "Behold, the King;" Mark says, "Behold, the servant;" Luke says, "Behold, the Man;" and John says, "Behold, your God." John's gospel is amazing.

Some have likened John 13-17 to the holy of holies of Scripture. It's interesting, it opens up in John 13 with Jesus washing the disciples' feet. We're going to get the famous episode where Jesus washes the feet of the disciples, including Judas Iscariot, then He dismisses Judas and He's alone with the other eleven disciples. In John 17, the Upper Room Discourse closes with Jesus praying, so technically John 17 is not a discourse, it's a prayer; and it is indeed what you might call His High Priestly Prayer. It ends with the prayer of Jesus in John 17.

Let's just begin in verse 1. It says, "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew,"—there's going to be an emphasis throughout this whole chapter on what Jesus knew and what the disciples knew—"that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." In the Greek that would be translated, "He loved them to the uttermost." "And supper being ended"—this is their supper feast, the Passover meal—"the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; 3 Jesus"—again—"knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God"—notice this—"and went to God"—so He came from heaven, He's going back to heaven.

Verse 4, "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments"—outer tunic or coat—"and took a towel, and girded himself. 5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." I'm trying not to go too slow or to get too bogged down in too much detail or information, but go back with me to verse 1.

In these first five verses there is a kind of running theme in this section of humility. If you're taking notes, you can put down verses 1-5, be humble. Jesus is going to be leaving the disciples. He's trying to impress upon them what they needed to be in light of His departure. He wanted them to be humble.

Now, verse 1, " . . . the feast of the passover," was one of the annual feasts that all male Jews had to make the pilgrimage down to Jerusalem to celebrate. Of course, it celebrated the departure out of Egypt the night of the Passover, when they would slay the lamb, put the blood

on their homes and God spared the firstborn in their homes, and they came out of Egypt. This was a Passover feast. The reason this is happening at Passover is because Jesus is our Passover sacrifice—that which the lamb symbolized in the Old Testament is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Jesus actually died at Passover. He was our Paschal Lamb. He was the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Jesus didn't have a house, didn't have a place for the disciples to gather. Remember, He had to borrow an upper room, so He's in the upper room where He had the last supper with His disciples, and it would be actually the last night He would have with them. He would leave this upper room, go into the Garden of Gethsemane, He would be arrested, there would be the kiss of Judas, He would be tried, and then nine o'clock the next morning He would be crucified on Calvary. He is the Passover Lamb.

Notice He, “. . . knew that his hour was come.” It's interesting, John 2, when Jesus turned the water into wine in Cana of Galilee, and His mother asked Him to do something about the situation in the wedding. He said, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.” Jesus was on a divine timetable. We need to be on a divine timetable. We need to be walking in the will of God, doing the things that God has called us to do. So, Jesus was in the will of God going to Calvary to die on the cross in His hour.

I like to think about the reality that the primary reason for the incarnation, the primary purpose for His coming into the world, was to die upon the cross for our sins. I think about that He was born in order to die. He was born to fulfill the demands of the law, and by His life and by His death and to be able to redeem mankind back to God. It was all drawn up and planned by God the Father, agreed to by God the Son, and produced by the work of God the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who believe, but it was just all this great megapicture narrative of God's plan that Jesus would come to die. His hour has now come. So, all through the gospel, “Mine hour's not come,” “Mine hour's not come,” but now His hour had come.

As I said, this is the last night that Jesus would have before He would be crucified, and it is the end of His public ministry. It's the end of His public ministry. He's just going to be alone with His disciples encouraging them about His crucifixion and His departure back to the Father, and then He'll speak about the coming of the Holy Spirit.

So, He would, “. . . depart out of this world,” verse 1, and “. . . having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end”—He loved them to the uttermost. Now, verse 2, “And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,”—that's just a little kind of teaser for what's to follow in this chapter when we read about Judas going out at night, and he was actually going to betray the Lord.

Verse 3, “Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands,”—Jesus knew His hour had come, Jesus knew the Father had put all things in His hands—“and that he was come from God, and went to God.” At the end of verse 3, that's a great statement of the fact that Jesus came from heaven to earth, He would be going back from earth to heaven. John says,

“He came unto his own,”—that means His own creation, His own created world—“and his own”—the second ‘own’ there in John 1, means His own people, the Jewish people—“received him not.” So, He came unto His own creation, but the people of Israel would not believe in Him or receive Him, so He would go back to God.

