

Chapter 27: The Love of Jesus

John 13:21–38

If the first half of John 13 reveals to us the servanthood of Jesus, the second half of John 13 addresses a closely related subject: the *love* of Jesus. Just as we must serve as Jesus has served us (John 13:14–15), so also we must love as Jesus has loved us (John 13:34–35). This means that we must not only nurture feelings of affection for our fellow believers, but we must love them by serving them self-sacrificially. This mindset of humility, grace, and love for fellow believers is not only difficult, but impossible in our own strength. Loving one another just as Jesus has loved us runs counter to every instinct in us and to the ways of the world. Therefore, when we learn to love one another by the gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit, a miracle unfolds in our lives—we begin to look like Jesus! As such, our own self-sacrificial love glorifies Jesus, just as Jesus’ self-sacrificial love glorified him at the cross. This idea is at the heart of Jesus’ mission and glory, for *Jesus glorifies himself through self-sacrificial love*.

Committing Himself to Self-Sacrificial Love (John 13:21–30)

Having instructed his disciples about serving one another (John 13:12–20), Jesus speaks one final time to them about the one who will betray him: “After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me’” (John 13:21). That someone would betray his master is horrifying, but this betrayal is all the more treacherous after Jesus has taken the form of a servant to wash the feet of all his disciples, including his betrayer (John 13:5, 12). John reminded us three times in the midst of that narrative about foot-washing that Judas was about to betray Jesus (John 13:2, 10–11, 18–19), and now the time for Judas to act has come. Seeing Judas’s betrayal in direct contrast with Jesus’ foot-washing helps us to understand the true depth of its wickedness.

For both Jesus and his disciples, John highlights the raw, emotional response to the coming betrayal. In Jesus’ case, John tells us that Jesus “was troubled in his spirit,” using the same verb that Jesus himself used in John 12:27 (“Now is my soul *troubled*”), which was also one of the verbs that John used to describe Jesus’ emotions at the tomb of Lazarus: “When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and *greatly troubled*” (John 11:33). In those previous passages, this word communicated the nature of Jesus’ anguished grief and fears, but here it seems to speak to anguished sorrow. Fully human, Jesus suffers deeply from what is about to happen. His sorrow over the betrayal of a close friend is not “feigned” or downplayed or ignored.¹ Jesus is seized with deep, inner agony not only because he must die, but because it will be one of his closest friends handing him over to die.²

The Disciples' Self-Examination

Jesus' words shock his disciples. After hearing them, "The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke" (John 13:22). Since we know the story so well, it is difficult for us to put ourselves in the minds of the disciples who do not yet know the identity of the betrayer. Not only is it a shock to hear that someone from within their own ranks will betray them, but at this point, each disciple must ask himself, "Is Jesus talking about *me*?" Like the warning passages that we read in Scripture (e.g., Heb. 6:4–8, 10:26–31), Jesus' wants *all* his disciples to hear his warning, both the faithful disciples and the betrayer alike. For the betrayer, these words warn him of the extraordinary sin he is about to commit, and they also harden his heart to the point that he goes forward with the betrayal (cf. John 12:37–40).

For the disciples, Jesus' warning "gives them an opportunity of examining themselves and their life." Jesus knows that our feeble, foolish, fickle souls not only need the assurance of the promises he gives us, but also the warnings he gives us as well. Unless we know the dangerous consequences that await apostates, we will not as diligently keep ourselves from the creeping encroachment of sin and unbelief. William Hendriksen writes:

Let each disciple be caught with a certain dread of himself. Let him be filled with grave misgivings, with wholesome self-distrust. These men need time for self-examination. And so, for a few minutes at least, the work of introspection has its free course. Did anyone pray the prayers of Ps. 139:23, 24? "Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my thoughts; And see if there be any wicked way in me. And lead me in the way everlasting."

