

## Sermon #90 — John's Gospel

Title:            **LOVED TO PERFECTION**

Text:            John 13:1

Subject:        *Our Savior's Great Love for His Elect*

Date:            Sunday Morning — July 11, 2010

Tape:            John #90

Reading:        *John 13:1-19*

### **JOHN 13:1-19**

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.
2. And supper being ended, the devil having now put 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 was come from God, and went to God;
4. He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.
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.
6. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?
7. Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

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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.

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

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.

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

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?

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

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

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

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.

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

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.

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

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Let's open our Bibles to John chapter 13. — The Lord Jesus is on his way to Calvary, where he must be made sin for us. There, upon the cursed tree, “**bearing our sins in his own body on the tree,**” he must suffer and die as the cursed thing, the thing specifically cursed of God. In just a few hours, the holy Lamb of God must go through Gethsemane's darkness. There he would anticipate being made sin, being forsaken by his Father in those three hours of darkness. In Gethsemane, he will begin to drink the bitter cup. His very heart crushed within him, he will sweat great drops of blood, falling to the ground. In less than twenty-four hours those very hands that washed the disciples' feet would be nailed to the cross, and he who spoke so tenderly to his little band of followers would be in his death agonies, suffering all the horror of hell, all the horror of God's infuriated wrath in the room and stead of his people.

**What was on his mind?** What were his thoughts? It is important to know that which is on a man's heart when he comes to the end of his life, when he knows he is about to leave this world. Someone long ago wrote, “The ruling passion is strong in death.” The ruling passion of a person's life is strong in death, be that passion hypocrisy or sincerity, whether it be selfish or magnanimous, “the ruling

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passion is strong in death.” As men are leaving this world, they usually reveal that which is the chief, ruling passion by which they have lived.

That was certainly the case with our blessed Savior. He had almost reached the end of his earthly life. He now came to a time of great trouble and agony of heart and soul. He was about to endure the great and terrible death of the cross, by which he would purchase and obtain eternal redemption for all God’s elect. What was uppermost in his mind? What filled his heart? What did he think of his disciples in that hour, when he had so many things to occupy his mind?

- His Betrayal By Judas
- The Agony And Bloody Sweat Of Gethsemane
- His Approaching Death
- Peter’s Denial
- Being Made Sin
- His Father Forsaking Him
- All His Disciples Forsaking Him
- His Torturous Death

What was on his mind? What thoughts occupied his heart? What moved his soul? Read John 13:1 with me, and these questions are answered in the most amazing way imaginable.

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“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.”

(John 13:1)

The Savior’s love burned as brightly at the Passover Supper as it had ever burned before. Indeed, the Savior’s love had never burned so brightly before! Behold how he loved his disciples! — Even at the end of his life he still loved them. — *“Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.”* The title of my message is **LOVED TO PERFECTION**. You will see the reason I have chosen that title when I have given you the last point of the message. — **LOVED TO PERFECTION**.

“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.”

O Holy Spirit, speak now by your Word to the hearts of these immortal souls, that we may this day be made to know *“the love of Christ that passeth knowledge!”*

I want to do the best I can to expound this marvellous revelation of God line by line and word by word. I do not

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us want to miss, or lightly pass over anything in this text that is bursting with life.

### **BEFORE THE PASSOVER**

First, John connects the Savior's love for his own with the passover. — *“Now before the feast of passover...”* — The feast of passover was the Mosaic annual celebration of redemption, the celebration of God redeeming Israel out of bondage. The feast was instituted by God himself. The great day of the feast, the highest holy day in Israel, was the Day of Atonement, when the paschal lamb was slain and its blood sprinkled upon the mercy-seat by God's high priest.

But God's purpose in giving that commemorative celebration was much, much more than a mere reminder of what he had done. The whole feast was, when kept by believing men and women, a blessed celebration of faith, anticipating what he would do! — It was a picture of Christ our Passover being sacrificed for us!

“Paschal Lamb, by God appointed,  
All our sins were on Thee laid;  
By Almighty love anointed,  
Thou hast full atonement made.  
All Thy people are forgiven  
Through the virtue of Thy blood;

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Opened is the gate of heaven,  
Peace is made for us with God.

Savior, hail! enthroned in glory,  
There for ever to abide;  
All the heavenly hosts adore Thee  
Seated at Thy Father's side;  
Worship, honor, power, and blessing,  
Thou art worthy to receive;  
Loudest praises, without ceasing,  
Meet it is for us to give.”

