

John 13

Sermon Outline Thanks to B.W. Johnson's Commentary

The events of this wonderful week have passed rapidly. We have followed Jesus in His Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem upon Sunday and His visit to the temple. On Monday occurred the incident of cursing the fig tree cf: Mark 11:12-22, as He went from Bethany to Jerusalem. The second time Jesus entered into the temple to assert His authority to cleanse His Father's house by casting out the traffickers and money changers Matthew 21:12ff. He then returned in the evening again to his beloved retreat at Bethany. Tuesday was one of the busiest, stormiest, and most fruitful days of His ministry. On His appearance at the temple He was accosted by the demand, "By what authority doest thou these things?" cf: Matthew 21:23ff Then came the attempts of the various parties to entangle Him in questions that were traps. Then a succession of parables are directed against the Jewish nation cf: Matthew 22:1ff, the awful denunciation of its sins are recorded in Matthew chapter 23, the final and sad farewell to the temple and the nation that closes that chapter, the discourse on the fate of the nation, the end of the world and the day of judgment is recorded in Matthew Chapters 24 & 25. After these, He returns to Bethany, where the next day, Wednesday, seems to have been passed in rest and preparation for the approaching struggle. From there on Thursday afternoon He went into the city to eat the Passover cf: Matthew 26:17ff. This last interview with the disciples before His suffering is one of an unusually confidential and affectionate nature and is the occasion of the sweetest and most consolatory teachings of our Lord.

John 13:1 Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus 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.

The Lord saw the dark and bloody path of suffering immediately before Him.

John 13:2 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to betray him;

The Revision says "During the Supper". The devil planted the seed, but the soil of his heart was ready. Judas' disappointment over the costly box of

ointment had enraged him. John calls attention, to the fact that Judas was there, already a traitor at heart, and that Christ knew it, in order to show the wonderful love of God for sinners that would stoop to wash Judas' feet.

John 13:3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

He was completely aware of His Divine Power and Majesty with God, and He stooped to the lowly position of a servant. Taking upon Himself the duty of women, servants and slaves in the ancient world.

John 13:4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

Jesus arose, laid aside His outer robe, wrapped a towel around Himself and started washing the feet of the twelve, without explanation.

1. The disciples expected the immediate appearance of the kingdom. They sat down to this Supper as if it was a state occasion, and strife arose among them to be first place, to sit in the "chief seat at the feast". It was the old question, "Who should be greatest" cf:

Luke 22:24-30 And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. 22:25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. 22:26 But ye *shall* not *be* so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. 22:27 For whether *is* greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? *is* not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth. 22:28 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. 22:29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; 22:30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

2. Jesus and His disciples had come in, hot and dusty from their walk from Bethany; their sandals had been laid off according to custom. No apostle volunteered to attend to the washing of feet, the duty of a servant, they were fill with angry, envious thoughts of who should have the most honorable place.

This foot washing was a rebuke, an awful rebuke, to their ambitious strife, far more powerful than words could have spoken; such a rebuke that never again do we see a hint of the old question. It said, "Let him that would be greatest become the servant of all."

John 13:5 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.

John points out the wonderful sight of God in Christ washing the feet, not only of the apostles, but of the traitor, Judas.

John 13:6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

The language of Peter is that of confusion: Do you, Lord and Master, do the work of a servant, a slave or a woman.

John 13:7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

There is much that is not clear to the dull understanding of the apostles, that became clear later after His resurrection.

John 13:8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

Jesus is saying if you are not submissive to Me, you are not My disciple. Washing, to the Jews, was symbolic of purification from uncleanness. Christ could only wash with His blood, the obedient.

John 13:9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head.

His language is partially due to embarrassment to have the Savior perform such a duty on him.

John 13:10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

He who is once cleansed by the blood of Christ and added to the one Church of Christ only needs to come to Christ in repentance and prayer for the partial cleansing of our every day to day sins.

John 13:11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

Not all who enter into Jesus' service are cleansed. Judas was not. Some do not enter through the door, or, obey. They are the thieves and robbers.

John 13:12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

They knew the act that He performed, but did not comprehend the meaning.

John 13:13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for *so* I am.

John 13:14 If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

Master is used in the sense of Teacher, and Lord in the sense of Ruler. You ought to follow the example of humility, self-sacrifice, and service to others that your Lord sets you. This is instead of seeking pre-eminence, disputes concerning seats of honor, and shrinking from humble service to each other.

John 13:15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

Christ gave an example, not a church ordinance or ceremony.

The Pope washes the feet of 12 beggars a year, the German Baptists (Dunkards), Mennonites, and a few minor sects practice foot-washing.

