

EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #53

John 13:31-38

Now that Judas was out of the room, Jesus could begin serious teaching for the true disciples concerning many topics. He didn't have much time because things were going to move forward very quickly. Judas was on his satanic mission and he would quickly fulfill it.

The first topic that Jesus addresses is that it is time for Him to leave and this was all for the glory of God. Don't miss this key point. You will notice that the word "glorified" and "glorify" occur five times in two verses - **verses 31 & 32.**

The word "glorify" is doxazo (δοξάζω) from which we get our English word doxology. It is a word that means to think in terms of or hold an opinion of splendor, majesty, praise and honor (Smith, p. 121). To glorify God is to think in lofty terms about God, mentally viewing Him as majestic, Who deserves all praise, honor, glory and majesty. Now Jesus is connecting this "glorification" kind of thinking about God to Him going to the cross. In other words, **when properly understood, the cross-work of Jesus Christ should not be viewed as a defeat, but as the greatest God-glorifying event to ever exist.** The cross glorifies God. It shows His love, His mercy and His grace. It glorifies God. When someone believes on Jesus Christ and is saved because of the cross-work of Jesus Christ, it glorifies God. **Someone who believes he can save himself by his works or religion, will never be saved and will never glorify God, for man's work does not glorify God, Christ's cross-work does.** The point Jesus brings out is this:

JESUS WANTS HIS DISCIPLES TO KNOW THAT ALL THE EVENTS ABOUT TO HAPPEN TO JESUS CHRIST, SPECIFICALLY HIS PENDING CRUCIFIXION, ARE FOR THE PURPOSE OF BRINGING GLORY TO GOD THE FATHER AND GOD THE SON.

This is the first theme Jesus brings up now that Judas is out of the room. There are things He teaches that Judas will completely miss. There is doctrine and critical Grace Age information that Judas never grasped, because he was now out of the picture. Jesus takes His disciples to a whole new level of instruction and it all started when Judas was out of the picture. As Dr. Boice said now that the atmosphere had been cleared, Jesus was free to speak (*John*, Vol. 4, p. 1031).

Sometimes the greatest blessings and growth will occur when a Judas-type is gone. As near as we may determine, there are four main instructive points that Jesus gives to His disciples:

DISCIPLESHIP INSTRUCTION #1 – It is now time for the Son of Man and God the Father to be glorified. **13:31-32**

We may observe from **verse 31** that when Judas had gone out, Jesus uses an adverb "now." This refers to now what was about to happen, which would put Him on the cross. There was no way that Jesus was going to tell Judas, that by him being an evil traitor, it would bring glory to God, but now that he was gone Jesus could freely teach His loyal disciples about it.

What these disciples were about to see in the next hours would not look like anything that would glorify God. But this was the greatest God-glorifying moment ever to be on this earth.

In these two verses, there are three main points Jesus makes:

Point #1 - The cross glorifies the Son of Man . **13:31a**

It almost seems odd that Jesus uses the phrase “Son of Man” rather than “Son of God” especially when one considers that John’s purpose is to present Jesus Christ as the only God/Savior. However there is good reason for this because the stress here is that His willingness to permit His Deity to take on humanity was that which glorified God. He had to die as a man, the God/man on that cross, because His death was for sinful man. As Dr. Whitelaw said, Christ is referring “not to the preexistent glory which belonged to Him as the eternal Son, but to that which had been conferred on Him as the incarnate Son through whom the glory of God had been manifested to the world” (*Commentary on John*, p. 297). Christ’s full glory was about to be seen by the entire world. He would go to the cross as the God/man and on that cross He would die looking like every other man nailed to a cross. But three days later, He would rise from the dead and fully display the glory of God. The cross glorifies God the Son.

Point #2 - The cross glorifies God the Father . **13:31b**

This is so moving because all of this negative stuff is about to happen to Jesus Christ and His thought is about the glory of God the Father.