In our text the Lord Jesus has his mind fixed upon the purpose for which he had come into the world. He came here to give his life a ransom for many, that we might receive the forgiveness of sin in him! —— Read on...

## **JESUS KNEW**

Second, we are told that the Lord Jesus knew he was about to depart out of this world. — “*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...*” — Oh, what a change was now coming over our dear Redeemer! Though it is here stated in the most tender terms possible, the Spirit of God here tells us that our Lord Jesus knew he was about to die.

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- He had come to die.
- He knew that he must to die.
- He knew that he was about to die.
- And he knew all that he must suffer in dying!

Yet, such is the fulness of his love that even as he anticipated the wormwood and the gall, his heart was upon his people. — *“Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end!”* He set his face like a flint to go up to Jerusalem; but there was no flint in his heart!

**The Lord Jesus undertook the work of our redemption, as our covenant Surety before he made the worlds.** He must go through with it. Death itself could not change his love. Truly, his *“love is strong as death”* (Song of Solomon 8:6), — and stronger than death!

“Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if *a* man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.”

(Song of Solomon 8:7)

In our Lord’s case, love was stronger than that death of deaths which he deigned to die that he might make us live. Now is his great *“hour”* of trial; but he is true to *“his own”* even in this dreadful hour. He is about to die; but he still loved *“his own.”*



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**That is not all. The blessed Savior was about to depart out of this world, to go away from his disciples.** Soon, they would see him no more. Soon, they would hear his voice no more. It may be true that “Absence makes the heart grow fonder,” but men often forget those they profess to love when they are separated from them. **Many hearts are shamefully, but completely, dependent upon sight.** But it is not so with Christ. All the distance between earth and heaven was soon to intervene between our Lord and his disciples; yet he loved them, and he loves them still. No distance makes any difference between him and “*his own.*” — “*Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*”

**More than that, he was going unto the Father!** None of us have the slightest idea what that involved! I will not attempt to describe the heavenly splendors of his throne, the glories which his redeemed delight to lay at his foot, the songs which angels continually sing in his presence. His glory, now that he has returned to his Father, is glory that no mortal heart can imagine and no mortal mind can conceive! Yet, we may confidently sing...

“Now though he reigns exalted high,  
His love is still as great;  
Well he remembers Calvary,

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Nor lets his saints forget.”

I cannot describe the wondrous experiences of our Lord Jesus, from life to death, from death to resurrection, from resurrection to ascension, from ascension to the glories of his Father’s throne. But all those changes made no change in him, none of them. — *“Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.”*

### **“HAVING LOVED”**

Now, in the third place, we are given a full description of how the Lord Jesus had loved his own up to this point in time: — *“Having loved his own.”*

How much can be done with one stroke of a pen! With those four words John gives us the whole history of Christ’s dealings with his disciples. — *“Having loved his own.”*

Remember, that is how he began with them; and that is how he began with us. They were poor and insignificant; but he loved them. He showed his love for them by calling them to be his own. That love wrought effectually upon their hearts, and made them obedient to his call. He began his relationship with them by loving them. **The Lord Jesus loved my soul out of the pit.** I do not know a better way to

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describe conversion and salvation than that. Do you? — Christ has loved us out of the pit! **The love of God loves us up out of the pit and loves us to Christ.** Thus Christ loved his people from the beginning, with an everlasting love, and proves his love by drawing them to himself, and the cords he uses to draw them to himself are the bands of his love.

**Having begun by loving them, he taught them.** And all his teaching was love, for they were, like you and me, very slow learners, quick to forget and slow to remember. Yet, he went on teaching them because he loved them. Had he not loved them, he would not have tolerated them. — Did he not love us, he would soon cast us aside, and look for a people more worthy.

**“Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?”** What massive love there is in that question! So was it when he was dealing with **Thomas**. In his tenderness he submitted without question to the doubting disciple’s test. He said to him, *“Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.”* All his teaching, all his doctrine dripped with mercy, love, and grace. All his lessons were lessons of love.

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**The Lord kept on loving his disciples, though they were sinners still and far from perfect disciples.** What weaknesses and infirmities they had, all of them!

