

John 13 Chapter Study

INTRO

II. THE END Chs. 12-21

E. The Last Supper Chs. 13-17

Remember that John wrote his gospel last & aimed to fill in some of the details Matthew, Mark, & Luke had left out.

So he jumps in ch. 12 from the Triumphal entry 5 days before Passover, to the eve of Passover in ch. 13.

The other gospels tell us about what Jesus did on the intervening days, so John leaves it *out* of *his* story.

And whereas the others cover the Last Supper in less than a chapter, John spends 5 chs. on it, giving us a detailed record of what Jesus shared with the disciples on that important occasion.

1. Jesus washes the disciple's feet 13:1-17

We'll be digging into this first part of ch. 13 on Sunday.

It gives us one of the most crucial truths of what it means to be a follower of Jesus we have.

Tonight, we'll just read the text –

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. 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. 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!*" 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." 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.

Throughout history, when the followers of Jesus have faithfully lived out what He says here, the Church has been pure & effective in its mission of saving the lost & blessing the world.

But when it's lost sight of these things, it's become corrupt & lost its voice.

I've been reading a lot about the Emergent Church lately.

The Emergent Church is a movement of mostly young adults who believe the contemporary American evangelical church is no longer *relevant* to today's post-modern culture.

Emergent leaders say that most of the church is locked in a modern mindset using modern approaches to ministry that no longer relate to where they and their lost peers are at.

They are planting churches that seeking to make the Christian faith relevant to a post-modern audience.

So really, at the heart of the Emergent Movement is *the desire to be relevant*.

While that's a good desire, the Emergent Church isn't the first generation of believers who've recognized the need to make their message relevant to their time.

EVERY generation of Church leaders have understood the need to speak the language of their culture.

But the mistake many have made is to *alter the message* for the *sake* of relevance.

They feel the need to APPEAL to the lost, so they present the Gospel in an attractive package that *distorts* the message.

A bit later, we'll see Jesus reminding the disciples that while they are *IN* the world, they are not *OF* it.

Christians live *in* their culture, but that does not mean they are to embrace those aspects of it that are ungodly.

There must always be a certain *distance* between the believer and the society they live in – otherwise they could not be the spiritual & moral salt & light Jesus said they would be.

A ship is made to be in the water – but whoa to that ship when the water gets in it!

And so it is with the Church – it's meant to be in the world, but the world must not be in it.

The desire to speak with relevance to our age must never give way to *compromise* with the age.

History makes it clear that when the Church has accommodated itself to the world in this way, it's ended up losing it's power & witness.

The story is told of Francis of Assisi meeting with the Pope.

The Pope was giving him a tour of St. Peter's & The Vatican.

With the vast treasures all around, the Pope said, "No longer do we have to say

with St. Peter to the lame man, ‘Silver & gold have I none.’”
To which Francis replied, “And also can we no longer say to him, ‘Rise up and walk.’”

The Emergent Church is critical of seeker-sensitive churches because they’ve allowed *the world’s idea of success* to dumb down the gospel, turning it into little more than a means to the American dream of the “Good Life.”

Emergent Christians feel like the gospel has been hijacked by commercialism and they want to get back to the model they see presented in the book of Acts.

My concern is that in their desire to be relevant to a post-modern ethos they’re only *duplicating* the error of those they criticize.

Instead of holding fast to the Word of God & seeking to bend culture to it through the influence of a holy life, they’re coloring the Gospel with the crayons of post-modernism – which is fundamentally *anti-Christian*.

What we find in these first 17 vs. of ch. 13 is a much needed corrective to the perennial problem of power in the church.

But it’s not just something for *church leaders* to pay attention to.

What Jesus says here, the truth He lives out is intensely practical & personal for every believer. That’s why we’ll be concentrating on it Sunday.

2. He points out His betrayer 13:18-30

18 “I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, ‘He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.’”

The lesson Jesus taught about how to handle power in vs. 1-17 was for His followers. It had no relevance to others.

Among those who claimed to be following Jesus was a *fraud* named Judas.

Though Jesus had invited him to be a disciple, Judas had never really responded to the invitation.

Oh sure – he’d tagged along for the last 3 years & he’d appeared outwardly to be one of the guys, but his motivation in following Jesus had never been that of a true disciple.