Now, when the supper was ended, verse 4, “He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. 5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.” The picture here starts off where they’re in the upper room. Remember, they had to borrow the room. Jesus had to borrow a donkey, He had to borrow a room, He had to borrow a tomb. Someone said, “No big deal, He only needed it for the weekend.”

Here they are in this upper room, and by the door is where there would be in all Jewish homes a basin of water, a bowl, and a towel. It was always the job of the lowest slave—not just a slave, but the lowest of the slaves—to actually wash the feet of the guests who came into the house. It was customary in this time, in this part of the world, they wore open sandals. They had dirt roads and paths. They didn’t have concrete or asphalt. They didn’t have astroturf. They didn’t have grass like we have. They didn’t have socks and shoes, so wherever they went their feet would get dirty, kind of like when you’re camping and you go shower somewhere and you walk back with your flip-flops or your sandals on, your feet get dirty again, and you go, “Oh, what does it matter, I’m camping anyway. It’s just a sleeping bag. Sixty people have slept in this before me.” You just crawl in and tough it out.

There was no one there in the room to do the job of the lowest slave. I can almost imagine that the disciples were looking over the corner of their eye at the towel, the water, the basin. They’re thinking, I’m not going to do it. That’s beneath me. I’m not going to. Maybe Peter ought to do it or maybe James should do it. They’re kind of like, “Who’s going to be the first?” Have you ever been with a group of people and there was maybe something spilled on the floor. Everybody saw it, but nobody wanted to move first and made like you didn’t see it because you’re thinking, I don’t know why someone else doesn’t clean this up, and you don’t get up and clean it up yourself? So, that kind of vibe was maybe in the group here. It must’ve really convicted them when they saw Jesus get up, take off His outer garment/tunic, and He took the towel, tied it around His waist, He got down on His knees, and He went from disciple to disciple and began to wash their feet, verse 5, “. . . and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.”

Now, I don’t want to read typology into this narrative, but it’s pretty clear to me that this is a beautiful picture. This is a true story, an actual event, but it pictures a very important doctrine of Scripture in that Jesus left heaven. When He left heaven, He laid aside His splendor and His majesty and His glory. This is described doctrinally in Philippians 2. You ought to write that down. In Philippians 2, Paul says, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought”—equality with God not something to hold onto. Listen to what it says, but emptied Himself, that’s talking about Him laying aside not His deity. We must be clear about that, not His deity but His glory. He never stopped being God. It’s impossible for God not to be God. It’s impossible for someone to become God, God is eternal.

God will never stop being God.

Jesus was in heaven. He laid aside His majesty and His splendor and His glory, and then “. . . and took upon him the form of a servant,”—so when Jesus took that towel, and He tied it around His waist, it was a picture of His incarnation, so Paul in Philippians 2 said—“. . . took upon him the form of a servant . . . and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” So, what’s called the kenosis passage of Philippians 2, which means the emptying, is pictured in this section of Scripture where Jesus laid aside His coat, put a towel, a badge of humility around Him, and began to wash the disciples’ feet. That’s what we know doctrinally as the incarnation. How did He wrap Himself in humanity? By being, through the work of the Holy Spirit, conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary. He took on humanity that was true humanity, but sinless—not like our humanity which we inherited from Adam’s sinful nature, but a sinless humanity. What a beautiful picture this is in verses 4 and 5, and Jesus came to forgive our sins and to wash us in His precious blood. It’s called the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. So, He began to wash the disciples’ feet.

Now, verse 6, “Then cometh he to Simon Peter,”—almost anytime you find Peter mentioned in Scripture, something pretty exciting is going to happen—“and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?” You can almost paraphrase, “You’re going to wash my feet?!” He was just freaking out. Verse 7, “Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. 8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.” When Peter heard that, “Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.” “If that’s the case, Lord, just give me a bath. Shampoo my hair, wash my hands and my head and my

feet. Just give me a whole bath.” “Jesus saith to him, He that is washed”—this word ‘washed’ means fully, completely bathed—“needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit”—or completely—“and ye are clean, but not all,”—which is a reference to Judas Iscariot.

The first section, verses 4 and 5, “He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel,” gets down and washes the disciples’ feet; which, by the way, included Judas Iscariot’s feet. Now, I don’t know about you, but I’m not interested in touching anyone’s feet. Feet are kind of the ugly part of the human anatomy to me, it’s like “No, thanks, you can do your own feet.” But here’s the Son of God in flesh, humbly serving His disciples. He wanted to remind them that this is what they were to be when He left—humble servants. He wants to remind us tonight that we’re to be humble servants.