- When in the tempest, they were fearful and suspected the Lord Jesus of caring nothing for them. Yet, he loved them.
- When he told them of his certain death and resurrection, they understood not the words that he spoke. Yet, he loved them still.
- When he looked into the future and saw that they all would soon be cowardly and faithless, he loved them still. He said, “*All ye shall be offended because of me this night,*” and so it came to pass, for “*they all forsook him.*”
- He told Peter that he would deny him thrice; and so it came to pass. Yet, “*Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*”

**In spite of all their weaknesses, sins, failures, rebellions, inconsistencies, and ignorance, the Lord Jesus kept on loving them!** He had made up his mind to love them, and he never ceased to love them as long as he was with them, and he has gone on loving them ever since. When he was about to depart out of the world unto the Father, they still needed to have their feet washed, and he still loved them **He loved them enough to stoop before each one and wash their feet!** All the infirmities, the imperfections, the

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carnality, the dullness, the unbelief, and the hardness of their hearts, which he saw in them did not cause his love for them to cool or diminish in the least. — *“Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.”*

**That sums it all up.** There was never a touch of hate, there was never the slightest anger, there was never a sign of weariness, there was never the slightest lukewarmness in the Savior’s love. It was always just this, — *“Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.”*

**That is the love of Christ to his chosen; and that is the love of Christ to me!** I never knew, I never heard of such a lover as he is. I never dreamed that he could be such a lover as he has been and is to me. Oh, how I have vexed and grieved his gracious heart! But never, never, never once have I found anything from him but love! — *“Having loved his own.”* That expression sums up the whole of Christ’s conduct towards his chosen people. It reveals every feature of his character. There it is, all of it. You may apply a microscope, and look as long as you like, but you will find that it is all there. — *“Having loved his own.”*

**“HIS OWN”**

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Fourth, John identifies the objects of the Savior's love as "*his own*." That is a very brief description; but it is magnificent and full. — "*Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*" — "**His own**" — Do you know how they came to be "*his own*"?

**He chose them as his own before the worlds were made.** As long as the Scripture stands the doctrine of election can never be eradicated from it. Before the day-star knew its place, or planets ran their rounds, Christ had made his choice; and, having made it, he stood to it. **He chose them for his love; and he loved them for his choice.**

Having loved them and having chosen them, **he espoused them unto himself.** — "*They shall be mine,*" said he; "I will be married to them, I will be bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh." Therefore, in the fullness of time, he came here, made one with our humanity, that he might be seen to be a true Husband to "*his own*" — "*his own*" by choice, "*his own*" by espousal.

**They were "his own" by divine gift, too.** His Father gave them to him. The Father committed them into his hands. "*Thine they were,*" said the Savior, "*and thou gavest them me.*" The Father loved the Son and committed all things into his hands; but he made a special committal of his own chosen people. He gave them to him, and entered with him

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into surety engagements on their behalf, that as they were his sheep, committed to his charge, he would deliver them up to the heavenly fold, and not one of them would be torn by the wolf, or die of the frost or the heat, but that all would pass again under the rod of him who counts the sheep. He has sworn, — *“I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant”* (Ezekiel 20:37).

The great Shepherd of the sheep will take care of the whole flock that was entrusted to his care. He will not lose one of his sheep. In the last day he will say, “Father, here I am, and the children that you gave me; of all that you gave me I have lost none.” Thus, they are *“his own”* by his own choice, *“his own”* by espousal, and *“his own”* by his Father’s gift.

**And all those whom the Lord Jesus calls “his own” are his by a wondrous purchase, by the purchase of his own life’s blood!** He looked upon their redemption as being already accomplished, for in his prayer he said to his Father, *“I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”* Truly, the work was finished from the foundation of the world, and in just another twenty-four hours, our blessed Lord Jesus would cry, *“It is finished!”* Think often my brother, think often my sister, how dearly bought you are. Think often of the fact that you belong to Christ, that

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you are numbered among “*his own*” by the price of his own blood! — “*Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price.*” Oh, what a price he paid!

**He loved us better than he loved himself.** He paid the purchase price for us that was demanded by the law and justice of the Triune Jehovah, the price required that we might be made the righteousness of God in him! Well may he call us “*his own*” when it cost him so much to redeem us.

**And we have become “his own” by his conquest of his love.** He called his disciples by his grace. He drew each one of them by cords of love. And they ran after him. That is just the way it is with you and me, with all who are his. You remember when he drew you; do you not? Can you ever forget when, at last, you yielded to the power of those bands of love, those cords of a man? How gladly we now sing, —

“Oh, happy day, that fixed my choice  
On Thee, my Savior, and my God;  
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,  
And tell its raptures all abroad!

‘Tis done! the great transaction’s done;  
I am my Lord’s, and He is mine:



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He drew me, and I followed on,  
Charmed to confess the voice divine.”