Although Judas is unique in the nature of his betrayal, many apostates have followed in his footsteps by falling away from faith in Jesus. As Paul writes to the church at Corinth, "Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).

The Identification of the Traitor

Characteristically, Peter is impatient for Jesus to reveal the identity of the betrayer. It is possible that Peter has extra motivation beyond the other ten innocent disciples to make sure that he is not the betrayer, since Jesus made a veiled reference to his betrayer in the context of attempting to wash Peter's feet: "And you are clean, but not every one of you" (John 13:10). While the other disciples feel a general sense of concern by wondering if they could really do such a thing, Peter may be wondering if Jesus has already said that *he* will be the one to do such a thing. John tells us therefore that "One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side, so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking" (John 13:23–24).

To understand the arrangement of Jesus with his disciples at this meal, it is important to understand that the "table" described here was not a tall table with chairs arranged around it, as we would use. Instead, Jesus and his disciples are "reclining" (that is, lying down) around a U-shaped table that only stands a short height above the ground. Because they eat with their right hand, they are reclining on their left sides, using their left elbows for balance.⁵ Therefore, the disciple "whom Jesus loved" is reclining with his back to Jesus, on Jesus' right side, and in order to speak to Jesus, he must lean back against Jesus (cf. John 13:25). This is the first point in the Gospel of John that we read

about the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (or “the beloved disciple”), but he “will reappear at Jesus’ cross (19:26–27), at the empty tomb (20:2–9), by the Sea of Tiberias, when the risen Jesus appeared to seven of his disciples (21:1, 20–23), and in the final two verses that ascribe the authority of this Gospel to him (21:24, 25).”⁶ Additionally, it is likely that the disciple accompanying Andrew at the beginning of this Gospel (John 1:40) is the beloved disciple, although John does not tell us explicitly.

Almost certainly, the beloved disciple is the Apostle John himself, the author of this Gospel (John 21:24). Rather than reading this title as John’s boast about being loved more than the other disciples, it is probably better to read this as the description that *others* gave when they observed the close connection between Jesus and John.⁷ Alternately, this may simply be John’s own description of the great love he *felt* in the presence of Jesus.⁸ If so, then perhaps all the other disciples may have described themselves in the same way too. Now, it is true that John is a member of the inner circle of Jesus’ disciples along with Peter and John’s brother James (cf. Matt. 17:1; Mark 5:37; John 19:26–27).⁹ Nevertheless, it is not entirely clear that John’s position on the right side of Jesus at this meal is an explicit place of honor, especially since the place of highest honor would be at the left side (i.e., behind) Jesus.¹⁰

Seeing Peter’s secret signal, John follows Peter’s suggestion: “So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, ‘Lord, who is it?’ Jesus answered, ‘It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.’ So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot” (John 12:25–26). Of the four Gospels, only John tells us this story about Jesus’ identifying the traitor by giving him a morsel of bread.¹¹ Rather than identifying the traitor directly, Jesus gives a dipped morsel of bread to Judas. Although all the disciples see Jesus giving the morsel to Judas, only John knows the true significance of the act—and in fact, giving Judas the dipped morsel of bread may have been a “mark of honor.”¹² John tells us explicitly that the other disciples have no idea what is happening:

Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.” Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor. (John 13:27–29)

For everyone other than John, Jesus prolongs the suspense of learning the identity of the betrayer until Judas brings soldiers and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees to capture Jesus in the garden (John 18:1–11). The other disciples must continue to examine themselves, and Jesus gives Judas one last opportunity to repent without being exposed.¹³