Now, should we have foot washing ceremonies in the church today? This is descriptive, it’s not prescriptive. It’s not telling us as Christians today that we physically, literally must wash one another’s feet. I’ve never been in a foot washing ceremony because, as I said, I’m not into washing feet, but we’re not commanded to do this, we’re not required to do this, and it’s not something binding. If you want to have a foot washing ceremony, fine; but I think if you know you’re going to a foot washing ceremony, you’re most likely going to get a pedicure and wash your feet really good, make sure everything’s looking just right, and you have lovely feet.

They're not going to be dirty. You're not going to go out and walk in the mud, "Well, I'm here! Wash my feet." But it's not something required of us.

Again, when you interpret Scripture, you have to figure out whether this is just description of what was going on or is it prescribed for the church today—was it taught or practiced in the gospels, was it taught and practiced in the book of Acts, and was it commanded or taught in the epistles—and that's not the case when it comes to washing feet. I believe that it's a picture of we need to be servants, and Jesus is going to drive home that point at the end of this story.

I love the lessons behind Simon Peter, verses 6-10. Now, in the first section, the lesson is be humble. In this lesson, it's be holy because there's another picture for us. I don't want to develop it too much, but again, it's one that I believe to be a very important doctrine taught in the Scriptures, that is, the moment you are born again—listen to me very carefully—you are bathed, you were washed. It's the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. Your sins are forgiven or washed and cleansed. That would be seen in the bath, verse 10, that they would have. So, you would go to the bathhouse in the ancient world, you'd take a bath. Walking back to the house, the only thing you needed to do was clean your feet or wash your feet in the house because you've come from the bathhouse to the house. They didn't have running water or showers or bath inside their house.

The picture is that we are born again by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. That's what constitutes being a true Christian—you must be born again. It's like having a bath. But when we walk with the Lord in this world, our feet get dirty, so to speak, and what we need to do is 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This is the washing of our feet. Now, these two categories, again, the first bath brings me sonship or the communion of being in Christ. The second foot washing maintains fellowship or intimacy with Christ.

I don't believe that when you sin as a regenerated, born-again believer that you lose your salvation. It's impossible to unregenerate yourself. A lot of times when people think about losing their salvation, they forget that something happened to you when you were saved. For you to lose your salvation you'd have to undo what the Holy Spirit did, and I can see no indication in Scripture that there's any way you can do that. You'd have to unregenerate yourself. You'd have to take yourself out of Christ and put yourself back into Adam, and the Holy Spirit would have to leave you and forsake you, which Christ said He would never do, and Paul said in Ephesians that you're sealed until the day of redemption. That's just a little taste of what I believe happens when you're born again, that you're secure in Christ.

But we can lose intimacy, we can lose fellowship. Sin can break the communications with God. This is why 1 John 1:9 is in the Bible. It's written for Christians, if you sin. It's called the Christian's bar of soap; and most likely, we need to always, throughout every day, "Lord, just forgive me for that thought. Lord, forgive me. Cleanse my heart. Lord, forgive me for that attitude. Lord, forgive me for the way I talked to that person." All throughout the day, we're kind of like, "Lord, would you wash my feet?"

The picture there is interesting. Go back with me to the text. When Peter says, "Lord, You're not going to wash my feet," Jesus said, verse 8, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me,"—that's that fellowship. "You can't commune with Me. You can't be in fellowship with Me. You can't have participation with Me." Peter overreacted, "Well, then, give me a whole bath," and Jesus said, "No, you had a bath, you only need to have your feet washed." Once you've been born again, you don't need to be born again, again.

Sometimes when we give altar calls or invitations here, people want to come down every week, and you want to get born again, again; and they want to get born again, again and again and again. You can only get born again once. You can't get born again, again, okay? If you've been born again, that's a one-time experience. So, you've had a bath, all you need is your feet washed. I would say it like this, "All you need is to confess your sin, and God is faithful and just to forgive your sins, and to cleanse you from unrighteousness." You don't lose sonship, you lose fellowship. You lose that intimacy, that communion.

In the book of Jude it says, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." What he means by that is stay in fellowship with God so that you can experience God's love. Stay in communion with God so you can experience His peace and His power in your life. That's again a second picture that we see from verses 6-10, ". . . and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean."

