

TUESDAY BIBLE CLASS

A Study in John 13-17

October 2, 2007

Intro: Before I began this current study of John 13, expecting, the Lord willing to go through chapter 17 as a separate segment in the Gospel of John, I was confirmed in my decision to take up what has been generally called, *The Upper Room Discourse* (chs. 13-16), and including the Lord's prayer in chapter 17 which seemed to me to belong to it, I was encouraged in consulting several evangelical commentaries to find that they did the same.

For example, Arthur Pink, an Englishman, had this to say about these five chapters:

We are now to enter upon what many believers in each age have regarded as the most precious portion of this Gospel, yea, as one of the most blessed passages in all of the Word of God. John 13 begins a new section, a section clearly distinguished and separated from what has gone before. . . In chapters 13 to 17 we see Christ alone with his own, separated from the world, telling them of their peculiar portion and privileges (p.291).

J. C. Ryle, an Englishman, had this to say about this part of the Gospel of John. After reading the first five verses of John 13, he said,

The passage we have now read begins of the most interesting portions of St. John's Gospel. *For five consecutive chapters* (emphasis mine) we find the Evangelist recording matters which are not mentioned by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. We can never be thankful enough that the Holy Spirit has caused them to be written for our learning! In every age the contents of these chapter have been justly regarded as one of the most precious parts of the Bible. They have been the meat and drink, the strength and comfort of all true-hearted Christians (*Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*, (Vol. II, p. 223).

Frederic Godet, a Swiss theologian (1812-1900) called John 13-17 the third main part of John's Gospel, the first two being 1-4 (of which the first eighteen verses were a prologue) and 5-12. But in the chapters that we are going to consider in detail, Godet said that the Lord's public ministry had come to a close, and he turned in these chapter to the special preparation of His disciples for the ministry of His disciples who were to be "the future founders of the Church" (p. 801).

Griffith Thomas, also from England, indicates in his "Outline Studies" of all the writings of the Apostle John, that:

The record of Christ's public ministry closes with chapter 12, and with chapter 13 the second division of the Gospel opens. In the first five chapters (13-17) we have the record of the last conversations of our Lord with His disciples, in which He revealed Himself more fully to them and elicited their deepening faith (p.204).

Let me give you one more comment. This is from David Brown, who, I believe, was a Scot. This is what he had to say about our chapters, John 13-17:

The record of our Lord's public ministry has now been concluded. . . We are now in the Supper-room; the circumstances preparatory to which our Evangelist presumes his readers to be already familiar with through the other Gospels. What passed in this Supper-room, as recorded in this and the four following chapters. has been felt by the Church in every age to be stamped with a heavenly and divine impress, beyond all else even in this divine Gospel, if one may so speak, and the glory of which no language can express (Vol. 4, p.427).

We all should know that the Apostle John's primary purpose in his Gospel is stated in the last two verses of John 20:

30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name (John 20:30-31).

The “signs” to which John was referring were the miracles recorded in the first twelve chapter, concluding with the raising of Lazarus from the dead in chapter 11 and some of the results of it in chapter 12. But the very wording of chapter 13, verse 1, suggests a change in emphasis. Here the Apostle John was directing those who read this Gospel to the fact that the Lord was turning to “His own which were in the world” to prepare them in a special way for the time that He would no longer be with them.

Now as we come to the first part of chapter 13 we learn about:

I. The Lord and His Disciples in the Upper Room (John 13:1-14:31).

First the Apostle John gives us:

A. The setting (John 13:1-3).

Matthew (26:17-30), Mark (14:12-26), Luke (22:7-39) tell us how our Lord and His disciples got to the Upper Room, or “the Supper-Room,” and some of the things that took place there. But they did not mention what the Apostle John recorded for us in the first three verses of John 13, nor of our Lord’s washing the feet of the apostles. Let us focus, first of all, on John 13:1-3. The Apostle John tells us what the Lord knew on that night in the Upper Room, and why Judas did what he did.

But before we get to that, let us notice what the Apostle John has given us in the first three verses of John 13.

13:1 One of the most amazing of our Lord’s attributes, is His omniscience. He, as well as the Father and the Holy Spirit, know all things. They know the end from the beginning. And they are working all things out according to Their own will. All through the Gospel of John we have references made to the Lord’s *time*, or His *hour*. We see it first in John 2:4. Then we see it again in John 7:6. Then see it in 7:30; 8:20; 12:27; 13:1; 17:1. Obviously this was a reference to the time of the Lord’s death when He would offer Himself for the sins of the world. The Jews would have set the time much earlier in the life of our Lord, but it was not in their power to do so. God was in full charge of the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. So this is not only evidence of the omniscience of the Lord and the Godhead, but evidence of Their omnipotence.

But John did not write that the Lord knew that the time had come when He was to die, but, led by the Holy Spirit, he wrote that “Jesus knew that His hour was come that should depart out of this world unto the Father.” So what He knew was that the time had come for Him to die, to be buried, to be raised from the dead, and to ascend back to the Father, having finished His work in this world. It wasn’t pleasant knowledge for Him because He knew the suffering that was ahead for Him. He knew that He would pray in Gethsemane that this cup might pass from Him. But He was just as certain that He would return to heaven and to the Father as He was that He would die. The Jews were not able to carry out their evil plot against Him until God’s time had arrived. It is important for us to know this as we approach the terrible sufferings of our Lord on the Cross. As Peter would declare later, our Lord was “delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God ,“ and this was the reason that the Jews could lay their hands on Him and crucify Him. See Acts 2:24. And it was also a part of the plan of God that God would raise Him up, “having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it” (Acts 2:25). Why was it not possible? For three main reasons at least: (1) because He was the Son of God; (2) because the Scriptures had declared that He would be raised; and

(3) because there would be no salvation for us if He had not been raised. That is what He came to accomplish. That was His mission on earth.

The Lord knew all of this. And we can thank God that He did!

But what else does verse 1 tell us? That “having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” Here is a verse on Particular Redemption, or Limited Atonement. But this statement, I believe, tells us more than just that the Lord would never stop loving us – although what could be better than that? But let me point out another aspect of the coming of the Lord into this world that we always need to remember.

Verses like John 3:16 tell us that “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.” Romans 5:8 tells us essentially the same thing: “God commendeth [gave proof] of His love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” One verse I have been reviewing almost daily in recent weeks has been 1 John 4:10, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” Why am I reminding you of these well known verses? Because they, along with many other verses, tell us that the whole mission of Jesus Christ on the earth was to tell us that God loves us. Our Lord’s birth was evidence of His love for us. His good works were evidence of His love for us. The truth He taught was given because of His love for us. But the crowning evidence was His death for us. That is one thing that “the end,” “He loved them to the end” has in mind. One of the meanings of the expression is *the fulfillment of a mission*, or *the completion of a task*. Of course it does mean that they Lord will never stop loving us regardless of what we do or how often we may repeat the same sins. But if Jesus Christ had not died on the Cross, the crowning evidence of God’s love for us, and His own love for us, would be missing! The end in this verse included *the Cross*. *The disciples did not want Him to die. They saw no reason why He should die. But our Lord actually put Himself in the hands of His enemies, knowing that they would put Him to death because He had to. There was no other way that His mission on earth could be fulfilled.* There are many evidences in Scripture, there are many evidences in all of our lives, that God loves us, that Christ loves us, and that the Holy Spirit loves us, *but the greatest of all is what happened at Calvary. The indisputable evidence that God loves us is to be seen at the Cross.* That is surely one reason that Jerry Bridges has encouraged us to preach the Gospel to ourselves every day. There are many experiences we have when we are inclined to say, “If God loves me, what did He let this happen to me.” That is exactly the time for us to remember our Lord’s death. “Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” The end is the Cross, proof positive of God’s love for us, that He would not spare even His Son, but delivered Him us for us all so that all of us would know that God really loves us.