Satanic Possession

Judas, however, does not repent. Instead, Judas betrays “the One out of whose very hand he had been fed.”¹⁴ When he takes the morsel that Jesus gives to him, Satan himself “enters into him” (John 13:27). Previously, John told us that Satan put the plot to betray Jesus in the heart of Judas (John 13:2), but now Satan fully enters into him. This language of “entering into” is the typical language for demon possession (e.g., Mark 5:12; Luke 8:30, 11:26); however, “However, in the present passage it is not demons but Satan himself who is said to enter a person, which is without parallel.”¹⁵ Satan refuses to allow a lesser spirit work for the overthrow of the Son of God; rather, as R. C. H. Lenski

writes, in “the entire war upon Jesus (beginning with the temptation in the wilderness) the head of the hellish kingdom operates in person.”¹⁶ The movement from Satan’s putting the *intention* into Judas’s heart all the way to Satan’s full possession of Judas stands as a warning to us: just as believers are to grow in Christ through being ever more filled with the Holy Spirit, it is also possible for the influence of Satan to grow in one’s life. John Calvin summarizes this lesson well: “We ought, therefore, to walk diligently in the fear of the Lord, lest, if we overpower his goodness by our wickedness, he at length gives us up to the rage of, Satan.”¹⁷

The Glory of Jesus in Betrayal

Jesus speaks to Judas both to acknowledge the plot that Judas has set his heart to do (“What you are going to do”), and to demand that Judas carry it out: “do quickly” (John 13:27). Jesus is not giving permission to Judas, but simply instructing him to follow through with what he is already planning more quickly than Judas might have done before being exposed as a traitor.¹⁸ Judas can no longer nurture his treasonous thoughts in secret, for he now knows that his Master sees all. Moreover, Jesus has told his disciples that a betrayer is in their midst, so Judas is faced with a dilemma: either confess his sin before his fellow disciples and seek forgiveness from his Lord, or carry out immediately the plan that he has long prepared in his mind and heart. He has already hardened his heart against Jesus, so that Satan’s possession only seals him to his hideous task. If Judas has felt up to this point that he was in control of his Master’s life, Jesus now reveals to him that he has known all along: “It is Jesus who orders Judas about this business, to carry it out when Jesus wants it done and not when Judas may feel like doing it....When men are determined to do evil, a higher hand controls their deeds for ends that are utterly beyond them.”¹⁹ This element confirms what Jesus spoke earlier, that “No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord” (John 10:18).²⁰ By giving Judas the morsel of bread and sending Judas to do his act of treason quickly, Jesus commits himself to the self-sacrificial love of going to the cross. Jesus has forced Judas’s hand, and by doing so, Jesus has locked in his path to the cross.

The element of Jesus’ control over his betrayal is critical for understanding his passage. Jesus’ actions of permitting and controlling his betrayal are entirely unprecedented. When people learn about dangers against them, they do everything in their power to prevent those dangers from coming to fruition. Jesus, however, has come to be betrayed, for only through betrayal will he give himself in self-sacrificial love as an atoning sacrifice for his people. More than that, Jesus is glorified in his betrayal, for he oversees and controls all that is happening to him. Jesus’ words to Judas ensure that the plan will go forward according to the timetable that he planned with his Father before the foundations of the world were laid. The moment of Jesus’ glorification is at hand (John 13:31).

As Judas departs to betray Jesus after receiving the morsel of bread, John tells us, “And it was night” (John 13:30). Certainly, this reflects a literal truth, just as Nicodemus literally visited Jesus by night (John 3:2). In both cases, however, the night symbolizes some kind of spiritual darkness—for Nicodemus, the darkness of ignorance (John 3:10) that may lead to the darkness of wicked deeds against the light who has come into the world (John 3:19–21). But while Nicodemus repents and believes in Jesus (John 19:39), Judas does not, and sinks deeper into the darkness of violence against the light of the world.²¹ Jesus exercises sovereign power over the situation, but that does not absolve Judas from his heinous sin. Judas, and Judas alone, bears responsibility for the betrayal of the Son of God.