Now, He wants to drive home the lesson of the foot washing, and it's in verses 12-17. "So after he had washed their feet,"—notice again the picture—"and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example,"—He's given us a pattern, an example—"that ye should do as I have done to you. 16 Verily, verily"—which is truly, truly—"I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him." Notice verse 17, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

Now, the picture here Jesus then gets up from washing the feet, takes off the towel, puts again His outer coat or tunic on. Again, the picture: Jesus left heaven and temporarily and voluntarily laid aside His splendor, majesty, and glory. It only shone through with just a little peek on Mount Transfiguration. Remember Mount Transfiguration where Jesus was transfigured. He pulled back the veil of His humanity and let His deity shine forth. They saw His glory, John 17. So, now the picture is that He puts back on His tunic. Jesus, after He was crucified, rose from the dead, forty days later He ascended in a glorified body back to heaven, and He's seated and exalted at the right hand of God the Father in heaven. That's the picture, yet in the story Jesus drives home the point, "You know what I've done to you? I've given you an example that you should follow in My steps that you should wash one another's feet," verse 14.

The first picture is that we are to be humble. The second picture is that we're to be holy. The third picture is that we're to be servants, which lead to, verse 17, happiness. "If ye know these

things, happy are ye if ye do them.” So, we’re to be humble, we’re to be holy, and it will produce happiness. If you want to be a blessed and happy individual, then be humble and live in holiness, communion with God, and be a servant to others. How glorious it is.

In verse 18, Jesus says, “I speak not of you all,”—again, He moves into His dismissal of Judas from the upper room. Judas had his feet washed. Think of how much light and revelation and truth Judas got. For three years, he hung out with Jesus and His disciples and saw the miracles and heard His words but still hardened his heart and was not saved. You can be that close to the Kingdom of God, yet die in your sins and perish for all eternity. He says, “I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.” Notice the Scriptures being fulfilled, and then He quotes there from Psalm 41:9, if you’re taking notes. That is a psalm of David where he’s probably talking about Ahithophel, who turned against him, his trusted counselor, but it has a Messianic application to Jesus Christ where the writer here, John, says that He was fulfilling Scripture, “. . . He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.”

Verse 19, “Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.” What Jesus was doing was wanting them to know He’s in control, “When I get arrested in the Garden, I’m being tried, you see Me hanging on the cross, just know this, I know what I’m doing. I know what’s happening. I’m in the Father’s will. The hour is come. Everything’s cool.” He didn’t say that, I said that, “Everything’s cool. It’s all going to be what it’s supposed to be just don’t freak out. I want you to know.” As we know God’s purpose and plan, we know God’s will, it helps us to stand strong against the trials and troubles that come into our own lives.

Verse 20, He says, “Verily, verily,”—truly, truly—“I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.” Interesting statement there, by the way, Jesus said that He is sending them, and whoever receives Him would receive Him that sent Me. You can’t have God the Father without going through and receiving God the Son. There are some that put down the concept of receiving Christ. I hear people say, “Oh, these Christians who pray, ‘Have you received Jesus Christ?’” And the Bible is very clear in even using that concept of receiving Christ. In John 1, “But as many as received him, to them gave he power”—the right, the authority—“to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” John’s the gospel of belief, so I have no problem with using the term “receiving Christ.” Have you received Christ? Have you invited Him to come into your heart and your life and be your Lord and Savior? So, “He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.”

Verse 21, “When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit,” this is most likely His human spirit, which Jesus had being a true human being. It was not easy. It was not pleasurable, it was very difficult. Remember, He would go in just a few hours from this upper room to the Garden, and He would pray face down in the dirt, sweating drops of blood, and He would say, “Father, if it’s possible, let this cup pass from Me,” so His spirit was troubled. “. . . and testified, and said, Verily, verily,”—truly, truly—“I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.” What a bomb Jesus set off in that upper room. There they are in the upper room, and Jesus looks at

this group of guys, "One of you shall betray Me." Wow.

Verse 22, "Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake." They had no idea who it was. They weren't suspecting Judas, either. Verse 23, "Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved." Who's that? John the apostle. Isn't that convenient for him to write his own gospel and to let everyone know, "I'm the one Jesus loved. I was His favorite. I was leaning on His bosom." John refers to himself.

Verse 24, "Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. 25 He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? 26 Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. 27 And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly."