I hope you see what I have been trying to say, and what the Apostle John surely had in mind when He wrote these words, and what the Holy Spirit wanted us to be assured of so He had the Apostle John write it down, and He, the Holy Spirit, has been preserving it for us in the Word.

But let us go on to verse 2.

13:2 Think of having supper with the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet having in your heart that you had made plans with His enemies to have Him put to death. And it was all for one thing: money!

Who was Judas Iscariot? You all know that he was one of our Lord’s disciples. He was an apostle. But look back with me to John 12, and let us read together verses 1 through 8. The testimony of Scripture about Judas Iscariot is given in verse 6 of John 12: “He was a thief.”

Listen to what the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10:

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

Does this mean that if I have ever stolen anything that I can't be saved? And the answer to that question is, No, because Paul went on to say,

11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. 6:11).

Judas had a problem. In fact, he had lots of problems. He was guilty under the Law on several accounts. He stole. He coveted. He obviously had taken the Lord's name in vain. He was a sinner. He was one of the worst kind of sinners. But he had never done anything about it. Just think! He had not only heard the Gospel over and over, but undoubtedly he had preached the Gospel, and probably had seen people saved. But he had never done anything about his relationship to Jesus Christ. Perhaps he took comfort in the fact that he was an apostle, and that he knew a lot of truth. But his heart was just as wicked as a person who had never heard about Jesus Christ at all. In fact, the Lord Jesus Himself said of Judas Iscariot, "Good were it for that man if He had never been born" (Mark 14:21).

But notice we are told that Judas made the mistake of thinking that he was in control of his own life when he wasn't. Judas had refused to do anything about his habit which he had to know was wrong, was sinful in God's sight. And in compromising with sin, he was playing right into the hands of the Devil. And it was the Devil who put in Judas' heart a desire to betray the Lord Jesus into the hands of His Jewish enemies. If we refuse to make things right with the Lord, the Devil will take over our lives and cause us to do things that we would never do on our own. Careless with one sin can make us liable to commit any sin. After the deed was done, Judas tried to give the money back to the Jews. And when the Jews would not take it, Judas threw the money down and went and committed suicide. Judas thought he was in control of his own life, but he was a slave not only to his own sin, but to the Devil himself. Evidently no one among the apostles knew that Judas was a thief or that he had been stealing from them. And as long as Judas didn't get caught he felt that it was safe to go on living the life of a thief. But he knew in his heart that it was wrong, not just wrong to do to other people, but wrong before God! He sinned against his conscience. He sinned against the Word (because we can be sure that he knew the ten commandments). Every sin which we commit, makes it easier for us to keep on sinning.

This ought to be a warning to everyone, but especially to people who go to church. It ought to be a warning to those of us who were raised in church. It is so easy to be deceived about our relationship to God. We might think that we have one when we don't! The Apostle John said in his first epistle that a child of God will not live in sin. Judas had no one to blame but himself. I can't say why the Lord chose him to be an apostle unless it was as a warning to people like we are who have charged to make sure of our calling and election. See 2 Peter 1:10.

But now let us go on to verse 3.

13:3 Judas Iscariot was not hesitant, according to what we read in John's account when Mary of Bethany anointed the feet of the Lord Jesus with what was called *costly ointment* – he was not at all hesitant about criticizing even the Lord Jesus Christ for letting her do it to Him. See again John 12:1-8. This was another warning sign displayed by Judas. He had no feeling in his heart of worship toward the Lord. He was the personification of pride. How different was he from the Lord! Notice what the Apostle John wrote here about the Lord as we prepare to see the Lord take a towel and making the rounds of the apostles to wash their feet.

Here in John 13:3 we read a second thing that the Apostle John mentioned that the Lord knew. He knew “that the Father had delivered all things into His hands.” And He knew “that He was come from God.” And he knew that “He went to God.” There is a great deal of meaning in what the Apostle John said about our Lord here. And these words could not have been spoken about anybody on earth except our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord claimed all of this in John 5:22-23:

22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

23 That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

God the Father had ordained that His Son should be treated as people would treat the Father. The Father has ordained that the Lord Jesus shall be King of kings and Lord of lords. No one has greater authority on earth or in heaven than the Lord Jesus. And the Lord Jesus in His life here on earth knew this. He knew that “the Father had given all things into his hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God,” as our verse tells us. Now if this were said about you or me, we would be so conceited that no one would be able to live with us. But it was the very knowledge of this that made the Lord determined to demonstrate humility of the greatest sort. We are about to read of the Sovereign of all the earth, and of the angels in heaven, taking a towel, girding Himself, and going on His knees before every one of the apostles to wash their feet. He took the place of a household servant. He knew Who He was. He knew that as the *Lord* Jesus Christ He had come from God on a mission, and that He was returning to God to be seated at His right hand having fully accomplished the work that the Father, God, had sent Him to do. He was bowing the knee before His apostles in the full knowledge that some day before Him “every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess, that [He] Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10-11). God has done all of this for His Son. Coming from God and returning to God means with all of God’s authority and total approval.

How would you have felt if you had been in that group of apostles, and the Lord came and kneeled at your feet to wash them? I would be totally in agreement with Peter. No humility, or humiliation, could be greater than that which was experienced by our Lord Jesus Christ in coming from God. No greater glory could be upon Him than that which He has received in returning to God. And all of this was because of His love for us, a love that brought the Savior of the world to the Cross of Calvary. We have in all of this the incarnation, the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of God the Son.

Let me add this one word before we move on to verse 4. There was one great burden upon the Lord’s heart as He faced His return to the Father. And we see this in verse 3. It was this: He was going “out of this world,” but He was leaving “His own which were in the world.” In John 13-17 the word “world” appears forty-one times! The Lord knows the dangers we are in, and the temptations we are subject to, and the disappointments that we are going to experience in this world. And so we have His words in John 14:1-3 and John 17:24.

Our Lord showed that greatness in the kingdom of God, in the church of Jesus Christ, is measured in terms of humility, not supremacy. The Lord of all made Himself the servant of all.

There was one thing that the Lord did not like going back to heaven. It was that He was leaving His people in the world. Our flesh is tempted by the world. The Devil is the god of this world. Consequently we need to remember the Apostle John’s words in 1 John 2:15-17 and the Apostle Paul’s words Romans 12:1-2.

If you read the three accounts which Matthew, Mark, and Luke give of the Lord with the apostles in the Upper Room, or Guest Chamber, as it is called in Mark and Luke’s account, you will find that Luke gave the most information of the three Synoptic writers. He mentioned that, as incredible as it seems, during that time when the Lord had told them that one of them would betray Him, the apostles got into an argument as to who was the

greatest of the twelve. Then the Lord said what came the closest to what John recorded of the Lord washing the feet of His apostles. Let me read to you three verses from Luke's account which contain the Lord's words of rebuke after the apostles had gotten into their argument about who was the greatest. Here are our Lord's words:

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.

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.

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 (Luke 22:25-27).

This must be what led the Lord to wash the disciples feet. Let us now look at verses 4 and those that follow.