Commanding the Disciples (John 13:31–35)

Formally, John 13:31 begins the section of the Gospel of John that biblical scholars call the Farewell Discourses, a section that runs all the way through John 17. Farewell discourses are a fairly well-known literary genre, where a famous person gives their last words, advice, and exhortations before they die. In the Bible, we can also see farewell discourses in the closing speech of Jacob to his sons (Gen. 49), of Moses (all of Deuteronomy, but especially Deut. 32–33) of Joshua to Israel (Josh. 22–24), of Samuel to Israel (1 Sam. 12), of David to Solomon and Israel (1 Chron. 28–29), and of Paul to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17–38).²² Jesus begins by telling his disciples that he must indeed leave his disciples, who cannot *yet* follow him (John 13:31–33). As D. A. Carson points out, “Whatever the similarities between the farewell discourse and other pieces of similar genre, one fundamental distinction must be kept in mind. In all the other instances, the person saying farewell was not expecting to come back.”²³ Then Jesus, will teach his disciples a *new* commandment to love one another as he has loved them (John 13:34–35).

The Glory of Jesus in his Self-Sacrificial Love

After Judas leaves, Jesus continues to teach his disciples: “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once” (John 13:31–32). The last time he was in public, Jesus prayed, “Father, glorify your name,” and then a voice sounded from heaven, saying, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again” (John 12:28). Jesus explained to the crowd that the voice came for their sake, not his (John 12:30), and he made a final plea for them to believe in him before he departs from the earth (John 12:35–36). Here, Jesus picks up this theme to teach his disciples more completely.

On a practical level, it is not surprising that Jesus should want to give his disciples more information about the glory that he is about to receive. Jesus will be glorified in a way that will not look in the least like glory to the disciples, and he must prepare them for what is going to happen so that they do not lose all hope or faith.²⁴ The cross, according to universal human understanding, carries with it no glory, and yet Jesus insists that not only he, but also his Father, will be glorified through his suffering and death. John Calvin writes:

It is, because by it he glorifies God the Father; for in the cross of Christ:, as in a magnificent theater, the inestimable goodness of God is displayed before the whole world. In all the creatures, indeed, both high and low, the glory of God shines, but nowhere has it shone more brightly than in the cross, in which there has been an astonishing change of things, the condemnation of all men has been manifested, sin has been blotted out, salvation has been restored to men; and, in short, the whole world has been renewed, and every thing restored to good order.²⁵

Although the cross is foolishness to human wisdom, shame to human pride, weakness to human power, and disgrace to human glory, the cross is nevertheless the power of God unto salvation. Jesus will be glorified through it, and his Father, who sent him to the cross, will be glorified. At the cross, the Triune God will reveal his manifold wisdom to the world. Some, by grace, will come to recognize the glory of Jesus on the cross and trust in him by faith, while others will reject Jesus

because of the shame that he experienced on the cross.

Furthermore, the cross will *mutually* glorify the Father and the Son. They will not receive glory independently from one another, as when two shareholders in a profitable company each receive his own portion of the dividends to use as he desires. Furthermore, this will not be “reciprocal glorification, as when I sing your praise, and you sing mine....The two constitute a unit.”²⁶ We cannot separate the glory of the Father from the glory of the Son, for God will be glorified *in* the Son of Man, and God will also *glorify* the Son of Man—and glorify him at once (John 13:32). Again, John Calvin captures the essence of this passage beautifully:

He promises, therefore, that when the ignominy which he shall endure for a short time has been effaced, illustrious honor will be displayed in his death. And this too was accomplished; for the death of the cross, which Christ suffered, is so far from obscuring his high rank, that in that death his high rank is chiefly displayed, since there his amazing love to mankind, his infinite righteousness in atoning for sin and appeasing the wrath of God, his wonderful power in conquering death, subduing Satan, and, at length, opening heaven, blazed with full brightness.²⁷

The death of Jesus will reveal the glory and love of the Father, and the Father will reveal the glory of Jesus’ death to those who gain eyes to see through the grace of the Holy Spirit. In this magnificent work of redemption, each person of the Holy Trinity will work jointly to reveal the glory of God by opening the eyes of sinners by faith.

