

John Ch 13:18-38

“Discerning Jesus’ Disciples”

As the drama continues to unfold for us here in John ch 13, and we step back into this situation here, Jesus has just given these His disciples a *powerfully profound* and *penetrating* object lesson in *practical* servanthood. They were all arguing and at each other over who it was that would be the greatest in the kingdom; and Jesus demonstrated for them how that the way to *exaltation* is through *humiliation*, the way *up* is *down*, the way to become *1st* is to choose to become *last*, and that the way one *leads* others is through *servicing* others. It’s been well said that the branch that *bears* the most fruit *bows* the lowest. and Really He was simply showing them how the overflow His of love will exemplify itself in our lives, for the fruit of the Spirit *is* love, and to love and to give of one’s self, or to serve, is like hand in glove, they naturally go together.

But He was also simultaneously showing them the need to *abide* in Him and in His Word, (and He’ll expound on that more in Ch 15) but we realize that this powerful example in practical service, wasn’t just a demonstration of humility. But it was also an illustration of sanctification, and how we’re sanctified through confession, and the washing of the water of Word of God as it flows over our feet (proverbially speaking) and keeps us entirely clean. The washing of the disciple’s feet wasn’t a lesson regarding salvation, but rather sanctification. Now surely we can glean an application regarding salvation when Jesus said there in vs 8, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.” and Truly we’re to be washed by the blood of Christ if we’re to have any part with Christ, there can be no union with Christ unless we’ve been washed by Christ. But in the context Jesus wasn’t speaking about the *initial union* by which we’re united with Christ by the cleansing flow of His blood. But rather the *ongoing communion* and intimacy with Him, which can be severed by sin in our lives, and how that if we’re to have a holy walk, we need to have clean feet.

So He says in vs 10 (read) and we spoke of the cultural relevance to a statement like that and how they were able to glean understanding and insight from that comment, because if you take a bath your body is clean, but if you step out of the bath tub onto a dirt floor, or travel on dirt roads from a bath house to your house, your feet are going to pick up dust and dirt. and So before you hit the sack, you would take a basin of water, wash your feet, and be completely clean. and The Lord was saying that we’re bathed by His blood the moment we surrender our hearts and lives to Him. But inadvertently as we walk through this life, and throughout the week you may be around people who are cussing, and seeking to engage you in ungodly ways, or subject you to ungodly thoughts or whatever. and That’s like the dust and dirt of the world clinging to our feet, violating the holiness, and purity of our walk, and so Jesus says if we’re to maintain that communion with Him we need to remain clean. Now, “*How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.*” Ps 119:9

When Paul was exhorting husbands to love their wives in Eph 5, he gave us insight into the cleansing power of God's Word when he said, "*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*" Eph 5:25-27 and Of course in a little while Jesus will say, "*You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.*" John 15:3

So the exhortation to abide in His word, and to minister to our bros and sisters by the Word, that we might wash one another's feet and in so doing, help solidify a sanctified walk, one that maintains communion and intimacy with Jesus. You see if Jesus being God was humble enough to lower Himself that He might minister to us, and wash us, how much more should we be willing to serve and wash one another?

Vs17-21

Heb 4:13 says, "...there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." Jesus knew that one in His inner circle would betray Him, the thoughts and intents of the heart of Judas Iscariot lay wide open before Him. and Though we can cloud, and cloak the thoughts and intents of our hearts to one another, it's all wide open before Jesus Christ He knows your heart, He knows if you're sincere in your love relationship with Him, and He knows if you're just playing games with God, that when the matter is brought down to the substance you have no heart for the Lord at all. and I pray that as the Lord surveys the hearts of this fellowship, and we all have our bibles, we're all listening intently to the word of God, and join with the congregation in worship, that He's not troubled in spirit, that He wouldn't look out over this body, and say, "Most assuredly I say to you, one of you will betray Me."

We read here that Jesus was "troubled." Now we've encountered this word before, learned of how it speaks of a "rolling of waters" and "Deep agitation." But I don't think that the Lord was troubled over what was in store for *Him* as it related to Judas' betrayal, He's already spoken of His own trouble, and resolved that come what may into His life, the objective of His life was that the name of the Father be glorified. and So I believe the trouble that the Lord is experiencing here is for Judas, He's troubled, not only that a friend would betray Him, but what that betrayal entails for the one who turns his back *on* Him, and takes a stand *against* Him. You recall in Marks gospel we read where Jesus said, "*The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born.*" Mark 14:21 and So what's to become of Judas, troubles Jesus. It's that whole, "*As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.*" Ezek 33:11 Jesus would that Judas would repent, but he won't, and that's why in regards to the disciples being clean, (that's having been made pure before the Father by faith in Jesus) He says it vs 18, "I do not speak concerning all of you."