**We “his own” because of the force of his irresistible love.** His love has conquered our hearts. — “*We love him because he first loved us!*” There is no greater joy to our souls than the knowledge that we belong to Christ, that we are “his own.” The fact that we truly are Christ’s is the fountain of innumerable pleasures and blessings. The Son of God calls us “his own” — his own sheep, — his own disciples, — his own friends, — his own brethren, — the members of his own body. **What a title for such things as we are to wear,** — “his own!” We are HIS OWN! He owns us. He calls us “his own.” **With those two magnificent words, he distinguishes us from the rest of mankind, and sets us apart unto himself.** “*My name shall be named on them,*” he says. “His own” — **Surely, that is the highest honor that can be put upon us even in the last great day.** “*They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.*”

**Oh, the wondrous sovereignty of divine love!** I trust that there are some here whom the Son of God calls “his own” although they do not yet know that it is so. Bought with his blood, but they are not aware of it. Chosen before the foundation of the world, and yet they have not discovered it. May the Lord God reveal his everlasting love to you and

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in you, may he make your calling and election sure to you, by working faith in you, by conquering you now with his irresistible love!

### **“WHICH WERE IN THE WORLD”**

Now, fifth, the Spirit of God reminds us where “*his own*” are who are loved by the Lord Jesus. — “*Having loved his own which were in the world.*” There is something wondrous about this declaration — “*which were in the world.*” All of you know more about what this means than I can. As your pastor, maintained in my livelihood by your generosity, I live a very secluded life. I am very seldom confronted with the people among whom you live every day. You live in the midst of heathendom. The sooner we believe that terrible truth the better, because it is really so; and the Church of God in the world is nothing but a travelling tent in the midst of a world that lives in the wicked one. We are “*in the world.*” Like Lot was in Sodom, you are in the world, vexed day by day in your righteous soul with all that is paraded before you every hour, in every place. To be “*in the world*” is to be in the midst of...

- Unrestrained Idolatry!
- Abounding Wickedness!
- Relentless Blasphemy!

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**Being in the world, these disciples soon began to be persecuted.** They were stoned, imprisoned, and dragged into the amphitheatre to be torn of lions. Yet, *“having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.”* — *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in-Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

- In the world we are tempted.
- In the world we are afflicted.
- In the world we suffer.
- In the world we are in pain.
- In the world we sin.
- In the world we get sick.
- In the world we are bereaved.
- In the world we die.

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We have losses and crosses because we are “*in the world.*” God’s curse still rests upon the earth: “*Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.*” — Nothing else! You may do what you like with it, but you cannot make it stop bringing forth thorns and thistles. They will continue to spring up as surely as the dust will return to the dust from whence it came. Yet, we read that the Lord Jesus, “*having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*” All the things we experience in the world come upon us and are brought to pass by him who loved us from everlasting, loved us at Calvary, and loves us now!

**“TO THE END”**

Here is the sixth and last thing revealed in our text. Our Savior loves his own, who are in the world, unto the end. — “*Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*” He who loved us from everlasting will love us always. — “*He loved them unto the end.*” What does that sentence mean?

**Without question, it must be asserted that the Lord Jesus loved his own...**

- Unto the end of his obedience.
- Unto the end of the law’s demands.
- Unto the end of the curse.
- Unto the end of their transgressions.

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- Unto the end of God's wrath.

**But the text specifically means that his love is constant, immutable, and unending.** The Hebrew phrase “*His mercy endureth for ever*” might be rendered, “His mercy endureth to the end.” That is, to the end which has no end, for there never will be an end to his mercy; and his love is continual, everlasting love, it will never come to an end. Having loved them while he was in the world with them, he loves them right straight on, and always will love them when time shall be no more.

**The words of our text might be translated, “having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the uttermost.”**

- He loves his people to the utmost stretch of love.
- He loves us to the utmost length of our need.
- He loves us without measure.

**The sentence might also be rendered, “He loved them to perfection.”** — “*Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto perfection.*” Now listen to me...

- The Lord Jesus loves us perfectly.
- The knowledge of his perfect love casts out all fear.

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- And the sure and certain result of his love is the everlasting, glorious perfection of all “*his own.*” ——  
Yes, he loves us unto perfection!

(Ephesians 5:25-27) “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; <sup>26</sup> That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup> That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

(Jude 1:24-25) “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, <sup>25</sup> To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

(Jude 1:21) “Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

“Jesus, lover of my soul,  
Let me to thy bosom fly!”

Amen.