

The Gospel of John

Love Like Christ

John 13:1-5

INTRODUCTION:

Please open your Bibles to John 13. Here God's Word has moved us to the last supper where Jesus spent time once again to prepare His disciples for what laid ahead. It was the night before He would be hung on the cross, and here the Lord gave His followers a new commandment. We see it first in John 13:34 where Jesus said...

John 13:34 (NASB)

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

Loving one another like Jesus loves us? That means living with an overflow of the Lord's eternal, sacrificial, unselfish love. The problem is that all of us have a streak of selfishness in our old sin nature. We were born with it, and it can be hard for us to overcome. But God wants to help us! One way to overcome our selfishness is simply to turn our eyes on Jesus and **Live Like Him**.

The more we look at the Lord's unselfish, sacrificial, servant-hearted life, the more we will be transformed to be like Him. John 3:16 starts out by saying...

John 3:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ "For God **so loved** the world,

How much does God love us? He loved us so much that he was willing to send His Son to live among us and give us an example on how to live. Jesus loved us so much that he was willing to follow his Father's will, even to the point of death on the cross.

The more we look at the God's love for us and how Jesus was willing to sacrifice Himself on the cross for us in order to glorify His Father, the more we will be able to love like Jesus loves us. So, how much does Jesus love us? Let us read verses 1-5 and we will begin to see.

All Stand and Read Scripture

John 13:1-5 (NASB)

¹³ Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. ² During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon, to betray Him, ³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had

given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, ⁴ *got up from supper, and *laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself.

⁵ Then He *poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

Prayer

Have you noticed yourself being selfish this week? You might have missed it. We often do. But I don't think you'll miss the selfishness in this poem:

"I had a little tea party
This afternoon at three.
'Twas very small –
Three guests in all –
Just **I, ...Myself ...and Me.**

Myself ate all the sandwiches
While **I** drank up the tea.
'Twas also **I** who ate the pie
And passed the cake to **me.**"

We live in a very selfish, self-centered world. Jesus' disciples were struggling with this problem of selfishness. But God doesn't want us to live like that! Jesus wants us to love other people the same way that He loves us. So, let's see how Jesus set an example of what it takes to truly love as He loved.

During this Last Supper, the disciples were in need of further teaching on concerning his purpose on earth and love. They, like the Jews, still wanted to believe that Jesus had come as an earthly King and Conqueror. They had this idea from Jeremiah.

I am reading from the New English Translation because it actually uses the word "conqueror".

Jeremiah 46:18 New English Translation (NET Bible)

¹⁸ I the **King**, whose name is the Lord of Heaven's Armies, swear this:
'I swear as surely as I live that a **conqueror** is coming.
He will be as imposing as Mount Tabor is among the mountains,
as Mount Carmel is against the backdrop of the sea.

They had misinterpreted the scriptures. The Messiah **was** going to be a King and a Conqueror, but He was going to be the **king** of a spiritual kingdom and He was going to **conquer** sin and death. If Jesus was the Messiah, the thought of Him dying did not make sense to them. If they had only read Isaiah more carefully, they might have understood that the Messiah was coming as a Savior. Isaiah had written this prophecy approximately 700 years before Christ saying that the Messiah was to come as a **Suffering Servant**.

Isaiah 53:4-5 New Century Version (NCV)

⁴ But he took **our** suffering on Him and felt our pain for **us**. We saw His suffering and thought God was punishing Him. ⁵ But He was wounded for the wrong **we** did; he was

crushed for the **evil we** did. The punishment, which made **us** well, was given to **Him**, and We are healed because of **His** wounds.

Of course, it is much easier for us to understand what Isaiah was saying because we are on this side of the cross. This was an **eternal love** in the ultimate degree.

BODY:

I. ETERNAL LOVE

This is God's truth for us in verse 1 where John wrote:

John 13:1 (NASB)

"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."

Verse 1 tells us that Jesus was getting ready to leave this world. And naturally, the Lord's disciples were disturbed about that because of their misunderstanding of the purpose of Him being on earth. The Lord leaving them was the last thing His disciples wanted, but it was actually the thing they needed most of all. Jesus was leaving. He was leaving for love's sake, and He was about to give the greatest demonstration of love the world will ever see.

Verse 1 tells us that Jesus "**loved His own who were in the world**". And He loves you so much that He wants also to have a close relationship with you. Think about knowing the God of the whole universe in a personal way and being part of His family. This is the kind of love we receive when we receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

Jesus "**loved His own who were in the world**", and "**He loved them to the end**." Jesus Christ is faithful to the end. He will love you to the end. Jesus will never walk out on you in the middle of the night. And no matter what you are going through, the Lord will stand by you.

The truth is that we will shed some tears in life. But God's Word promises us that Jesus will stand by us forever! In Hebrews 13:5, Jesus Himself has said...

Hebrews 13:5 (NASB)

⁵ *Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"*

And nobody can stand by us like the Lord Jesus Christ!

Now you may feel alone sometimes, but God surely is watching over you, and He always has been. In Jeremiah 1:5 the Lord spoke to Jeremiah and said...

Jeremiah 1:5 (NASB)

⁵ "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."

God was speaking directly to Jeremiah but the same thing is true for us. God has been watching over us in ways we can't even imagine.