The Departure of Jesus

Once again, we see the tender compassion of Jesus for his disciples as he prepares them for the pain of his departure from this world: “Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going you cannot come’” (John 13:33). Jesus knows that this teaching will be painful, so he addresses them as “Little children” (*teknia*), a word expressing tender affection.²⁸ By “a little while,” Jesus actually means only a few hours when Judas will come to meet him in the garden with armed guards.²⁹ The disciples cannot come with him “now”; however, in only a few verses, Jesus will tell them the rest of the story: “In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also” (John 14:2–3). But, in order to get from earth to the Father’s house, there is yet another path that the disciples must walk through the valley of the shadow of death—not only must Jesus walk this path, but afterward his disciples must walk it too (John 13:36).

The New Commandment

As if to tell his disciples what he expects of them in the meantime after he departs from them, Jesus adds an exhortation to his words of comfort.³⁰ “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34–35). The Greek word for “commandment” (*entolē*) is used in roughly three ways in the Gospel of John: (1) as a legal

commandment or order from the Sanhedrin (John 11:57), (2) to describe the mission that that Father gave to Jesus (John 10:18; 12:49, 50; 14:31), and (3) in reference to the precept that Jesus gives his disciples (John 13:34; 14:15, 21; 15:10, 12).³¹ Although this word can describe an impersonal, cold legal order (1), the context tells us that this general rule for life is bound up not in imperial command, but in loving instruction—and all the more so because the command itself is about exercising the kind of love that Jesus has just demonstrated to his disciples by washing their feet (cf. John 13:14–15).

But in what sense is this commandment *new*? Certainly, the commandment to love is not absolutely new, since when someone asks Jesus about the greatest commandment, he explains that the entire law can be summarized by the commandment to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love your neighbor as himself (Matt. 22:34–40). I have argued elsewhere that there are three major aspects of the newness of Jesus' law to love: (1) a new *emphasis* on the law that moves away from a legalistic understanding of the Mosaic Law; (2) a new *example* of love in Jesus' entire earthly ministry, but especially in his foot-washing and death on the cross; and (3) a new *enabling* to love through the power of the Holy Spirit.³² Jesus does not cast off the old covenant law and replace it with his new law; rather, he dusts off and clarifies what the Mosaic Law actually taught, and then he empowers us to fulfill it by sending his Holy Spirit to pour God's love into our hearts by grace (Rom. 5:5). This particular word for *new* is not new in kind, but new in quality: "It is characterized by the freshness and the beauty of the dawn. It is altogether desirable."³³

As such, this *new commandment* should not be understood as a *new suggestion*. Jesus puts the highest priority on love, even going to the point of saying that people will know that we are his disciples by the way that we love one another. This does not exclude love for the world, but Jesus points specifically to the love that we have for fellow believers—the way we go out of our way to extend grace, mercy, and forgiveness to one another, and the way that we seek to serve one another in whatever capacity we can, just as Christ has served us. The chief characteristic of a disciple is neither theology nor moral purity nor church attendance nor social activism nor political stances, but love for the brethren. Because this love for one another identifies us with Jesus, we should keep in mind that by loving one another we will not gain the admiration of the world (cf. 1 John 3:11–24), for the world hated Jesus too.³⁴ Nevertheless, this is the new commandment that Jesus gives to us, that we love one another.