Remember - a disciple was someone who wanted to be just like the rabbi.

That had never been Judas’ aim. He followed Jesus for the prestige it gained him.

He followed Christ because he thought it was a good career move if indeed He turned out to be the Messiah.

Jesus saw in Judas’ plans to betray Him a fulfillment of Psalm 41:9.

At this point – Judas had already arranged with the priests to betray Jesus.

They were just waiting for him to return with the word on the best time & place to arrest him.

19 Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He.

In just a few hours, the disciples’ world would be turned upside down.

It would begin with Judas’ betrayal in the Garden or Gethsemane.

Jesus warned them ahead of time so that when it came they wouldn’t think that

somehow He'd lost control of the situation.
Even in His arrest & all that followed, they were to see His glory.
His torture & death were not to shake their faith or confidence in Him.

20 Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

In just a few minutes, Jesus will speak about the Holy Spirit. That's Who He's referring to here.

He is the One who will come & pave the way for both the Son & the Father.

21 When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me."

The time is winding down now on the time He has left with the boys.

The end is approaching, & as with *any parting*, Jesus is bummed.

What's especially difficult to deal with is that it's one of the 12 who will be the trigger for the end.

Even though Judas had been a fraud from the start, Jesus still loved him.

Judas hadn't been a friend to Jesus, but Jesus had been a friend to Judas.

Betrayal by a friend is a heavy burden.

22 Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.

Because we know the story so well, we tend to imagine Judas as the black sheep of the disciples.

He had tats running up & down his arms & chest – shaved head, ear & nose rings, goatee, shades, black leather jacket, knee high boots with big lug soles. Switchblade.

Always had his arms crossed, scowl on his face, leaning against the wall with one foot up smoking a cigarette.

When Jesus said, "One of you will betray Me," we would picture the disciples nodding to each other with a quick awareness that Jesus is referring to Judas – I mean, who else would it be?

But that is not at all their reaction. They're stunned & can't figure out who it could be?

There had been nothing in Judas' behavior that signaled he was a traitor.

The LAST thing a disciple would ever do is turn his back on his rabbi!!!! This was *unthinkable*.

In the last ch. we saw that John knew Judas was pilfering from the purse.

As wrong as that was, it didn't give John a clue Judas was as bad-hearted as he was.

23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. 24 Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

Understanding the typical table setting helps us get a better picture of what's going on here.

Following the custom of the time, they would have gathered around a triclinium.

As the *host*, Jesus would sit at the 2nd to the end.

Seated at his right & left would be *the positions of honor*.

John refers to himself here as the one who leaned on Jesus' chest, meaning he was on His right.

The only person John would be able to see with ease would be the person directly across from him, in the *last* position.

The way John describes Peter's attempt to communicate with him indicates Peter was seated there.

That Peter was seated in the *end* position is further suggested by the fact that when Jesus washed their feet, it seems Peter was last.

25 Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "Lord, who is it?" 26 Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it." And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

If John is on Jesus' right, who's the only other person Jesus could have handed a piece of bread to? The person on his left, in the position of favor.

In this case it was Judas.

The main dish of the Passover meal was lamb, but it wasn't the roast lamb we'd think of. It was a *lamb stew*.

Jesus tore off a piece of flatbread, dipped it into the bowl, scooped up some of the stew, and handed it to Judas.

27 Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." 28 But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. 29 For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, "Buy those things we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. 30 Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.

Something triggered in Judas at the moment Jesus handed him the bread & stew.

Whatever debate may have been going on in him was now over.

Maybe he'd been toying with the idea of bailing on his plan to turn Jesus over to the authorities.

But something pushed Him irrevocably away from the Lord.

Strange that an act of kindness would provoke such a hateful reaction.

But that's what happens with many people.

The goodness of God leads the saved to repentance.

But it leads the lost to further depths of depravity.

This is what Paul means in Romans 2 when he says –

4 Do you despise the riches of [God's] goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? 5 But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who "will

render to each one according to his deeds”:

The battle over Judas’ will ended when he decided to press on with his plan to betray the Lord.

And having made that fateful decision to reject God, he opened the door wide to Satan who stormed in, eager to press forward the priests’ plot to kill Jesus.