Monday, October 8, 2007

B. The Lord Washes the Apostles' Feet (John 13:4-20).

It is important for us to remember that the only one who recorded this part of what took place in the Upper Room was the Apostle John, whose words we are considering now. It evidently made a tremendous impression on him, so that as he wrote this Gospel possibly thirty plus years later, it remained vividly impressed upon his mind. We learn from the other Gospels that an argument had broken out among the apostles in the Upper Room as to who was the greatest among them. The greatest, of course, would be the one who got to recline at the right hand of the Lord at the table. John, probably remembered this occasion, too, that he and his brother James had gone to the Lord *with their mother* requesting that they be given the seats at the right and at the left of the Lord when He came to reign. So there was a great deal of pride among the apostles. But we ought to be able to understand why. They were still having trouble thinking that the Lord was going to die, but it seems that by this time they were convinced that he was the Messiah. Many expositors believe that this was the only reason that Judas had stayed with the Lord as long as he had. He wanted to be among those who exercised the greatest authority in what we would have called, thinking of our own government, as the President's cabinet. I don't know if there is going to be a Secretary of the Treasury when the Lord rules over all the earth, but if there were, Judas wanted that position. He wanted to be in charge of the money.

But the Apostle John wanted to be faithful and obedient in writing his Gospel even though it put him in a bad light. Doubtless by this time in John's life (toward the end of the first century), he was thoroughly ashamed that he had ever gone to the Lord asking for the best seat in the kingdom.

13:4 As we read what the Apostle John wrote, we can see that he did it with great detail *just like it had happened that very day!* J. C. Ryle had this to say about what we read here at the beginning of verse 4: The minuteness with which every action of our Lord is related here is very striking. No less than seven distinct things are named, –rising, laying aside garments, taking a towel, girding Himself, **(13:5)** pouring water into a basin, washing [the disciples' feet], and wiping [them with the towel] (II, p. 233).

It was as though when the Lord had gotten up, they wondered what he was going to do or where he was going. When He laid aside his outer garment, they continued to wonder what He was going to do. It had been obvious to all of the disciples that, when they got to the Upper Room, a towel and a pitcher of water and a basin of water were there for someone to wash the men's feet. That was usually the job for the household servant, but there was no servant in this Upper Room, *and no one who was willing to be a servant.* You see, the problem was pride. That was too lowly a position for any of them. As apostles they felt that they were on the same level; to wash the feet of the rest meant that the one who did it would be lowering himself, not getting a higher

position which all of them wanted.

Why did the Lord get up? What was He going to do. Some may have thought that the Lord was going to give someone the task, but no one (we can be sure) thought for a moment that *the Lord would do it. There was certainly a need. It is very likely that the Lord and the disciples had walked from Bethany to Jerusalem, and their feet would have been tired and dust, probably sweaty.*

13:6 The expression with which this verse begins, “Then cometh he to Simon Peter,” probably means that Peter was not the first to have his feet washed. If that is so, and it seems to be, how amazing that the Apostles who had already had their feet washed had not said what Simon Peter said, “Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?” That is what I would have said, wouldn’t you? The expositor William Hendriksen said that they were so dumbfounded at what the Lord was doing, that they did not know what to say! That may be true. But the Lord couldn’t get by Peter? It was like Peter had said, “Lord, what are you doing?”

Godet pointed out in his comments on this verse that three words are emphasized here. They are “Lord,” “Thou,” and “me.” “**Lord**, dost **Thou** wash **my** feet?” When we are inclined to blame Peter for some of the things he said, and other things that he did, let us remember John 13:6.

It is a lot like what John the Baptist said to the Lord Jesus when the Lord came to be baptized by John. We have the record in Matthew 3:13-14:

13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest **Thou** to **me**?

This is how all of us should feel about the Lord and what He has done for us in saving us, and what He does in blessing us each day. The is what was expressed by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 2:20 was spoke about himself and the Lord when he wrote, “and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, or *faith in the Son of God*, **Who** loved **me**, and gave **Himself** for **me**.”

We have the same idea in our hymns, for example:

I stand amazed the presence of Jesus the Nazarene,
And wonder how **He** could love **me**,
A sinner condemned, unclean.

13:7 This verse shows how often what we say to the Lord is prompted by our ignorance. Peter was well acquainted with foot-washing. It was a part of their lives in those days. But in Peter’s mind the Lord should not be the One Who was washing their feet; they ought to be washing His feet. But the Lord indicated that this all happened because the Lord had something to teach Peter about foot-washing, or through foot-washing, and He promised Peter that Peter would learn what it was.

This is a statement that indicates for us one of the many ways of the Lord. There are many things that we read in the Word that we don’t understand, or don’t fully understand. Or there are things that happen to us that we don’t understand. But they are all a part of God’s providential dealing in our lives. Some things we may not understand until we get to heaven. On other occasions, like this that we are studying about our Lord’s dealing with the Apostles, the explanation may come soon. But the important thing for us is to believe that the Lord is working in every circumstance, in all of the experiences of our lives. Sometimes God does great things for us when we fail even though failing can be very difficult, and sometimes humiliating for us.

Quoting J. C. Ryle again, he said with reference to this statement,

It is a golden sentence which we ought to store up in our memories. God’s eternal counsels, the

wisdom of the great Head of the Church, must never be forgotten. All is going well, even when we think all is going on ill. When we cannot see it we must believe. In sickness, sorrow, bereavement, disappointments, we must summon up faith and patience, and hear Christ saying to us, “What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter (II, p. 240).

13:8 In this verse we see that Peter did not believe the Lord. But he was about to learn that you *never* tell the Lord “never.” When we go ahead after the Lord has put a red light in front of us, inevitably we do the wrong thing, or, as in Peter’s case, we say the wrong thing. He said, “Thou shalt never wash my feet.” Ryle says that the full force of what Peter said should be translated, “Thou shalt never wash my feet for ever, meaning for all eternity! This sounds humble, but actually it is a statement full of pride. Humility submits to the truth; it does not argue or contradict the truth. Robertson said that Peter’s response showed a lack of reverence for the Lord and a lack of confidence in the Lord. Even when we can’t understand the Lord, we need to be submissive to Him.

But the Lord does not give up on Peter. His response was, “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.” We really need the rest of their conversation to know just what the Lord had in mind. But it seems that Peter was not seeing the connection between saving faith and cleansing from the daily defilement of sin, or the need to depend upon the Lord daily for the maintenance of fellowship with Him.

A few years ago while I was teaching at Multnomah there was a group of students in the Grad Class, a one-year course for college grads and registered nurses. And some of them had the idea that once we were saved, we have no need to confess our sins any longer. They gave Dr. Mitchell a lot of trouble that year, and he was unable to convince some of them that we have a daily need to confess sin. I think this was the issue here with the Apostle Peter. In the first place he did not understand how the Lord was using the practice of foot washing to teach spiritual truth which we will see when we get down to verse 10. But it seems that the Lord was saying here that if you don’t see the need for daily cleansing in our walk with Him, it is evidence that we are not really saved – “Thou hast no part with me.” The person who is truly saved may have times of doubt and even some rebellion against the Lord, but it will be temporary – as was Peter’s conflict with the Lord in this case.

Well, when the Lord said that Peter was on the verge of showing by his life that he was not saved, Peter suddenly changed, and said what we have in verse 9.

13:9 Peter’s response to the Lord was immediate. He showed that his salvation was genuine. However, he went from one extreme to the other. He said, “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.” Now let us go right on to verse 10 to see the Lord’s response.

13:10 In the English translation of this verse we have two words which seem to be the same: “washed” and “wash” – “He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet.” But these two verbs are different words in the Greek. The first is *λελουμένος*, a perfect middle or passive from the verb *λούω*, which means *to bathe, to wash the whole body*. The second verb is *νίψασθαι* (*nipsasthai*) is an aorist infinitive (from *νίπτω*), meaning *to wash a part of the body, such as the face or hands or feet*.

