

8.26.18 ~ John 13:31-38,  
Jesus Tells His Disciples He is Going Away.

John records Jesus' last night with 11 of His disciples, for in the early morning hours Jesus will be arrested, and then later that day, He will be crucified.

**Read John 13:31-35...** It was only after Judas had gone out, that Jesus now begins to encourage, comfort, and instruct those who genuinely belonged to Him.

This is part of Jesus' last instruction to the 11 before He goes to the cross. Jesus' farewell message goes from chapter 13 through 16; these concluding words from Jesus present everything His followers need to know about discipleship and the distinguishing attributes of true Christianity.

The Son's greatest desire is to bring glory to His Father, and the Father's greatest desire is His Son's glory. Our main purpose as Christians is to give glory to God, i.e., to live in such a manner as to bring honor to Him in everything we do.

Look again at **verses 31-33**, Therefore when [Judas] had gone out, Jesus said, "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 will glorify Him immediately. Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.'"

Jesus Christ was God incarnate, yet His glory as God was hidden, veiled, except for the Transfiguration on the mountain (cf. **Matthew 17:1-8**), for He had set aside His glory to put on flesh, in order to go to the cross for us (see **Philippians 2:5-11**).

John 13-16 takes place the last night Jesus is with His disciples, for the next day, in His crucifixion, He would be glorified. Everything had been set into motion with Judas' betrayal, for in just a few hours, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Judas would lead soldiers to arrest Jesus, take Him away, and later that day He would be put to death, at which time He would be glorified.

Even though the cross looked like shame and failure, it was glorifying. In His death our Lord will experienced the deep humiliation, innocent of any crime, crucified with criminals, God's wrath for our sin being poured out upon Him, while being separated from His Father, and yet, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified."

In His death Jesus brought salvation to doomed sinners by destroying sin's curse, defeating Satan, and purchasing for Himself all those who belong to God. At His death Jesus would declare, "It is finished," bringing redemption to all who would believe in Him.

God is glorified in Christ's death, burial, resurrection, exaltation, and His coming again, all those things are essential to the gospel message. And so, as believers

and followers of Christ, we are to continue proclaiming that gospel, as we worship Him and exemplify His love, declaring His sovereign authority over all.

The love of God was manifest at Christ's death, for even though the wickedness of the human heart nailed Jesus to a cross, the sovereign love of God overcame it all, displaying His glory and power.

The wages of sin is death; God's justice demands that someone must die for sin's penalty. As Jesus hung on the Cross, "[The Father]... caused the iniquity [sinfulness] of us all to fall on Him" (**Isaiah 53:6**).

By paying our debt for sin, Jesus glorified God on the cross, displaying God's righteousness in bringing judgement, but also God's mercy in bringing forgiveness.

God's holiness could not look upon on the sins of the world, and so, Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (**Matthew 27:46**).

God had promised the world a Savior, and so the sinless Christ was offered up to receive the full punishment for the wages of sin, for God was faithful to His Word, even though it cost Him His only Son.

John writes (**1John 4:10**), "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation [appeasement] for our sins." We cannot begin to comprehend the love that would cause God to send His Son to die as payment for our sins.

Notice the divine truth (**verse 32**) that the Father and the Son are glorifying each other, "If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately" in His death, but also in His resurrection, ascension, and exaltation at the right hand of the Father in heaven; and yet, His greatest glory is yet in the future, meaning that Jesus was going to have to leave them, so He says (**verse 33**), "Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.'"

In the agony of His own impending death and subsequent glory, He calls the disciples "[His] little children," telling them He must leave them, and they can't follow Him at this time, as He had already said to the Jews (**John 7:34**), "You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come."

Again in **John 8:21**, Jesus said, "I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come." But in **John 8:24** He adds something very important, "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

Jesus' disciples would not be able to follow Him, at this time, but they were not in any danger of dying in their sins, for they believed in Him and belonged to Him, all but Judas, the betrayer. Jesus was reassuring them that although He would be

leaving them, He loved and cared for them; He exhorted His disciples to be preoccupied with His coming glory, rather than with His present leaving.

And so we, as Christians, are to be consumed with the Lord's glory, and filled with His love, for this is the most distinguishing attribute of a Christian, to live out our lives for Him with God's love being manifest in us (**verses 34-35**), "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

The apostle John was so affected by that statement he repeated it in **1John 3:11**, "For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another." As God's children, we have a God-given capacity to love, if we would love others as Christ loved us [dying for us], there would be no need for laws; for there would be no conflicts, no factions, no cliques, no gossiping, no slander, no criticism of one another, for we would (**Ephesians 4:32**), "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has [loved] forgiven [us] you."

Jesus' love is unconditional, sacrificial, compassionate, and forgiving; only that kind of love can fulfill the new commandment given by Jesus. If Christians exemplified that kind of love, the world would be in awe of Christ; but because many calling themselves Christians, live as self-centered, pious, hypocrites, lacking Christlike love, the church has become ineffectual in our society and culture.

Jesus' loved these 11 men deeply, but staying with them was not an option if they, or for that matter, anyone was to know the fullness of God's love, which was made effectual at His death and His resurrection.

**Read John 13:36-38...** It appears that Peter isn't giving as much attention to this "new commandment," as he is to Jesus saying He won't be with them much longer, and that they would not be able to go where He is going.

You know, Jesus told these guys, on several other occasions (cf. **Matthew 20:18; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:32**), that He would be betrayed, taken from them, condemned to death, buried, but that He would rise from the grave.

Here, it seems that Peter is fixated on Christ's leaving, even though he knows this is God's plan; almost like Peter didn't hear the part about the new commandment to love one another as Christ has loved [died for] them.

All Peter heard was, Jesus is leaving and I can't go with Him; but notice Jesus' response to Peter (**verse 36**), "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later." Peter doesn't want to wait for later, he wants to go right now, wherever Jesus is, that is where he wants to be, as is expressed by the impetuous Peter when he foolishly says to Jesus (**verse 37**), "I will lay down my life for you."

The compassionate, merciful Jesus responds (**verse 38**) saying, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times."

Wow, not only is Peter told that Jesus is leaving and he cannot go with Him, but he is also told that he will deny the Lord three times. [I will have much more to say about Peter's denial of Christ when we get to **chapter 18**.]

What a horrible reality must be hitting the disciples at this point in the narrative; they have been living with God's Son, the Messiah, the Lord of Glory, almost daily, for over three years, and now He is going away and they can't go with Him? They just can't accept that scenario.

Their whole world is falling apart and they are incapable, at this time, of grasping the Scriptures that sovereignly declare - unless Jesus goes away [arrest, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, ascension back into heaven], i.e., unless He goes away, He will not be able to come back to take them to be with Him forever.

Next week (**John 14:1-3**), Jesus' comforts them, "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also."

The truth is, it is Passover, Thursday night, in John's narrative. Jesus has been with these guys for three years, and in the morning, on Friday, He will be taken away from them; but Sunday morning, He will return to them, from the tomb, and He will never leave them alone again.

**To be continued...**

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