Have you ever stopped to think about how amazing God's love is for you? He had to ensure that all of your ancestors survived in order for you to be born. How many bullets or arrows went within just inches of someone's head. Had they been killed it would have changed the course of history completely. He has been planning, preparing, and working for not just hundreds -- but for thousands of years -- to ensure that **you** were here, that **you** had a chance to live and to breathe, to love Him and to love others, and to make a difference in this world.

We really have no idea of all God did to get us where we are today, but He has always been watching over us. And Jesus loves us enough to stand by us forever!

II. SACRIFICIAL LOVE.

Verse 1 also points out the Lord's sacrificial love for us. God planned that it occur during the Feast of the Passover. Again, the Scripture says,

John 13:1 (NASB)

13 Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

It was almost time for the Feast of the Passover, the annual feast that religious Jews still observe today. The Passover was instituted by God 3,500 years ago on the night before the Children of Israel escaped from Egypt. The Lord told them to take a spotless lamb, kill it, and put the blood of that lamb on the doorposts of their houses.

God explained why in Exodus 12:12-13:

Exodus 12:12-13 (NASB)

¹² For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am the Lord. ¹³ The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt.

Through the Passover, God saved the firstborn children of Israel from certain death. He also saved all of the Children of Israel from slavery in Egypt. But much more than that, God was pointing to the time when Jesus Christ would come into the world. God was pointing to the time in **John 1:29**, when John the Baptist would see Jesus and say **“Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”**

That is exactly what Jesus did when He sacrificed His life on the cross for our sins.

The blood on those Jewish doorposts pointed to the blood that Jesus would pour out on the cross for us. And now in John 13, the time had come. As verse 1 says that Jesus knew **"that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father."** He departed by the way of the cross, because He loved us enough to sacrifice Himself for us.

Verse 2 also points us to the Lord's sacrificial love.

John 13:2 (NASB)

² During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, *the son of Simon*, to betray Him,

Satan had already done his work in Judas' heart. The betrayal was at hand. **Jesus LET that betrayal take place because of His love for us!** Jesus loved us enough to sacrifice Himself for us.

Jesus tells us that He died voluntarily. He died for us because He loved us.

John 10:17-18 (NASB)

¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. ¹⁸ No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”

What an unselfish love He has exhibited to us!

III. UNSELFISH LOVE.

John 13:3-5 (NASB)

³ *Jesus*, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, ⁴ *got up from supper, and *laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself.

⁵ Then He *poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

Jesus' disciples were struggling with what it truly meant to exhibit this type of **unselfish love**. On the way to the Last Supper, the disciples had, once again, been arguing about which of them was the greatest. During the Last Supper Jesus used that moment to give them an object lesson on servant hood.

Luke 22:24-27 (NASB)

²⁴ And there arose also a dispute among them *as to* which one of them was regarded to be greatest. ²⁵ And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called ‘Benefactors.’ ²⁶ But *it is not* this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant. ²⁷ For who is greater, the one who reclines *at the table* or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines *at the table*? But I am among you as the one who serves.

In Jesus' day the washing of feet was a task reserved for the lowest servants of all. But the King of all creation stooped down that night to wash His **follower's** feet!

In the holy land, feet were coated with dust because of the dry environment. When it did rain, feet and toes were caked with mud. The Jews wore sandals not modern shoes. The streets were traveled by **beasts of burden**, not by cars, trucks and SUVs. So we can imagine the raw sewage lying in the roads. We can imagine the filth and dirt that covered

their feet. That is why every house had a water-pot, washbowl and pitcher by the door to wash the feet of those who entered. It was imperative that feet be washed before a communal meal, especially since people reclined at a low table and feet were very much in evidence. When Jesus rose from the table and began to wash the feet of the disciples, He was doing the work of the lowliest of servants. Since there was no servant present to wash their feet, it would never have occurred to the disciples to wash one another's feet. The disciples must have been stunned at this act of humility, that Christ, their Lord and master, should wash the feet of His disciples, when it should have been their proper work to have washed His.

Hours before His own death, Jesus' concern is singular: He wants His disciples to know how much He loves them and He wants them to know how to love one another.

As we mentioned earlier, when Jesus came to earth the first time, He came not as King and Conqueror, but as the suffering Servant. Matthew tells us that He taught the disciples that the way to be great was by serving others.

Matthew 20:26b-28 (NASB)

26...whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, 27 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

The humility expressed by His act with towel and basin foreshadowed His ultimate act of humility and love on the cross.

CONCLUSION:

When we come to Christ as sinners, we must come in humility. Humility is a heart attitude, not merely an outward demeanor. One may put on an outward show of humility but still have a heart full of pride and arrogance. We acknowledge that we come with nothing to offer Him but our sin and our need for salvation. We recognize our lack of merit and our complete inability to save ourselves. Then when He offers the grace and mercy of God, we accept it in humble gratitude and commit our lives to Him and to others. We "die to self" so that we can live as new creations in Christ.

We should never forget that He has exchanged our worthlessness for His infinite worth and our sin for His righteousness.

Galatians 2:20 (NASB)

*20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.*

That is true humility.

LOVE LIKE CHRIST!

This is the Day.