So what the Lord was saying is that if you have bathed yourself, supposedly in the morning, the rest of the day all you need is to wash your feet (which is why foot washing was so important).

Now for the Christian this means that if you have been saved (bathed), and then you sin, you don’t need to be saved a second, or third, or fourth, etc. time. You just need to wash your feet. And we can easily understand that our feet have to do with our walk, and our walk has to do with the way we live. So when Peter said, “Lord,

not my feet only, but also my hands and my head, if the Lord had let that stand, it would have meant that when he sinned in his walk, he could only be cleansed and forgiven of his sin by being saved a second time. Of course, that is impossible because there is no such thing as being saved a second time. When we are saved, we are saved forever. But we can still sin. When we do we confess our sin, or sins, to the Lord, and this is how our feet, our walk, is cleansed.

Now our Lord's words have nothing to do, as some have said, with baptism. Baptism does not save, nor is it even a part of salvation. If so, salvation would be part by faith and part by works. Water in Scripture is a type of the Word of God. In Ephesians 5:25-26 we read:

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1:23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." And in John 15:3 we read that the Lord Jesus Himself said, "Now are ye clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you."

The Word has power to save us through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. And the Word of God has power to cleans us when we as the Lord's people sin. In Psalm 119:9 we have the question, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" And the answer is, "By taking heed thereto according to thy Word." The Word keeps us from sin, and the Word cleanses us when we do sin.

So foot washing pictures the cleansing of a believer's sin in his walk, in his daily life. And when the Lord cleanses us from sin in daily life, we are "clean every whit." This means that we are "completely clean" (NKJV).

At the end of verse 10 the Lord added, "And ye are clean, but not all." Verse 11 tells us what He meant by this.

13:11 "And ye are clean, but not all" at the end of verse 10 meant that "He knew who should betray Him; therefore said He, "Ye are not all clean." None of the other apostles was suspicious of Judas, but Jesus knew, and He knew all along, that Judas was a traitor. It seems from the Gospel of John that Judas was at the last Supper, and I think I am safe in saying that the Lord Jesus also washed his feet. Who can adequately describe the wickedness of this man Judas when he was exposed to all the truth that he had heard, and had even preached, and who had heard the Lord many, many times, and had seen His miraculous works. And yet his heart was never changed. There is no more tragic story in the Bible than the story of Judas Iscariot. But we will see more of him later.

13:12 This verse is the reverse of verses 4 and 5. After He had washed all of the apostle's feet, He put His outer garment on, He sat down, and then He said to them, "'Know ye what I have done unto you?" It was time for the application of the truth that He had presented to them.

13:13 He told them, "Ye call Me, Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." Let's look at these two titles of our Lord.

"Master" is the translation of the Greek word Διδάσκαλος. It means *Teacher*. The Lord Jesus taught His disciples in every way: by Who and what He was, by what He did, and by what He said. The Lord Jesus was The Teacher of all teachers. As the Teacher of the apostles, they were disciples, learners. He taught them the things of God and the duties of man. This is what the disciples called Him and this is what He was.

They also called Him "Lord." This is the Greek word Κύριος. They belonged to Him. He had complete

authority over them. They were His bondservants. They were to be what He taught them to be. They were to be submissive to His teaching, His will.

They “called Him Teacher and Lord,” meaning that they had willingly taken that position in their relationship with Him. And it was not only willingly, but happily, joyfully. And the Lord happily acknowledged that He was their Teacher and their Lord. There was a sense in which the Lord’s public ministry was devoted to the teaching and training of these particular disciples who became His apostles.

He was also their Example. The Lord said that they were to do for each other what He had done to all of them. He had washed their feet, and they were to do to each other what He had done to them. In some respects this was probably the hardest part of all that the Lord had commanded them to do. They were a group of proud men who were more interested in being served than they were in serving. And at this point in our Lord’s ministry there was still much that they needed to learn.

Now I personally do not believe that the Lord here was teaching foot washing as an ordinance of the Church on a par with Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. There are some churches who do practice foot washing. I had two aunts who practiced this in their church, but they told me that they always made sure that they had just washed their feet before they went to a foot washing service. Both of them knew the Lord and love the Lord, and if they wanted to practice foot washing that is their privilege. There is certainly not anything in Scripture forbidding foot washing. In fact, when Paul was instructing Timothy about how the church should take care of the widows, Paul had this to say in 1 Timothy 5:9-10:

9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man,

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.

But you see, if you are going to make that an ordinance of the church, then you have to do the same with everything else that this lady had to do in order to qualify for help. Foot washing was common in both the OT and the NT because of their way of life. But foot washing showed that a person who did the washing was given to hospitality.

No, I don’t think that the Lord intended for us to be doing this today. There was a deeper meaning that He had in mind as He washed the disciples feet.

13:14 The Lord said here, “If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet” – and He had! This is what is called in Greek grammar a first class condition in which you assume that something is true, or know that it is true – and they did! Each one of them had had his feet washed by none other than their Master and their Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. So we can translate the first part of this verse, “Since I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s fee.” Our Lord was not talking about doing this in the church; He was talking about it with each other. Now that would be a real test for a group of men who had argued from time to time about who was the greatest. They weren’t concerned about who would be the best servant of all of the rest, but about who would be the greatest over all of the rest. Now when they argued about who would be the greatest, they were vying for the Lord’s position. You can’t have two Lords. If the Lord is the Lord, then that position is already filled. But it was the Lord and Teacher Himself Who had washed their feet. *So this means that the Lord was giving them a lesson in humility!*

This is probably the most difficult lesson for any of us to learn. Sin has filled our hearts with pride. Even a baby when it is born will try to take over the whole family by razing cane if he doesn’t get what he wants when

he wants it. Look at people at any stage in life and you can always see evidence of pride.

Can you imagine what it must have been like to be in the company of the Lord Jesus Christ, the one Person Who had not even the slightest trace of pride in His being? The Lord was teaching His disciples that in the family of God the way up is not up, but the way up is down. Dr. Mitchell used to call it *the root sin*. And that is exactly what it is. When Paul gave Timothy the qualifications of an elder, one of the things that he said was this: “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil” (1 Tim. 3:6). The Devil did what he did in trying to overthrow even God because of his pride. It is very significant that Peter spoke of humility in a very positive way as he was coming to the end of his first epistle. I am sure that most of you are familiar with his words which we just recently studied. Listen to what he wrote in 1 Peter 5:5-7:

5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

What did the Lord mean, “that ye should wash one another’s feet” if He was not actually speaking about real foot washing?

I believe that He was speaking about spiritual foot washing? Will you look for a moment at the word “ought”? It speaks of a debt, an obligation that we have toward each other. I have it toward you, and you have it toward me, and we all have it toward each other. Living in this evil world which is getting more and more brazen with its sin, it is harder and harder for even those of us who are the Lord’s people to keep our feet clean, that is, to walk in holiness, to live holy lives. Holiness is not only Christian character, but it is a way of life, God’s way of life. And to depart in any way from Scripture, is to get our feet dirty. We need to help each other in our battle against sin.

The first way we help others and others can help us, is by prayer. The Church of the twenty-first century is not a praying church.

Another way in which we can help others is by pursuing holiness ourselves. If you and I are really walking with the Lord, believers in need are going to be seeking us out. Keeping our own feet clean is a great example for others to keep their feet clean.