There is a wide difference between an example and a church ordinance. The Savior, the night before He was crucified, established a church ordinance, The Lord's Supper. Just as soon as the church is organized, on the day of Pentecost, we see the converts practicing the ordinance, cf:

Acts 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Acts 20:7 And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

In Jesus Great Commission just before His Ascension, He established another ordinance called baptism. This we find appears immediately on the day of Pentecost, cf:

Acts 2:36-41 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. **2:37** Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? **2:38** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. **2:39** For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. **2:40** And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. **2:41** Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

Acts 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

The ordinance of baptism, continues to be named in every example of conversion in the early church's history found throughout the book of Acts.

However, foot-washing is not found in the early history of the church, and is only mentioned one more time in the New Testament, as a duty of widows, cf:

I Timothy 5:10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

Foot-washing is not again found until the time of Augustine, the bishop of Hippo. This is after the great falling away and apostasy had been fully

inaugurated by the bishop of Rome or “Pope” claiming to take pre-eminence in the Church of Christ.

John 13:16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

If the Lord should thus condescend as a servant, how much more should we the unworthy slave serve others, if we have drunk of the Lord’s Spirit?

Philippians 2:1-11 If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2:2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. 2:3 *Let* nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 2:4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 2:10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; 2:11 And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

John 13:17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

If you understand the meaning of My act, happy are ye if you practice the same spirit in your lives. Those who catch His Spirit, and obey it, are happy in the Lord’s approval. The Greek word translated happy is the same as is translated blessed in the opening of the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 5:1ff. Here, therefore, we have another Beatitude.

John 13:18 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.

There is one present to whom this knowledge will not bring happiness. Jesus declares He knew the wretched heart of Judas, but chose him that the scripture might be fulfilled. Judas was no surprise to Christ. He had known his wicked nature from the beginning.

There was need among the disciples, and in the church today, for a man of such talents as Judas possessed, which was the talent for managing business affairs. It is not found among the qualifications of elders and is a great falling away in today's generation to confuse those with business ability with those who have shepherding and visiting ability.

It should be a relief to congregations today to know that God can bless them, and that the Gospel can succeed even though some bad men, or wolves in sheep's clothing have crept into the fold.

John 13:19 Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am *he*.

The hour was at hand, and the traitor would soon show his hand. Jesus declares it before it comes to pass, in order that the fulfillment, instead of being a crushing disappointment, might increase the disciples' faith.

Notice the "he" in verse 19 is an italicized word and it is not found in the original Greek. The verse should rather read: ye may believe that I am. The "I am's" of Jesus associate Him with the burning bush of Horeb.

I am, the self-existent uncreated Deity is revealed in these words. It is an affirmation of absolute existence. He did not, like man, have a dependent being, but said "I exist".

John 13:20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

They, whose faith was made strong in Him, would be commissioned as His heralds, sent from Him, as He was sent from the Father. To receive the King's messengers would be to receive the King, and to receive the King would be to receive the Father who sent the King Christ.

We Have Learned

The desire to be greater than other brethren is the cause of many quarrels and much evil.

Man's way to be greater than others is self-seeking.

God's way to be great is to serve others and do all we can for them in love.

Voluntary service in the kingdom of love, under the impulse of humility and self-denial makes a man a spiritual power.

John 13:21 When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.*

Already, Judas had been to the Chief Priests and agreed for a certain sum of money to betray the Lord. Judas was led captive by his covetousness, and agreed to betray Christ immediately after his disappointment over the alabaster box of ointment.

Matthew 26:14-16 Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, **26:15** And said *unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. 26:16* And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

When Christ was troubled in spirit, the Greek word always implies indignation mingled with sorrow. If we are in the company of loving friends and family, and one comes in who we know to be false and a traitor, it throws a cloud over the whole affair. It is obvious that Jesus wanted to speak to His friends alone, the glorious last words of Chapters 14-17

John 13:22 Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

They did not venture to doubt the Savior's prophecy, but it seemed to them impossible that one of their number could prove to be a traitor.

John 13:23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

Reclining at the table in the Greek or Roman fashion, each guest reclined on his left elbow with his feet extended outward. The disciple next to Jesus would be very near His bosom and would only need to bend back a little to lean on the Savior. The phrase, “whom Jesus loved”, occurs seven times in John’s Gospel; twice in speaking of Martha, Mary and Lazarus, and five times as the designation of the one who wrote this Gospel. John names all the other apostles freely, but never names himself. It was such a joy to John that he could hardly suppress it, to know and feel that one so glorious as Christ had loved “even him”.

John 13:24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

Peter, impulsive as usual, is the one who acts. He beckons, silently, to John who was next to Christ to find out whom He meant. John whispers, so since none else knew the question asked, no one understood the answer.

John 13:25 He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

Since the captivity, the Jews lay at table in the Persian manner, on divans or couches, each on his left side, facing the table, resting on a pillow and supporting his head, the guest to the right lay with his head near the breast of the first, so John just leaned on Jesus’ breast and whispered “Who is it?”