The Glory of Jesus in his Disciples' Self-Sacrificial Love

We must not miss the connection between the glory of Jesus in his own self-sacrificial love (John 13:31–32) and the command that he gives his disciples to devote themselves to self-sacrificial love so that they will be known as his disciples (John 13:34–35). By this, Jesus explains that not only will he be glorified by laying his own life down, but he will be glorified when his disciples do the same. When we lay down our own lives, we demonstrate that we prefer to obey Jesus than to follow the ways of the world. Although the world sees foolishness and suffering, eyes that have been trained to see the glory of Jesus at the cross will also see the glory of Jesus shining through those who give themselves to self-sacrificial love for the good of others. Obviously, this is not easy. The chief problem with self-sacrificial love is that it requires self-sacrifice—and love! Our sinful nature recoils against these things. But the difficulty of loving our fellow disciples self-sacrificially makes any progress in the area that much more glorifying for Jesus, since any growth comes from him, by

grace, and not from us.

Correcting the Zealot (John 13:36–38)

Not surprisingly, this is a hard word for the eleven disciples, and particularly for Peter. Just as Peter struggled when his Lord washed his feet (John 13:6–9), so now Peter struggles with the fact that Jesus is departing from them.³⁵ The narrative continues with Peter's further protests: "Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, where are you going?' Jesus answered him, 'Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward'" (John 13:36). By telling Peter that he must "follow afterward," Jesus is not talking about following him into that room in his Father's house (John 14:3). Instead, Jesus is telling Peter that Peter will eventually give up his life in service to his Master, but not as soon and not in the way that Peter here imagines (cf. John 21:15–19). As Jesus must stretch out his hands to die on the cross, so will Peter (John 21:18–19), but not now, and not in every respect similar to the death that Jesus himself must face. Jesus must die alone for his people as a substitute sacrifice for their sin, and they cannot follow him to take part in what he must do. But even when Jesus' disciples must themselves follow in Jesus' steps to their death, "their following will only take them on a road that Jesus has first traveled alone and has thus made passable for them."³⁶ We cannot replicate the unique work that Jesus does for us, even if we are called to imitate it as his disciples.

Again, just as during the foot-washing, Peter is not satisfied with Jesus' answer: "Peter said to him, 'Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.' Jesus answered, 'Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times'" (John 13:37–38). In this, Peter both misunderstands what his Lord will ask of him and overestimates his own strength. Peter is telling the truth that he is ready to die with Jesus by fighting for him in the garden (John 18:10); however, as Jesus prophesies here, Peter will deny knowing Jesus three times afterward, "when all seemed lost. That demanded a different brand of courage and devotion."³⁷ In that situation, when Jesus has willingly given himself up to be executed, Peter's strength fails. Peter's overestimation of his strength is a universal "opinion which we entertain from our very birth, which is, that we attribute more to our own strength than we ought to do. The consequence is, that they who can do nothing venture to attempt every thing, without imploring the assistance of God."³⁸ Just as Judas teaches us to recognize and root out the sin that may lurk in our hearts, so Peter teaches us to be cautious and circumspect so that we do not rely on our own strength.

Jesus' strong words in this scene parallel the strong words that he spoke to Peter when the disciple sought to prevent his Lord from going to the cross: "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man" (Matt. 16:23). In this case, Peter is doing the same thing, clinging to Jesus in order to prevent him from going to the cross. He has become a zealot, having elevated his *experience* of Christ above the *cross* of Christ. As such, Peter represents a hindrance to Jesus' mission from his Father, and Jesus must rebuke Peter by revealing the flaw in Peter's strength: "Peter will disown Jesus three times, not for lack of courage, but because he is unwilling and powerless to be considered a disciple of a Lord in fetters on his way to a cross."³⁹ As anguishing as the cross will be, Jesus considers it his glory. As far as Peter tries to oppose Jesus' glory, Jesus must oppose Peter with the strongest language he uses against his disciples, save only for Judas himself.

Part of what makes it so difficult to read this passage is the realization that we would probably want to say the same thing as Peter does. Why shouldn't Peter want to cling to Jesus? In fact, we *do* say the same thing when we try to protect what feels comfortable and safe to us. Furthermore, we are especially guilty of doing this in the church. We want to preserve what we experienced where we came to know Christ, as well as the times and places where we have grown, been served, and felt loved. The thought of moving beyond what is comfortable to us into a new phase of self-sacrificial love is terrifying. We like what we have already, and we cannot imagine the goodness of the glory that will come through self-sacrificial love. In that way, we are like Peter, and we need to hear the rebuke of Jesus against our zealotry that elevates our comfort over the way of the cross.