Going to church, a church where the Word of God is taught, where the emphasis is upon the teaching of Scripture, is of great importance in keeping our feet clean, and being close enough to our brothers and sisters in Christ so that we can help them.

And then we need to talk to each other about what we have been learning from Scripture. Talk about how He is answering prayer for you, or how He is helping you in your own life. We need to do this in our families. We all have trials. We all have temptations. We all have weaknesses, sins which easily get the best of us.

One of the greatest needs in the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ is for clean feet. No Christian can make it alone. We need each other. We desperately need each other. Go back again to verse 10 in our chapter where the Lord said, “He is washed (bathed, saved) needeth not save to wash his feet (to keep his walk, his way of life clean), but is clean every whit (completely clean). You see our walk has to do with our thoughts – what we think about, our speech – what we talk about; our eyes – what we look at; our character – the kind of people we are.

13:15 The Lord has given us an Example. In many ways the rest of John 13, all of chapters 14, 15, and 16, and surely our Lord's most glorious prayer in John 17, we see the Lord washing His disciples feet, helping them in their walk of fellowship with the Lord.

Also, if you are reading through your Bible on our schedule, you just finished reading Philippians. Go back and read again in the second chapter, verses 1-13.

Here in verse 15 of John 13 the Lord referred to Himself as an Example. This is a word that I think many of us have shied away from in the past because liberal theologians have spoken of Jesus as our Example instead of our Savior. But don't let unbelievers take a good Bible word, a title of our Lord Jesus Christ – don't let them take it away from us. The Lord Jesus is both our Savior and our Example. We are to be like Him which we know is the ultimate purpose of our salvation. But we can only achieve such a goal by the power and blessing of God, the Holy Spirit.

Monday, October 15, 2007

Lit., the word for "example," ὑποδείκνυμι, means *to show by placing under*. A very likely meaning is that we show what our Lord is like by placing ourselves under His authority. He is the One Whom we are to imitate, but not externally only, as the word *imitate* is often taken to mean, but believers are expected to learn to be like the Lord in our walk and even in our talk. We are to live as those who have the Lord as the Pattern of what we should be. It is to be with us like Paul told the Corinthians, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ (1 Cor. 11:1). We would all agree that there is no better example to follow than the Lord Jesus Christ.

13:16 The words, "Verily, verily," are doubled like this, in the Gospels only by the Apostle John. They indicate that the Lord was about to say something that He considered very important, and He wanted those to whom He was speaking to pay close attention to what He was saying. It is the word "amen" in both Greek and Hebrew. It is meant to show the authority of the Lord and the complete dependability of what the Lord was saying. Matthew, Mark, and Luke just use the word once each time, "Verily." Come grammarians say that the word means "truth." So we can translate it, "Truly," as, in fact, it is in the NASB.

The authority, importance, and power of the Lord's message is increased by the words, "I say unto you." I know of a President of an organization who said to those who were under him as he made a suggestion to them, "This is only a suggestion, *but remember who made it.*" I think that all of us who read the Bible have trained ourselves to notice in a special way, the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Verily, verily, I say unto you," is as though the Lord was saying, "Now this is what I want you to keep in mind from what I have been saying to you."

Well, what did the Lord say to them?

He said, "The servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent greater than He that sent him." If you had been able to watch what was going on in that room that night, and did not know who those men were, you would have assumed that the servant, the lowest one, was the Lord. He was the one who washed the apostles' feet. The word the Lord used for "servant" was δούλος, *a bondservant*. He had just said to them in verse 13, "You call me Master and Lord." And He agreed that that was what He was. Why, then, were they reclining at the table while He, the Lord, went to all of them, washing their feet? They had been contending among themselves as to who was the greatest. In that group of men, the Lord was the greatest. And most of them let the Lord wash their feet without a single word of objection. I imagine that the Apostle John must have been pricked in his conscience again as he wrote and remembered what took place on that memorable night. In the

last part of verse 16 the Lord said the same thing; “Neither is he that is sent [the apostles] greater than He that sent him.” The words “he that is sent” is actually the translation of the word *ἀπόστολος* which the Lord used here.

13:17 The Lord in this verse was apparently referring to what He had just said. The apostles were the sent ones; the Lord was the Sender. If we are not careful, our pride will put us in the Lord’s place, and the Lord in our place. A certain amount of happiness comes in knowing the truth, but the greatest joy is being in obedience to the truth. We all know that we should be humble, but being humble really takes the grace of God. Arthur Pink reminds us in his commentary, that “the one Christ termed a wise man that built his house upon the rock is ‘whoso heareth these sayings of mine and *doeth* them’ (Matt. 7:24).” The real blessing of reading the Word, or hearing the Word, is when we put it into practice in our lives. The word “happy” makes this verse one of the beatitudes of our Lord.

Verses 18, 19, and 20 form a transition from the lesson that the Lord had given to His apostles about humility to His words in exposing the one of the apostles who was a traitor.

13:18 The Lord quickly added, “I speak not of you all.” As we read on we see that the promise of finding happiness through humility and obedience to the teaching of the Scriptures, is not for those who do not know the Savior. Many people have tried, and others are still trying, to live by the Word of God who have never been saved, and so are not in the family of God. Faith in Christ, obeying the Gospel, is what brings us into the family of God. Perhaps you have heard people say very self-righteously when you present the Gospel to them, that they live by the golden rule. They are referring to Matt 7:12, although they probably had no idea where to find it. Many of them don’t know that these words are words spoke by the Lord Jesus and are a part of His Sermon on the Mount. What does Matthew 7:12 tell us that the Lord said?

12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

But neither do they know that the Lord immediately spoke of the broad gate that leads to destruction, which many find, or the narrow gate that leads to life. A person who does not know the Lord cannot live by the so-called Golden Rule. You have to be saved before you can live like that. And that kind of a life is not what leads to salvation; it follows from salvation. And we need to make sure that people understand their inability to live by the Word until they know the Lord.

But what else did the Lord say? He said, “I know whom I have chosen.” Arthur Pink points out that the Lord was not talking about election to salvation; he was talking about His choice of apostles. He knew from the very beginning that Judas was not a believer. The Lord is never deceived by anyone even though Judas had done a perfect job of covering up his true character. Back in John 6:70 the Lord told the disciples right after Peter had given his great confession of Christ, the Lord said to all of them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil [or demon]? And yet none of them picked up on that statement to ask the Lord who that one was.

Why the Lord chose Judas of course was to fulfill the Scripture. But there doubtless are other lessons that we can learn from Judas. But the Lord was quoting here from Psalm 41:9, a Psalm of David in which he was lamenting how he had been betrayed by Ahithophel whom he considered a dear and faithful friend until Ahithophel joined Absalom in Absalom’s rebellion against David. That act of treason, we learn from our Lord, was prophetic of what our Lord would experience at the hands of Judas. Do you remember that the Lord called Judas “friend” when the mob of Jews came to arrest the Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane? We read that Judas was with them. Matthew gives us this account in Matthew 26:49-50:

49 And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him.

50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus,

and took him.

That may well have been what ultimately led to Judas' death by suicide. But it was too late for Judas to try to undo what he had done.

For the Lord to use the expression that Judas would lift up his heel against him was likening what Judas did to what a trusted horse might do in turning on his master and giving him a vicious kick that would result in his master's death. The expression also was used when a man was trampled to death by the feet of his enemies among whom was one who had been his friend. It is a statement of utter betrayal. It was unthinkable that one who had literally lived and worked with the Lord during all, or most, of His public ministry, would actually be the one who would betray his Master into the hands of men, knowing what those men intended to do to Him. Judas knew as well as any of the other apostles that the Lord had never done anything that was worthy of death. He had seen that the Lord was the personification of kindness, mercy, and love, but he was consumed with a desire for money, which the Bible calls idolatry. He worshiped money instead of worshipping the Lord.