I forgot to mention, and I guess this is a good place to mention it, that when they ate their meals in those days their table was only a foot or two off the ground, and it was actually in the shape of a horseshoe or like a "C". It was open on one side. It'd be like a square with one-half missing. It'd be like a horseshoe. They would actually have a bed on the outside of that table, around the outside of the table, so the low table with a bed going all the way around the outside, and then open in the middle so the servants could come in and serve the food. They would lie on their left side with their arm like this, and they would have the dinner table at their head so they could reach over, grab the food, lean back, and just drop it in. I think this is a great design.

You know, have you ever eaten and said, "Oh, I've got to go lie down. I've just got to lie down." You're already lying down! This is sweet! There's no need to say, "Oh, I'm going to go lie down." I make a beeline for the couch a lot of times when I go home from church on Sunday and I'm super hungry, and I eat and go lie on the couch. You don't have to get up and go to the couch, you're already lying down.

But if you're lying on your left arm, and the person behind you is right there, which John was actually lying on that side of Jesus, all you do is lean back and your head is right on His chest. So, he's actually just inches away from Jesus. He's kind of like, "Lord, is it I?" He's probably thinking, Wow, back off, dude. You're invading My space. His face is just right there. Someone said, I was reading a commentary today, "The blessing of being near Jesus, you get an inside scoop on what Jesus is doing." "Lord, is it I? Who is it, Lord?" He asked Him. Jesus said, "He it is, to whom I shall give a sop," so they had this kind of dip, and "Whoever I dip the bread in the sop and I give it to, that's going to be the one that will betray Me."

Even though Jesus did that, they still weren't really putting two and two together and understanding that Judas was the one who would betray Him. ". . . And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. 27 And after the sop Satan entered into him." He had already made up his mind that he would betray Christ, this is the moment that Satan took control of him, but he was responsible for his sin and his dastardly deed.

Verse 27, “Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. 28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. 29 For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag,”—just think about that, Judas was the treasurer. He’s the one carrying the money. This is just amazing to me. “For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast;”—We have to pay the bills for the feast that we’re having, go make the payment—“or, that he should give something to the poor”—go out and make a donation to the poor, it’s Passover—“He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.”

Interesting that John puts that little information in there, “ . . . it was night.” I believe it was actually dark. It was night. But it’s a picture of the fact that Judas went out into his night of eternal doom. Judas, it says, “It would’ve been better for him never to have been born.” Interesting to me that Jesus had twelve disciples and one of them was a traitor. So, there’s always tares among the wheat. Even in the church today, not everyone that says, “Lord, Lord,” will enter into the Kingdom. Any local church can have a false disciple or a false believer, professing to be a follower of Christ but not truly born again and walking in obedience to God. So, Judas is found today still even in the local church.

Verse 31, Jesus announces His departure, “Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.” That statement is huge. The cross of Christ is in view here, which would bring glory to God. God’s able to even take the crucifixion, the cross of Christ, and use evil for good, the glory of God. “Jesus said, Now is the Son of man”—that’s a Messianic title taken from the book of Daniel—“glorified, and God is glorified in him. 32 If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. 33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you.” Jesus is disclosing the fact that He’s only got a very short time with them. “Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you.”

Again, they had no idea that He was thinking about the cross and going back to heaven, though He had over and over and over told them, “I’m going to go to Jerusalem, I’m going to be arrested, I’m going to be handed over to the hands of wicked men. I’ll be crucified and slain, but the third day I’ll rise again.” But they still weren’t getting it. They weren’t computing this. Jesus said, “ . . . yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me”—you can’t find Me—“and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come”—now.

Verse 34, “A new commandment I give unto you,”—Jesus tells them. We only find this section in John’s gospel, this “new commandment.” Some have called this an eleventh commandment. We have the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments, this is a new commandment or eleventh commandment. “A new commandment”—or a renewed commandment—“I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know”—the word ‘men’ in my King James translation is italicized, so it’s basically just ‘all know’—“that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” Again, that’s a section there you ought to underline, you ought to highlight, you ought to take note of.

Jesus gave them a new commandment. He's giving the same new commandment to us now. How is it new when in the Old Testament it actually says that we should love God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind; and love your neighbor as yourself. So, how can this be a new commandment, if in the Old Testament we're told to love our neighbor as ourself? In this way, Jesus gives it a new quality and a new dimension and a new description. When He says, "A new commandment I give unto you," it's actually a new kind of love, a new depth of love. It's a new dimension of love. It's a new commandment in that you are to love one another, and here it is, "... as I have loved you."