There is no question that there is an intimate connection between God the Father and God the Son. Both are glorified as God and both are glorified by the cross. The cross of Jesus Christ in the mind of God is the most God-glorifying moment in the history of the world. It glorifies God the Son and God the Father. Notice God the Father will glorify God the Son “in Himself.” This is a powerful proof of Christ’s Deity for He is God and is glorified as God “in Himself.”

Point #3 - God the Father will specifically glorify God the Son immediately . **13:32**

What was about to take place in the next immediate hours was all about the glory of God. Jesus wanted His disciples to realize that His death, burial, resurrection and ultimately His ascension were all about the glory of God. This was all God’s work for God’s glory. This is not about Judas sneaking around getting Jesus Christ killed. This is about the eternal plan of God.

There is nothing that has happened in world history that will ever come close to the importance of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Just this past week, a survey was conducted among religious people, most of whom believe in God, and their conclusion was there were multiple ways to God and to heaven. There is only one way and it is through the cross of Jesus Christ. God is not glorified by our works; He is glorified by Christ’s cross-work. Christ on that cross solves the justice, the righteousness, the holiness of God issue. It displays the love, the mercy and grace of God. It destroys the work of Satan, it reverses the Adamic curse and makes it possible for God to have a relationship with sinners like us. The cross of Jesus Christ is layered with the glory of God. It is the only way to a relationship with God. It is the only work that glorifies God. H. A. Ironside said that there was a woman who was asked if she were saved and she said she didn’t understand the process. She said she could see that Jesus died for her, but she felt there was something she needed to do because it seemed so simple that she just had to believe in Christ. Ironside said it was God who sent His Son to die and it was God who put all of your sin on His Son and His Son took all the wrath you deserve and the whole sacrifice satisfied Him and glorified Him so certainly if God is satisfied with it, so should you be (*John*, p. 578).

DISCIPLESHIP INSTRUCTION #2 – I will only be with you for a short time and then I am going to a place that you cannot come. **13:33**

The words “little children” is a tender word used by Jesus concerning His disciples. He wanted these eleven special friends to know that He was about to embark on a God-glorifying assignment that none of them could go on. It would happen in a “little while,” which meant in just a few hours. The irony here is that Christ’s greatest moment to the glory of God was the disciples’ saddest moment in the history of their lives. His glorification meant their separation. Now the disciples could have followed Him in physically dying, but they could not follow Him in His purpose for dying.

He was about to die for all the sins of the world. **Now carefully notice this because this verse proves you cannot save yourself.** Where Christ was going - to a cross to take the sins of the world and the wrath of God is not an assignment in which we may follow. Only He can do this. Only He can accomplish this. All we can do is link into Him by faith.

DISCIPLESHIP INSTRUCTION #3 – My new command for you is that you love one another as I have loved you. **13:34-35**

Verse 34 begins by saying this is a new commandment. The adjective “new” is critical to understanding what is meant here. There are two different Greek words translated “new” in English. The first (νεος) has to do with newness of time or new in the sense of being recent (G. Abbott-Smith, p. 226). For example, you buy a used car and it is new to you in time. You may legitimately say “I purchased a new car.” The second word (καινος) refers to new in the sense of the quality being unused or unworn. This is the word you would use if you purchased a brand new vehicle that had never been owned by anyone else. This is the word used here.

Jesus is saying I want your love to go to a brand new level of quality. Loving people is certainly not a new concept, for even in the O.T., Israel was admonished to love God and love their neighbors (Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18). The new dimension is a new quality about the love is that it has a brand new object - “one another”; it is to have a brand new level - “as I have loved you.” This new type of love stems from a consciousness of Christ’s love for us.

The verb “love” (αγαπω) is agape, which is the highest kind of love one may demonstrate that chooses to do the best for another even if it means making a sacrifice. Prior to this time, Jews loved their neighbors, other Jews. Now the command is to love all other believers who have the same kind of faith. The pronoun “another” (αλληλοις) is another of the same kind or mutual kind. If we put this into the immediate context here, this is not a command to love everyone including Judas-types; it is a command to love those who are mutually and similarly dedicated to Jesus Christ.