John 13:26 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*.

In a low tone, in John’s ear, the Lord answers, He will show. There was on a table a dish of bitter herbs, the Lord took a piece of bread dipped it in the sauce, and gave it to Judas. John saw the act and understood what it meant. The rest did not comprehend that Judas was the traitor.

John 13:27 And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

Judas knew what he had sold himself to do, and he at last asked the same question. The Lord answered “Thou hast said”. Startled to know that his treachery was known to Jesus, as soon as he received the sop, he cast aside

hesitation and gave himself wholly up to Satan's work. For he was already under the devilish influence, and he plunges headlong into the bottomless pit, for he was fully exposed. Christ wished the traitor to leave at once that He might be alone to give a last sweet and loving charge to His faithful disciples.

John 13:28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.

John 13:29 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; or, that he should give something to the poor.

No one but John knew that Judas was the traitor, so none of the others could understand what Jesus charged Judas to do. They supposed that Judas was directed to spend some money for some purpose.

John 13:30 He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

He ate the sop, Christ spoke to him at once, and he immediately arose and went out. After the Passover meal, the Lord's Supper was ordained, cf:

Matthew 26:17-29 Now the first *day* of the *feast of unleavened bread* the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? **26:18** And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. **26:19** And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover. **26:20** Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. **26:21** And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. **26:22** And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? **26:23** And he answered and said, He that dippeth *his* hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. **26:24** The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. **26:25** Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said. **26:26** And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this

is my body. 26:27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; 26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 26:29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

John 13:31 Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.

When Judas left, the last disturbing element seems to have been removed from the mind of the Lord. The clouds of the world are lifted and here begins the most remarkable discourse recorded in history. He will go through His bloody pathway to the presence of the Father. He apparently strives, as never before, to reveal Himself to them so fully that every doubt of His Divine Majesty disappears.

His weary ministry ended, and the glorification begun, there is an emphasis and exultation in the word "now". His disciples were not yet fully freed from their carnal ideas of His earthly glorification. They had expected Jesus' glorification to be accomplished in His coronation as King of the Jews in Jerusalem. The Cross was the means of Jesus' glorification and He anticipates the "lifting up" as a sacrifice, as a risen Savior, and as an ascending Lord to take seat upon a universal throne. He was pointing them to His greater majesty, filling them with larger hopes and investing them with higher honors than they could ever have had in an earthly kingdom. The world's idea of His glory was different, and He would ascend to enjoy the glory He had with the Father before the world was.

John 13:32 If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.

John 13:33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you.

Observe the tenderness of the term applied to His disciples, a term applied nowhere else except in

I John 2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

I John 2:12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

John 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

He would go away and they could not follow him.

John 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

The commandment to love was not new, but such love as the Savior commanded was new. That love was one so intense as to give up all things; a self-denying, self-sacrificing love which is not of the earth, but carries its own demonstration that it is of heavenly origin. The "new life" is love.

John 13:35 By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

The heathen said, "See how these Christians love one another." But the presence of such love does more than cause those who behold it to marvel. It points them to Christ as its author, for all must admit, when it shines forth in its excellency, that it is of heavenly origin. When it is fully exhibited men know that those who possess it are the disciples of Christ.

John 13:36 Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.

The Lord said, "Do this in remembrance of me until I come again." Peter, after the supper is eaten, not yet able to comprehend the Lord's death, asks, "Whither goest thou?" The Lord's way was to the cross, the sepulcher, the ascension, and to heaven. Peter might follow in due time, but the Lord had other work for him now. According to tradition, Peter did follow Christ to the cross in death. He was also crucified.

John 13:37 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.

It was very hard for Peter to give up. He was impetuous, generous and self-willed. His conduct now was characteristic of the man. Christ has spoken of death; Peter declares that he will die too for his Master's sake.

John 13:38 Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

The Lord reveals to him his weakness. Before the cock shall crow for the dawn of the next morning he will have thrice denied his Lord. For the fulfillment of this prediction, cf:

Luke 22:54-61 Then took they him, and led *him*, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off. 22:55 And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. 22:56 But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. 22:57 And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. 22:58 And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. 22:59 And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this *fellow* also was with him: for he is a Galilaean. 22:60 And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. 22:61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Peter had bravely attempted to defend his Master with a sword when the company came, led by Judas, but when Christ was led away, he "followed afar off." First, in the hall of the high priest, he denied to the maid servant that he knew Christ; then he denied to another man. About an hour later another said, "'Of a truth this fellow was with him; for he is a Galilean.'" And Peter denied with oath, declaring, "Man, I know not what you say." Just then the cock crowed for the approach of day.

Sources: KJV, e-Sword, Clarke's Commentary, but mainly B.W. Johnson's Commentary.