It ought also to amaze us that there was not a single apostle who expressed any suspicion at all about Judas. He had done a perfect job of concealing the true nature of his heart.

13:19 As I have just said, it was so unthinkable to the other apostles that one of them could, or would, betray the Lord, that the Lord told them ahead of time, so that they would have further confirmation that He was truly the Messiah, the Son of God. The Lord had not been deceived by Judas as David was deceived by Ahithophel.

But what does all of this mean regarding the ministry that Judas Iscariot had had? Verse 20 helps us to answer that question.

13:20 There is nothing in the Gospels that would indicate that Judas did not serve the Lord like the other apostles did. He must have performed the miracles that they did. He must have preached the Gospel like they did, and even had seen people saved under his ministry. He saw the miracles which the Lord did, and heard all of the wonderful teaching that the other apostles heard. He really acted and worked and responded like a real member of the Lord's men.

Can we say that the people who professed faith in Christ under Judas' ministry were really saved? Were the people who were healed under his ministry to think that the Lord had healed them? Is it possible that even today a pastor who has taught the Word, and has seen people saved under his ministry, could be unregenerate Himself? Is it possible that a parent who has raised children to know the Lord, has taught them the Scriptures, and has made sure that they went to church, would ultimately show that he was not saved?

I am sure that most of you could tell about people, possibly people whom the Lord used in your life in one way or another, who in later life turned away from the Lord, and went back into the world. Did the Apostle John have Judas Iscariot in mind when he wrote those ominous words in 1 John 2:19? What do we read in 1 John 2:19 tell us? Listen and I will read it to you.

19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

Can I be saved if the person who led me to Christ turned out to be a phony? Notice what the Savior Himself said here in verse 20. This ought to answer a lot of our questions. The Lord began this verse just like He began verse 16: "Verily, verily, I say unto you." *Truly, truly, the Lord is speaking.* "He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me." Did the Lord send Judas? Absolutely! Did the Lord empower Judas to preach the

Gospel? Yes, He did. Were people saved under Judas' ministry? Probably just like they were under the preaching of the other apostles. Did the Lord know that Judas was not a believer, that he was not one of the elect? There is no question about that. Well, then what about those people who had accepted Judas and the message that he brought to them? They had received the Lord. And those who received the Lord, believing the Gospel, trusting Christ as their Savior, had received the Father.

Notice the wording of John 5:24, words which the Lord spoke much earlier than the time we are reading about here in John 13. This is what He said according to John 5:24:

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

You see, if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you are believing on the Father, and it makes no difference what instrument the Lord may have used to get the Gospel to you. So this means that everyone who professed faith in Christ under Judas' preaching was saved when they believed, and the fact that Judas turned out to be a phony and a traitor, did not in any way the salvation of those who had been brought to Christ by Judas. There salvation was totally secure. I hope that the person who led you to Christ is still walking with the Lord, or, if they are not living, they are with the Lord in heaven. But if he, or she, is not, then you can sing with new understanding our present Sunday School hymn, "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform."

C. The Identification of Judas as the Betrayer (John 13:21-30).

There was nothing about these last hours of our Lord's life on earth that was easy for Him. Here it seems that His grief was for Judas. Anybody who says that the Lord has pleasure in the death of the wicked, is doing a great injustice to our Lord and manifesting how little they understand about the heart of God. It grieved the Lord in the depth of His soul to know what was happening to Judas. I believe we can say that there was a great bond that had taken place in our Lord's relationship to Judas during the years of his public ministry, although the same could not be said for Judas' relationship with the Lord. Judas had played the role of an apostle perfectly. He was a master deceiver for everyone except the Lord. Now that the hour had come for the Lord, it had also come for Judas, and it was an unbearably heavy weight on the Lord. We see in these verses ahead of us a little of what Isaiah the prophet had in mind when he predicted that the Lord would be "a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3). There surely was no sorrow like His sorrow.

13:21 We are that the Lord "was troubled in spirit." Thayer explained that this word, *ταράσσω*, meant that He was inwardly agitated and in great turmoil. He was deeply affected mentally and physically by what He had to tell the other apostles and by what it all was going to mean to Judas. When the Lord had warned the ungodly time and time again during His ministry, He had not observed any response in Judas' heart that there was a judgment to come.

There was certainly no joy that the apostles could observe in the Lord in what the Lord had to tell the other eleven apostles. And the Lord said it with those same words of certainty that He had just used twice before in a matter of a few moments before: "Verily, verily, I say unto you." The Lord had a message for them, not of what *might* happen, but what would *most certainly* happen. These last dreadful hours would be initiated by none other than one of their own group. This would have normally be the place where the apostles would have felt the safest. Now they were to be told that one of them was a traitor, who really understood nothing of the Lord's mission on earth in spite of all that he had seen over the past three years. This same verb, which is translated troubled, was use by the Apostle John back in John 11:33 when Mary came to Him when He had finally arrived after learned that Lazarus was dead. She was weeping and so were many Jews who had come to mourn with her and to comfort her. In all their affliction He was afflicted. The word "troubled" vividly described what the Lord went through on both of these occasions. But He spoke and said to His disciples,

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.” This kind of an announcement coming from the Lord Himself meant that the unbelievable was going to take place. The words here seem to indicate that it was hard for Him to get the words out. In verse 22 we see the response of the apostles.

13:22 A time of complete silence followed. There is no evidence that any of them said a word. They just looked at each other in disbelief that he could be speaking about any of them. And even at this time Judas continued to act as astonished as they were. He had been deceiving them for a long time, and he did not break down even with what the Lord had said. This was not at all what the other apostles had expected the Lord to say. Ryle said in his comments that the word “doubting” does not really convey what the word in the original text conveyed. It was more that they were puzzled, perplexed. Judas didn’t display any more guilt than did Peter or James or John, or any of the others. The hypocrite Judas maintained his composure. Ryle said here that “the length to which hypocrisy can go, without detection by man, is very awful” (II, 260). And yet we have to realize that the deceiver himself was deceived, thoroughly deceived, “through the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb. 3:13).

We read this in Matthew’s account of what took place in the Upper Room at this point:

20 Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

23 And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

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.

25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said (Matt. 26:20-25).

13:23 “The disciple whom Jesus love” is taken by most expositors to be a reference to the Apostle John himself. It is used four other times after this in John’s Gospel, in 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20. There has been a lot of discussion as to what is meant by this term. Obviously it was a title which John used of himself since it is only used in the Gospel which carries his name. At first it sounds like a pride claim, as though John was the only apostle which Jesus loved. But that seems completely out of character for John, especially as he was writing late in the first century after it seems that all of the other apostles were in heaven. John evidently did have a special relationship with the Lord, and possibly John 14:21 and 23 give us an idea why John claimed that title, that because of his obedience to the commandments of the Lord, he enjoyed a special fellowship with the Lord that not all believers enjoy.

But it seems to me that John was using that expression much in the same way that Paul spoke of himself as “the chief of sinners.” Or like we have in mind when we sing, “I’m only a sinner saved by grace.” The Apostle John knew that he was saved, and that he was appointed an apostle, not because the Lord saw anything good and meritorious in him, but just because the Lord loved him. Perhaps it has a parallel as when Moses was telling the people of Israel why the Lord had set His love upon them. See his words in Deut 7:7-9:

7 The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:

8 But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

9 Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.