The new level of love that we are to have is “as I have loved you.” There ought to be a willingness for us to demonstrate a sacrificial love for all true dedicated servants of God. We should especially rally around the faithful believer. Jesus is asking His disciples to take their love to a brand new, fresh level or quality.

H. A. Ironside and James Montgomery Boice said a good way to love as Christ loved us was to turn to I Corinthians 13:4-7 and substitute the name Jesus for the noun love: “Jesus is patient, Jesus is kind, Jesus is not jealous, Jesus does not brag, Jesus is not arrogant, Jesus does not act unbecomingly, Jesus does not seek His own, Jesus is not provoked, Jesus does not take into account a wrong suffered, Jesus does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but Jesus does rejoice with the truth. Jesus bears all things, Jesus believes all things, Jesus hopes all things and endures all things.” Boice said then substitute the pronoun “I” for Jesus and you will love like He did (*John*, Vol. 4, p. 1041).

Now Jesus says if you will love each other this way, “all” will know you are My disciple. Not might know or can know but “will” know. It is so interesting that later Jesus will tell these disciples that they will be able to do the same kinds of miraculous things He did (14:12); however, the thing that would really set them apart as His disciple was not so much what they did but how they loved.

We can tell people about the love of God and we can tell people what we believe and that will not convince them nearly as much as how we care for one another.

J. Vernon McGee tells the story of when he was a boy, his dad died and he went to work to support his mother and sister. He stayed with two aunts and his bachelor uncle. One aunt was a Baptist and the other was a Presbyterian. The uncle was a beer-drinking unbeliever. Every Sunday after church they would all sit down for the noon meal and at the table, McGee said, we heard all the Baptist dirt and the Presbyterian dirt. Years later, when the uncle was in the hospital about to die, one of Dr. McGee’s aunts wept and asked him why the uncle refused to trust Christ and McGee said he concluded that it was because you do not win people to Christ by being Christian cannibals. **Many do not come to church to hear the gospel because all they hear before they get to church is the gossip** (J. Vernon McGee, *John*, Vol. 4, p. 456).

If you want to witness loudly outside of church, love one another in church.

DISCIPLESHIP INSTRUCTION #4 – It is time for Jesus to die, but it is not time yet for the disciples to die. **13:36-38**

Peter immediately wanted to know where Jesus was going and in just a few moments Thomas will want to know the same thing (14:5).

As mind-boggling as this is, these disciples whom Jesus loved don’t have a clue as to what is happening.

By using the names “Simon Peter” we immediately see that Peter is a man with two natures, the old and the new. By this fact alone, none of these disciples could follow Jesus Christ. Christ is going to the cross to die for sins and in order to do that, He must be the Holy, God/man hanging on the cross. Peter was a disciple, but he was also a sinner, which meant in the sacrifice for sin death, no one could follow Jesus Christ.

In **verse 37** Peter said that he was willing to lay down his life for the Lord. But he did not know himself nor the power of Satan for Jesus brings out the fact that Peter would deny Him three times before daybreak, which is when the rooster crows.

The big difference between Judas' betrayal and Peter's is that Judas was cold-blooded and calculated in his betrayal. He planned it and was paid for it. Peter's was emotional and spontaneous. He got caught up in the moment. Furthermore, Judas was not a believer and Peter was.

But we need to realize that any believer has the potential of falling and failing. This must have shocked the other disciples wondering whether or not Peter was the traitor. But notice in **verse 36** Jesus says, eventually you will follow Me, Peter. In other words, you will die for Me.

Now what these disciples are learning here is that Jesus Christ is in control of every single moment and every single event that is taking place. He knows what will happen to Him and He knows what will happen to Peter and He knows what will happen to them.

Our moment of death will eventually come if the Lord tarries. The amazing grace of this text is that Christ's cross-work makes it possible for sinners like us to glorify God. No matter how you have sinned or betrayed Christ, you can glorify God.