But more than that, we also need to hear the promise of the gospel that Jesus *has* gone to the cross for us. Jesus' death has already atoned for the sin of our selfishness and reluctance to love self-sacrificially, and Jesus' death has purchased the power we need to follow in his footsteps. In that light, we need to hear Jesus' marching orders again—that we must love one another, just as Jesus has loved us. We must take the place of a slave to serve our fellow believers by whatever the spirit of Jesus' foot-washing requires of us, and we must love by laying down our lives for one another, just as Jesus laid down his life for us. By this, we will fulfill the great commandment and people will know that we belong to Jesus. More importantly, by this we will glorify Jesus through the self-sacrificial love that he creates in us through the gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Discussion Questions

1. What can you gain from the warnings Jesus gives to Judas in this passage? Do you see Jesus' words about his betrayer as something unrelated to you, or do you recognize that you too could fall into sin? How do Jesus' warnings qualify as a form of his grace toward us?
2. List as many ways as you can that the self-sacrificial love of Jesus on the cross reveals his glory. How does Jesus' death on the cross cut against the ways of this world? How does the cross reveal God's love, glory, and justice?
3. If the Old Testament law can be summarized by the law to love God and to love people, then why does Jesus insist that his commandment to love one another is *new*? Why does Jesus even need to give us the commandment to love one another at all? Where is it hard for you to love self-sacrificially right now?
4. Why does Jesus speak so harshly to Peter when Peter tries to cling to the Lord whom he loves? Can you relate to Peter's desire to protect what is comfortable and safe in his experience of Jesus? What comfortable and safe experience of Jesus might you have to sacrifice in order to glorify him by loving a fellow believer?

Notes

1. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 68–69. Available online: <<http://>

www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.iii.v.html>

2. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 939–40.

3. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 69. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.iii.v.html>>

4. Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 244–45.

5. Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 245.

6. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 472.

7. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 943.

8. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 473.

9. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 942–43.

10. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 473.

11. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 942.

12. Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 557.

13. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 947.

14. Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 247.

15. Köstenberger, *John*, 416–17.

16. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 950.

17. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 70–71. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.iii.v.html>>

18. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 951.

19. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 951–52.

20. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 476.

21. “The dark power that had already taken possession of his heart now drove him to carry out his (long-cherished?) plan. ‘And it was night’ is surely more than a temporal reference. It was ‘the night of the betrayal’ (cf. 1 Co. 11:23), or ‘the power of darkness.’ It was the night against which Jesus had repeatedly warned both the crowd and his disciples, that they should believe in the light before it was too late (cf. 9:4; 11:10; 12:35). Into that night Judas vanished to do what he had to do (vs. 27). We are not told where or to whom he went. The outcome will be evident soon enough (cf. 18:2ff.). With his departure the die was cast and the separation between light and darkness was final.” (Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John*, 473.)

22. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 480.

23. Ibid.

24. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 72–73. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.iii.vi.html>>

25. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 73. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.iii.vi.html>>

26. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 957.

27. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 74. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.iii.vi.html>>

28. Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 561.

29. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 957–58.

30. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 75. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.iii.vi.html>>

31. Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 252–53.

32. See Jacob Gerber, *That You May Know: A Primer on Christian Discipleship* (Omaha, NE: 19Baskets, Inc., 2014), 29–31. This outline is modified from Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary: New Testament*, vol. 2 (Colorado Springs: Victor, 1989), 485–91.

33. Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 253.
34. Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John*, 477.
35. Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John*, 478.
36. Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John*, 479.
37. Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 564.
38. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 78. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.iii.vii.html>>
39. Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John*, 478–79.