When we know that the Lord did not see anything lovely or loveable in us when He chose us and saved us, but

that He simply saved us because He loved us, then we will be inclined to say to people who ask us for our name, that we are just a disciple whom Jesus loves. And if anyone asks us how we know that He loves us, we can quote to them Romans 5:8 that “God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

But going back to verse 23 in our text, we are reminded that in Jesus’ day, people did not sit at a table to eat; they reclined. The Apostle John was “leaning on Jesus’ bosom,” meaning that he was located at the table right next to the Lord Jesus. Now go on to verse 24.

13:24 I think that we have to realize at this point that Peter was *beckoning*, as this verse tells us, to John in a way that the other apostles would not know what was going on, that he should ask the Lord who the betrayer was. The word “beckoned” means that in some way Peter signaled the Apostle John. He may have nodded with his head in some way. Anyway, Peter made John understand that he wanted him to ask the Lord who the betrayer was. I think that we can assume that the other disciples did not know what was going on between Peter and John.

13:25 So John did what Peter had indicated that he wanted him to do. He asked the Lord, “Lord, who is it?”

13:26 The Lord did not speak of Judas by name, but He said to John, “He is is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.” The sop was probably a piece of unleavened bread which the Lord dipped in some kind of a sauce that was a part of the Passover Supper. It may have come at the conclusion of the Paschal Supper. Anyway, our Lord gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.”

13:27 At this point “Satan entered into him,” that is, into Judas. We were told in verse 2 that when the Supper had ended, the Devil had actually put into Judas’ heart . . . to betray Him. Now, in verse 27 that “Satan entered into him.” So Judas was not demon-possessed; he was Satan-possessed! Judas Iscariot had been playing into the hands of Satan, so to speak, for a long time. He did not understand that his opponent was just flesh and blood, but he involved himself in the most wicked deed he could possibly have done, and finally Satan took over completely in Judas’ life. He who had the title of being a bondservant of the Lord Jesus Christ, had made himself the bondservant of the Devil. His conscience was seared like it had been destroyed with a hot iron. Bishop Ryle called his conscience “dead, buried, and gone. He ruses and goes out to do his wicked work, and parts with (the) Lord forever” (II, pp. 257, 258). And then Bishop Ryle added these words:

The extent to which we may harden ourselves by resisting light and knowledge is one of the most fearful facts in our nature. . . We may lose entirely all sense of fear, or shame, or remorse, and have a heart as hard as the . . . millstone, blind to every warning, and deaf to every appeal. . . None seem so liable to it as those who, having great light and many privileges, deliberately turn their backs on Christ, and return to the world. . .

Let us watch jealously over our hearts, and beware of giving way to the beginnings of sin. Happy is he who “feareth always,” and walks humbly with his God. The strongest Christian is the one who feels his weakness, and cries most frequently, “Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe” (Psa. 119:117) (*Op. cit.*, p.258).

The Lord, knowing that His hour had come, as we learned in the first verse of this chapter, said to Judas, “What thou doest, do quickly.”

We have up to this point an alarming revelation of the depravity and corruption of the human heart, the power of Satan, but the overruling sovereignty of God and the Lord’s submission to the will of the Father.

13:28 This verse confirms that only Peter, John, and the Lord knew that the betrayer was Judas Iscariot. What Peter and John had done, had been done in the presence of other apostles, but the others did not know what it was.

13:29 This verse shows what the others were thinking. They had heard the Lord say, “What thou doest do quickly,” but they did not know what He meant. Some thought that the Lord had sent Judas out to buy some other supplies for the feast, or that He was sending Judas out to give to the poor. Little did they know the disastrous mission on which Judas left the Upper Room.

13:30 Judas “received the sop, went immediately out: and it was night.” Charles Erdman said that “Judas went out into the night of his eternal disgrace and doom” (Erdman, Charles, *The Gospel of John*, p. 124).

Many Scriptures come to mind as we think of Judas going out into the night. One is John 3:19: “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.” Another is Matthew 6:23: “But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” And Jude wrote of those “to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.” In Hebrews 10:31 we read, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” And John the Baptist said, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36).

If we are inclined to feel that God was not just because He did not elect everyone to salvation, we need to understand that Judas did what he wanted to do. And although he had countless opportunities, right up to this last moment to turn to the Lord, he chose to get a reward from the Jews for betraying the Lord Jesus, rather than turning to the Lord that he might be saved.

October 23, 2007

D. The Lord’s Words to His Disciples in the Upper Room (John 13:31-14:31)

13:31 It seems almost like it was a relief to the Lord that Judas was gone. Now He could speak to His disciples as He had not been able to speak to them before. Bishop Ryle had this to say concerning Judas’ departure and what the Lord said to His disciples afterwards:

Freed from his (Judas’) company, which must needs have been painful, our Lord opens His heart to His little flock more fully than He had ever done before. Speaking to them for the last time before His passion, He begins a discourse which for touching interest surpassed any portion of Scripture (II, p. 266).

This discourse actually continued to the end of chapter 17, and is generally referred to as The Upper Room Discourse. But you can see from John 14:31 that at that point the Lord and the disciples left The Upper Room and made their way to the Garden of Gethsemane.

The Lord knew that the worst possible sufferings were ahead for Him, but it seems also that what He said in verses 31 and 32 brought great comfort to Him as He faced those terrible moments when He would be made sin for His own elect. Notice how prominent some form of the verb *glorify* is in verses 31 and 32. This amazing word has been defined as *to invest with dignity and majesty*. It means that at the Cross with all of its shame and suffering, the true nature of God and the true nature of the Lord Jesus Christ would be manifested more so than in any miracle that the Lord had performed, or in any message that He had given. This is not to minimize the importance either of our Lord’s miracles or His messages, but it is to state who supremely important the

message of the Cross would be. I want to read to you again from Bishop Ryle's commentary on the Gospel of John what he had to say about these verses because he has said it far better than I could say it. Listen to what he wrote:

The crucifixion brought glory to the Father. It glorified His wisdom, faithfulness, holiness, and love. It showed Him wise, in providing a plan whereby He could be just and the justifier of the ungodly. It showed Him to be faithful in keeping His promise, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. It showed Him holy, in requiring His law's demands to be satisfied by our great Substitute. It showed Him loveing, in providing such a Mediator, such a Redeemer, and such a Friend for sinful man as His co-eternal Son.

The crucifixion brought glory to the Son. It glorified His compassion, His patience, and His power. It showed Him most compassionate, in dying for us, suffering in our stead, allowing Himself to be counted as sin and a curse for us, and buying our redemption with the price of His own blood. It shows Him most patient, in no dying the common death of most men, but in willingly submitting to such pains and unknown agonies as no mind can conceive, when with a word He could have summoned His Father's angels, and been set free. It showed Him most powerful, in bearing the weight of all the transgressions of His people, and vanquishing Satan, and despoiling him of his prey.

For ever let us cling to these thoughts about the crucifixion. Let us remember that painting and sculpture can never tell a tenth part of what took place on the Cross. Crucifixes and pictures at best can only show us a human being agonizing in a painful death. But of the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of the work transacted on the Cross, of God's law honored, man's sins borne, sin punished in a Substitute, free salvation bought for man, of all this they can tell us nothing. Yet all this lies hid under the crucifixion. No wonder St. Paul cries, "But God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world (Gal. 2:20) (II, pp. 267-268).