Knowing the die was now cast, Jesus told Judas to be about his business.

The other disciples assumed Jesus was giving him instructions about paying for dinner or giving the customary gift to the poor so they could enjoy the Passover.

3. The end is close 13:31-33

31 So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him.

This was ultimately what Jesus had come for – to go to the cross.

He didn’t come primarily to *lay lofty teaching* on us.

He didn’t come *to be a good example*.

He came to die for the sins of the world, then to rise so that we could be born again into a wholly other life than the one we were first born to.

The glory of Jesus was that He perfectly performed the Father’s will.

32 If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately.

It might be difficult to see how God’s glory is revealed in the brutality of the passion of Christ – but it’s through the unspeakable suffering He endured that we catch a glimpse of the greatness of God’s love.

A few years ago there was a well-known & respected President of a large Christian College who resigned to take care of his ailing wife.

He’d been a successful pastor & author who’d earned a solid reputation as both learned & godly.

Every year invitations to speak came in from all over the world.

He’d taken the college from being a small but respected school to being one of the largest & most prestigious Christian campuses in the nation.

It was growing & was poised to make even greater advances under his leadership.

But at what seemed to be the pinnacle of his career, he turned in his resignation.

His wife had come down with a premature case of Alzhiemers.

The reason for his resignation was that he’d made a promise 30 years before to stand by & serve his wife in sickness & in health.

She needed him more than the College did – so he turned his back on the success of his career to be successful in the higher calling of his marriage. Love demanded such.

His fame & success as the head of a famous College pale in comparison to the *glory of his integrity & love for his wife*.

The glory of God is made clear by the love demonstrated in the cross.

33 Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer.

What's lost in translation is that Jesus is not speaking here of His presence with them but that it's only going to last a little longer. His point is that He's *leaving*.

You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you.

Jesus' mission didn't end at the cross.

Between His death & resurrection He went & preached to those who'd died in faith in previous generations.

Upon the announcement of His work on the cross, they could then be delivered from where they had been waiting in Abraham's bosom, into the glory of Heaven.

Since the resurrection, when believers die, their spirit goes to heaven.

That compartment of Hades known as Abraham's bosom no longer exists.

4. A new command 13:34-35

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

Put yourself in their place as Jesus says this.

As Jews, when Jesus speaks of a *new commandment* – what would they have immediately thought of? The Ten Commandments!

These were the foundation upon which the Jewish identity rested.

The word “new” is the Greek word *kainos*; *completely new*.

This isn't the “new & improved” of the 30 year old laundry detergent they simply put in a more modern package.

This is something *brand new* that has never been before.

When Jesus said He was giving them a *new commandment*, they understood Him to mean this was to supersede all others.

From now on – the principle that governed their lives was to be love for one another.

Jesus clarifies what He means by this love when He says it's to be *the same love He showed*.

This isn't just a love of emotion or good will. It's action – movement.

This is why this word “agape” is so often translated as “charity” in old English Bibles.

It's a disposition of mind & heart that does what needs to be done to benefit the one loved.

Then Jesus says –

35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Here's the identifying mark of being a disciple – love for one another.

A disciple's goal is to be just like the rabbi.

Here Jesus says that the trait that marks, that distinguishes those who follow Him is agape for one another . . .

Practical, selfless acts of kindness given to others.

The mark of being a Christian isn't a bumper sticker, a big Bible, a spiritually-sloganed T-shirt, religious lingo, theological jargon, or being conversant on

millennialism.

Jesus said that the definitive identifier that would mark us before the world as belonging to Him was our agape for one another.

Do you love other Christians?

Let me put it this way - what has love moved you to DO for a believer lately?

Or how about this – is there a Christian you know you aren't loving?

How do you think Jesus feels about that? What are you going to do tonight about it?

CONCLUSION

This is where we end tonight's study though it's not the end of the ch.

And here's why – We CAN not – we MUST not read this, nod our heads and go on without doing what it says.

Jesus said this was our new commandment!

If we don't do what this says then we are NOT His followers!

The badge, the identifying mark of discipleship is love, especially for one another.

If we just read this, study the words with an academic eye, but do not heed the voice of the Spirit, then we are *worse* than the Pharisees of Jesus' day.