Jesus knew that Judas wasn't clean, and so though Judas had his feet washed, if you're not bathed in the 1st place, washing your feet won't make you clean. What's the point? That you can sit in church your whole life under the waterfall of the word of God, but if you've never been cleansed by the blood of Christ, you're not clean. It doesn't matter if you're here Sunday after Wednesday after Sunday, coming to church, or catching a study in a home group, or tuning in to 89.3 everyday on your radio, those things in and of themselves won't cleanse anyone from sin. Now surely faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, but the way we're made right before God is by the blood of Christ, not by catching a bible study.

It's amazing the # of people who hang their hat on the fact that they go to church therefore their ok with God! No, you're not ok with God just by coming to church, in fact, as I mentioned last week if you come here and hear the word of God, and have no intention of responding or being obedient to the word of God, (as it pertains at least to salvation) all you do is store up judgment for yourself. Because you're coming in to an understanding, with out any intended obedience, and even as it relates to our sanctification, understanding with out obedience can be a dangerous thing. Peter said it like this, "*For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: 'A dog returns to his own vomit,' and, 'a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.'*" 2 Peter 2:21-22

But as it pertains to Judas, Jesus said he wasn't clean in the 1st place, he never fully gave his heart to Christ, was around Christ, heard the *words* of Christ, saw *works* of Christ, but never surrendered his *heart* to Christ.

He says, "I know whom I have chosen." The point being that even though Judas was #ed among them, Jesus didn't make a mistake when He selected Judas, this didn't take Him by surprise and therefore somehow disqualify His deity because why would anyone select someone to be with them who would never fully be for them? and Jesus answers that here. He says, because the scripture had to be fulfilled; now we need to understand that foreknowledge in no way constitutes causation. I know that when this study is over, a good # of you will leave this place by going back through the foyer and out the front door, but that doesn't mean I'm causing you to do it. and So just because Jesus knew the path that Judas would choose, don't be confused, Judas was operating under the intention of his free will the whole time, he could've repented at any moment, but he chose the pathway to perdition.

The scripture that Jesus quotes here is from Ps 41 which says in the entirety of the vs, "*Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me.*" Ps 41:9 and Of course when Judas seals the deal there in the garden and give the Lord the kiss of betrayal Jesus said to him, "*Friend, why have you come?*" Matt 26:50

As we mentioned last week, many of you are no doubt familiar with what it's like to have a close friend turn on you, and betray you. It's one thing when an enemy seeks your undoing, your demise, but when a friend turns you, or somehow undermines you, it's like a whole new level of hurt.

It crushes your heart, but question is how do I then respond, how do I react when I've been hurt, or betrayed, because that's when it seems the most difficult to allow the Lord to show Himself through me. I want to deal with this one my own way, I want to harden my heart against the situation, callous over and cut that person off. That's the natural thing to do, but it's not the supernatural thing to do, when I do that the love of God is choked out of my heart in that area, and I'm no longer loving as Christ loved. and In a few minutes we'll read where Jesus will say, "As I have loved you, that's the standard by which you're to love one another." Jesus extended Himself to Judas till the very end, even though He knew that Judas was against Him, yet He was reaching out and available *to* Judas.

Jesus is saying here, "I'm telling you guys that this is coming down the tracks so that when it happens you won't be blown away, because I want to send you away, to send you out in My name, and so I want you to be strengthened in your faith, not weakened in your faith by this betrayal wondering how I could pick such a person, the scripture must be fulfilled."

Vs22

Matthew and Mark tell us that they began to question themselves in the matter, and ask the Lord saying, "Lord, is it me?" No one suspected it would be Judas, no one thought he was a bit shady all along, as a matter of fact they trusted his integrity so emphatically that they entrusted the administrative money matters to *him*. So he was the last one they suspected, he was an altogether upright kinda guy, what's my point? The wheat and the tares can grow side by side and from the surface appearance they look strikingly alike. But of course in due season the wheat buds forth it's fruit, the tare, or the weed never will, and though man might not see the difference according to the outward showing, God searches the heart. and As we stated earlier God is very aware of who is genuinely in love with Him, and the one who's relationship with Him is merely skin deep.