Notice also the words of our Lord to the Father in John 12:28, and the Father's response to Him from heaven: Father, glorify Thy Name. Then there came a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

We learn from John 14:13 the glory of the Father is involved when the Lord answers prayer:

And whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. This was the primary purpose that the Lord had in coming to the earth, to glorify the Father. It would be hard to overemphasize the importance of John 13:31, 32 in the life and ministry of our Lord. And yet these are probably two verses that we would never select to memorize. Pink says of these two verses, "Here, as ever, John gives us the highest, the *Divine* viewpoint of things" (p. 335).

13:32 Pink suggests an extended paraphrase of this verse to bring out its meaning. These are the words of our Lord. "If God the Father be specially glorified in all His attributes by My death, He shall proceed at once to place special glory on Me, for My personal work, and shall do it without delay, y raising Me from the dead, and placing Me at His right hand" (p. 339). And that this is the meaning of this verse seems to be confirmed by what the Lord said in the next verse. The glory of Christ was confirmed by the resurrection of Christ as the Apostle Paul said in Romans 1:4 that the Lord Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead."

13:33 "Little children" - This is the only time that our Lord addressed His disciples as "little children." Expositors are quick to mention that it was not until Judas had left them that the Lord addressed them in this way. It was a term of endearment. As the Lord had arrived at His "hour," His heart was turned toward His disciples in a special way. We see in John 14:1 ff. As well as in John 17:24 that the Lord felt deeply His departure from these eleven men, and that He was looking forward to the time when they all would be together

again. When the Lord said, “Whither I go ye cannot come,” was he thinking of the Cross, or of His ascension back to the Father. It would seem from what the Lord said to Peter in verse 36 that He was speaking particularly of His ascension. He was still going to be with them “yet a little while.” They would seek Him after His death when they heard that His body was not in the tomb. He did not say that they would not find Him, but that “whither I go ye cannot come>” In verse 36 He said to Peter, “Whither I go thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards.” So He must have been talking about when they would die, or when the Lord would return for them. But the point was that the Lord would be leaving them. None of this seems to have been clear to the disciples even at this point, *i.e.*, that He would die, be raised from the dead, and then ascend back to the Father in heaven.

But in the light of all of this we have our Lord’s words in verses 34 and 35.

13:34 The setting here emphasizes in the strongest possible way the importance of this “new commandment” that the Lord was giving to them. Think of all of the things the Lord might have said at this time, but this was the point of supreme importance to the Lord, especially in the light of what was immediately before Him.

The apostles were familiar with the importance of love in their lives. When the Lord had been asked previously, what is the great commandment in the Law, you will remember that He did not respond with any of the ten commandments. Instead, He responded by saying that the first commandment in the Law was that they were to love their God with all their heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. Mark added “strength” (Mark 12:30, as did Luke in 10:27. Matthew (22:37) said “all your heart, and soul, and mind.” They all were quoting from Deuteronomy 6:5. But then the Lord surprisingly added the second commandment: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (from Lev. 19:18). The new commandment given here is new in two ways. In the old commandment they were to love their neighbors, which could mean any person, saved or unsaved. In the new commandment the disciples were commanded to love one another. In the old commandment they were to love their neighbor as they loved themselves. In the new commandment they were to love each other as Christ had loved them. Both the old commandment and the new commandment are beyond man’s ability, but the new commandment is especially high. It can safely be said that no one ever has obeyed either of these commandments perfectly, but that is particularly true of the new commandment. But the point that the Lord was making was that we are to continue trying to demonstrate such love.

But the importance of the new commandment is to be seen in our Lord’s words in John 4:35: “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples..” In Ephesians which we are presently studying on Sunday mornings, Paul said something very significant in the verse we will come to next Sunday. He said this, “Wherefore I also, after I heard of (1) your faith in the Lord Jesus, and (2) love unto all the saints” – he was mentioning the two characteristics of a true child of God: faith in Christ, and love for the Lord’s people. In 1 John 3:14 the Apostle John wrote many years later, “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.”

Now look at verse 35.

13:35 “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” It is not by how many verses you can quote. It is not by what church you attend, or how often you go to church. It is not by whether you are a Calvinist or an Arminian. It is by the fact that you really love the Lord’s people, and that you would rather be with them than any other people on the face of the earth. It is that Christians are your best friends, and that you would do anything for them that you could possibly do. Remember that the chief characteristic of love is that you will do anything you can do for those you love. This is a love which needs to

be manifested at home as well as out of the home toward others. Pink reminds us that 1 Corinthians 13 gives us a full exposition of these two verses. It is not unusual that we can find a person who will talk doctrine, and argue doctrine, but who is totally lacking in love for the Lord's people. Such a person demonstrates that he does not know the transforming power of the Gospel. We all need to examine our own hearts to make sure that we have this basic characteristic of those who are in the family of God.

13:36 The remainder of this chapter is devoted to the Apostle Peter. It is significant that he and Judas Iscariot occupy a place close together in this thirteenth chapter of John. The difference between them could hardly be greater.

It seems to me that Judas Iscariot was probably a man that people liked, that even the Apostles liked. As we have seen none of the disciples was suspicious when the Lord first announced that one of them would betray Him. He was not one of those who, like James and John, felt like they deserved the seats at the right hand and left hand of the Lord when He established His kingdom on the earth. He never did seem to have much to say.

The Apostle Peter was very different. He was always talking. He was very self-confident. I don't think that there is any question but that he loved the Lord Jesus Christ very much. He, among all of the disciples, was impressed by the fact that the Lord said that He was going away, and that none of them would be able to follow Him. If there was one place in the universe where Peter wanted to be, it was with the Lord. He thought that he was very strong, but actually he was very weak. But he was the one of all of the disciples who wanted to know where He was going that they would not be able to stay with Him and be with Him like they had been for the past approximately three years.

So he did not ask the Lord *when* He was going, but *where* He was going. You will notice that at this point the Lord did not answer Peter's question. The Lord simply repeated that Peter could not follow Him, but then the Lord did add, "but thou shalt follow me afterwards."

At this point Peter was probably remembering those words of the Lord when He had called Peter and his brother, Andrew, with the words, "Follow me." Peter immediately followed the Lord, and they had been practically inseparable all of the years of the Lord's public ministry. Peter had not been troubled by the fact that there were those who hated the Lord. He had left the fishing business planning to follow the Lord for the rest of His life.

So how did Peter respond to the Lord's response? We see this in verse 37;

13:37 Peter responded with another question, and I believe that the emphasis must have been upon the word *now* – "Lord, why cannot I follow Thee *now*? He sensed that it must have been because the Lord was seeking to protect them from some impending danger. And so Peter added the words, "I will lay down my life for Thy sake"! However, we know that when the time came that Peter might be killed because of His relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, Peter denied, not just once, or twice, but three times that he even knew the Lord.

Peter was very sure of himself. This was evidence of the pride that was in his heart, which he seemed to be totally ignorant of. He believed that if the time came when he, too, would have to face the possibility of death, or even die with the Lord, he would die with the Lord. Bishop Ryle reminded his readers here of Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."

As I have reminded you in the past, Peter's spiritual history is reflected in his epistles. He said in 1 Peter 5,

beginning with verse 5, these words which show what he had learned from his pride and self-confidence in that time when he failed the Lord so miserably. This is what he said:

5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.

7 Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

9 Whom resist steadfast in the faith, know that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

11 To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Peter was not only underestimating himself, but he was underestimating the power of the Devil, and overlooking His own need for “the God of all grace.”

13:38 The Lord knew what Peter did not know, both that Peter would deny the Lord, how soon he would do it, and how many times he would do it! Here we have another verily, verily.

The Spirit of God did not have the Apostle John to write this because He wanted to humiliate Peter, but he did it as a warning to us that we might not follow Peter in his sin.