Jesus uses the Greek word *agapá* Ἀγάπη this is the word used. So, "... as I have [*agapá* Ἀγάπη you, that ye also [*agapá* Ἀγάπη one another." It's a new commandment or a renewed commandment that gives a new qualification, "... as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Then, the statement, verse 35, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Do you know what the birthmark of a true Christian is? Love. Read John's first epistle, "You say you love God, but you don't love man, how do you love God whom you have not seen, if you can't love your brother whom you have seen." You say, "Well, I'm not one of those loving Christians. I'm a Christian, but not one of the loving kind." There's only one kind of Christian, the loving kind. Remember Romans 5, if you're born again? "... because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy [Spirit]," God's love for us, and if God loves us then we should be able to love others.

We watched on Sunday afternoon the Charlie Kirk memorial and saw Erika say, "I forgive, to the young man who murdered my husband." It's just blowing people away, even non-Christians, even non-conservatives. People who just, "I can't believe that." It's just so powerful. This is the kind of love that only God can give in the heart of a regenerated person, a love of God coming out from us. Jesus said to love our enemies, to pray for those which persecute you, and despitefully use you. Especially as believers in the church, we are to love one another.

You know, in the New Testament, Christians addressed themselves as beloved. We don't really use that today, but I think we might think about reviving that, "Hey, beloved," because it has a two-pronged aspect—it's a reminder that God loves you, and that I love you. God loves you, and I love you. Where else but in the church should we have this kind of sacrificial, self-denying, giving, *agapá* Ἀγάπη or *agape* love one for another? So, the new commandment, that's the mark of the Christian.

Jesus gives Peter a warning, verse 36, "Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou?"—and I can hear the pain in his heart and emotion in his words there in the upper room. This is an intimate moment. They love Jesus so much, they're convinced He's the Messiah, "... whither goest thou?"—he's starting to kind of be perplexed by His words and His agitation of His spirit. Peter said, "... whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards."

Earlier in the foot washing ceremony when Peter said, “You’re not going to wash my feet,” Jesus said, “What I’m doing now you don’t know, but you’ll know afterwards.” That’s kind of a picture, too, how in this life God allows things in our life that we don’t understand, but when we get to heaven, we’ll see things clearly. People have a tragedy and they’re always wondering, “What is it that God’s doing?” We may not know until we get to heaven. We may not understand until we look back from heaven from the eternal perspective of what God was planning, what God was purposing. We know “ . . . that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose,” and there we have to live by faith.

Now Peter is wondering, “Why can’t I go with You?” Jesus said, “Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.” Peter’s perplexed. He says, “Why cannot I follow thee now?” Peter thought He was going somewhere on earth, maybe a dangerous location, and he says, “I will lay down my life for thy sake.” Listen to Peter’s self-confidence. His self-confidence and his boasting, “I will lay down my life for thy sake.” Listen to what Jesus said, “Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily,”—truly, truly—“I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.” Wow. You know, Peter didn’t even know his own heart.

This reminds us of the danger of being self-confident, being over-confident. Any time I meet a young Christian, “Aw, I can handle the devil. I can handle temptation. I can do it.” I want to close my eyes and just shake my head. I don’t want to watch. After the fall, the dust settles, “Lord, please help me.” “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” What did Peter do? He denied Jesus three times. Three times he denied Jesus. Now, it’s interesting. Peter said, “These all may forsake You, but I’ll never forsake you,” in other gospels.

Now, it’s not in John’s gospel, but do you know what the disciples were talking about before they got into the upper room? They were talking about who will be the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven. “I’m going to be the greatest.” “No, I’m going to be the greatest.” “No, I’m going to be the greatest,” and then Jesus washes their feet. Peter boasts, “I’ll lay down my life for You,” and Jesus said, “Peter, before the rooster crows in the morning, three times,” not just once but three times, “you will deny that you even know Me.” Peter tells us that we need to be humble and God will exalt us, so don’t boast in your own strength. Don’t look to your own ability. Humbly, dependently put your trust and faith in God.

One of the most important things to learn is you can’t do it on your own. We’ll get to John 15 in this Upper Room Discourse and Jesus will say, “Without Me, you can do nothing.” We like to retranslate that to, “Without Me, you can’t do much.” No, Jesus said, “Without Me, you’re a big zero, you can do nothing.”

So, be humble, be holy, and don’t be a hypocrite. Let’s pray.