Vs23-25

So when Jesus let's the cat out of the bag regarding His betrayal, there begins to be a buzz about the room, they're all freaking out wondering who it would be, if it might even be me? and So Peter, who apparently wasn't able to discreetly ask the Lord himself motions to John, and says, "Ask Him who it is?" Perhaps Peter had intentions of seizing the traitor, or trying to somehow put a stop to such a thing if he knew who it was. and So John leans back and seeks out an answer to their question from the heart of Jesus.

Which by the way is the best place you can take any questions or confusion, or misunderstanding. The best place to seek answers to your questions is from the heart of Jesus, as you spend time *before* Him in prayer, and in fellowship *with* Him through His Word.

Vs26

Now based upon how this all unfolds it seems apparent that what the Lord said here to John wasn't heard by the rest of the guys because they were all freaking out and asking each other who it could be. But what I want you to see here is how the Lord just continues to extend Himself to Judas, and clear up till the very end He's offers him opportunity to repent. This act that Jesus did here, the dipping of the bread and the giving of it to Judas, was in that day a real gesture of honor. It would be similar to offering a toast to someone at a gathering today, it was an honorable gesture, saying, "You're my special guest here." and I don't know about you, but I don't think that Jesus was about hypocritical empty gestures, He was genuinely extending Himself to Judas, saying in essence, Judas, I know you've cut the deal, but you can still pull out, there's still time to repent. and I don't know what's going on in your life, but perhaps the Lord would say to you today, there's still time to repent here, I still love you, and am available to you, and ready to receive you if you'll but repent. But Judas, instead of rejecting the Lord's honor and falling down on his face and saying, "Lord it's me, I'm Your betrayer, be merciful I pray, and forgive me." Received the bread in hypocrisy.

Vs27

Now bear in mind that this is all happening in one swift motion, so that by the time John hears what Jesus *says*, and sees what Jesus *does*, Jesus has already dispatched Judas to fulfill his mission, again showing that the Lord's in control, rather than a victim of circumstance. and I'm sure John was stunned by the Lord's revelation to him, but by the time he saw it, Jesus simultaneously commissioned Judas to do what he's purposed to do. Remember the leaders of the Jews didn't want to take Jesus during the feast, because of all the people, they feared that there might be an uproar. But Jesus is forcing their hand, because He has to be crucified during Passover, to fulfill the scripture (as we've spoken of before). and So having rejected Jesus fully, Judas is given over to Satan totally. The Lord ratified his position, when you receive Christ, God will second that motion, but when you reject Him, God will confirm that as well, but the choice is yours. But even having made his decision, notice he's not beyond the realm of God's control, Jesus told him to leave, and he was compelled to cooperate.

Vs28-30

You see how inconspicuous Judas was, they just assumed Jesus sent him out on an errand of some sort, but he went out immediately, and notice, it was night. Having rejected Jesus Christ Judas was swallowed up in darkness, lost. and Now that the only ones left in the room are those who are genuinely in love with Jesus, He begins to prepare them for His departure, and encourage them regarding what's to come.

Vs31-35

5x in vs 31-32 the words "glorify," or "glorified," are used. and The whole topic of the glory of God there is revolving around the cross, and again though from the human perspective it was an instrument of mutilation and humiliation, from the Divine perspective it was the instrument of glorification. Because it would resolve in salvation, and redemption for man, as many as would call on the name of the Lord.

It's in the light of the cross that Jesus compassionately tells them that where He's going they cannot come. They couldn't be the one's to go to the cross, they couldn't be apart of the redemption of man, or somehow take part in the salvation of man.

Neither can you, and neither can I, and I don't feel it's the case here (at least I hope) but sometimes people can esteem their Pastors in a dangerous way, I'm not talking about giving respect to the office of the Pastorate, that's biblical. But to look to the Pastor to somehow save you, or to save your family, or your marriage, is to lose focus. Jesus Christ is our Savior in every form of the word, I'm nobody's savior, God ministers His Word through me, but I can't save anybody.

But it's our privilege to show people who the Savior is, now how do we do that? Vs 34-35, how do we discern the disciples of Jesus? By the way that we love one another. When Jesus says, "A new commandment I give to you," the word "new" there isn't the word like, "this is something you've never heard." Even in the law the Lord had told them, "...*you shall love your neighbor as yourself*:" Lev 19:18 So the idea there isn't new in the respect of something they've never heard, but new as in the idea of being fresh, Jesus is going to inject something fresh into the standard by which we're to love, and no longer are we to love our neighbor as ourselves, utilizing our self as the standard, but now we're to love one another as *He* has loved us, Jesus raises the standard. This is the mark of the disciple of Christ, *His* love flowing into us, and out through us on to one another.

What kind of love is His love, it's not self absorbed, it's selfless, it's not what can I get, it's how can I give. Like we said last week, Judas would betray Him, yet Jesus would love him, Peter would deny Him, Jesus would love him, they all would turn on Him and not be there for Him, but having loved His own who were in the world, He would love them to the end. The love of Christ constrains us, it compels us to continue to love when we're not being loved, it suffers long and is kind. The love of Christ does not envy, it's not proud, it's not rude, the love of Christ doesn't seek it's own, it isn't provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; the love of Christ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Christ's love never fails. (and Of course I'm quoting there from 1st Cor 13).

But Jesus is saying here, don't love as if you're the standard, love as if *I'm* the standard. "...*be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*" Eph 4:32 We quoted from Eph 5 earlier regarding the cleansing power of God's word, but we read there the way that Christ loved us when Paul wrote how the husbands were to love their wives, "...*just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,*" Eph 5:25 and To look on a people who will turn on you, or undermine you, or somehow scourge your with their words, and spit in your face and say, "Father forgive them they know not what they do." It just isn't a natural thing to do, it's supernatural, how can one maintain a strong yet tender heart in the face of such opposition, and turmoil?

I think it's in being a continual recipient of the love of Christ ourselves, how can something flow *out from* me, if it's never dispensed *into* me? and So I need to implore the Lord that He might *fill me* with *His* love lest the notions of my own flesh choke it out. The fruit of the Spirit is love, the evidence of Christ in my life is love, "By *this* all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." *His love* for one another, not if your sermons are spellbinding, and mesmerizing (which I for one am thankful). Not if you're so holy, or if you cling to the fundamentals of faith. Not if you state that you believe that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, sinless in nature, walked the earth as God in the flesh, died a substitutionary death as the spotless lamb of God, shed His blood for the remission of sin, resurrected the 3rd day, sits at the right hand of God interceding for the saints and is coming again to receive His bride (the church) out of the world in a pre-millennial fashion. None of those things (as good as they are) will show anyone that you belong to Jesus Christ

The mark of Jesus Christ *upon* your life is the Love of God flowing *through* your life, that's how we're to discern the disciples of Christ. In his 1st epistle John put it like this, "*If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.*" 1 John 4:20-21 Now Peter, still caught up on vs 33, and the comment about not being able to go where Jesus is going says this.

Vs36-37

Peter thought he was ready to die for his Lord before his Lord died for him.

Vs38

Since this thought carries through to Ch 14 we'll comment on these vs next time. Discerning Jesus' disciples, what's that that begins to make the evidential difference between the wheat and the tares, the fruit. What's the difference between a true disciple of Jesus, and a counterfeit, the love of Christ, Paul said, "*Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;*" Rom 12:10

I'll close with this thought, how does one allow the love of Christ to be demonstrated through them practically? How do I allow the love of Jesus to flow through me personally? Now whether you'll like this answer or not I don't know, but here it is; by faith. Reckoning the old man to be dead that Christ might lead His life through me. Paul said it like this, "*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*" Gal 2:20

To mix and mingle the Greek a little bit we might hear it like this, "Ego, has been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer "I" or "Ego" who lives, but Christ lives in me." So then what of the existence that I have in the flesh? I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.

If you're here and you've never given your heart and you're life to Jesus Christ God wants to fill you with His love today, to fill you with His Spirit, and forgive you of your sin. Jesus Christ, the Son of God loves you, and has given Himself for you upon the cross. Greater love has no man than this, than to lay down His life for His friends, and Jesus laid down His life for you, you can leave this place the friend of God, by simply lowering your guard, and letting Jesus into your life. He's the way the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father but by Him, He wants to give you new life, and a clean slate, but that choice is up to you, will you open the door of your heart and receive Jesus Christ today? Let today be the day of salvation for you.