

“YOU WILL KNOW THEM BY THEIR LOVE”

John 13:31-38

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INTRODUCTION

Judas left the upper room where the disciples and the Lord were now ready to partake of the first “Lord’s Supper.” John does not describe this supper, but it must have occurred about this time.

Having the betrayer out of their midst meant several of things to Jesus:

- He felt a great sense of “freedom” to earnestly communicate precious truths to His true disciples in order to prepare them for what lay ahead.
- He knew that His time was short and that the process of betrayal was now taking place.
- He was now prepared to go through His “hour” (13:1).
- He would be glorified through the process of suffering.

Jesus saw the “big picture.” All too often we are short-sighted, seeing only what is immediately in front of our faces.

1) He knew how all of this was going to affect Him in His suffering, crucifixion, and death. But, He also realized that ahead of that lay resurrection, ascension, and coronation—all part of His glorification.

2) But, He also knew what all of this meant for His disciples. He would be gone from them and they would sorely miss Him and would want Him back. They would want to be with Him again. Therefore, He outlined for them the responsibility they would have once He was gone. He also knew of their failures and helped prepare them for those and to overcome and be restored from failure.

What a wonderful Savior we have. Sometimes we think that He is not aware of us and of our problems, failures, and needs. But He understands completely. In fact, it is because of what He accomplished for us on that dark day that He has made it possible for us to face and overcome every issue of life, and also for us to manifest the reality of our Christian faith.

We miss Him while He is gone, but He has given us a job to do:

WE MUST MANIFEST OUR SAVIOR TO THE WORLD.

Jesus gave His disciples, and us, **three necessities** by which we can show the world who He is:

1) He must Be Glorified (31-32); 2) He must go away (33, 36-38); 3) They must love one another as He had loved them.

The first necessity is that

I. HE MUST BE GLORIFIED (31-32).

A. The sacrificial death of Christ was now a “done deal”.

“Now is the Son of Man glorified.”

Notice His messianic title used—"Son of Man".
"Glorified"—through suffering and death (See Phil. 2:9-11)

- B. His Sacrifice satisfied the justice and holiness of the Father; thus, "God is glorified in Him." Notice the past tense is used in the original as though it is complete.
The Son did exactly what the Father had sent Him to do.
- C. God will glorify the Son shortly through the resurrection, ascension, and session at the Father's right hand.
- D. God "will glorify Him immediately."
There is no further delay. His earthly ministry is now complete.

Jesus is all too painfully aware of what all this means for His disciples. He must prepare them for His sufferings, triumph, and departure from them.

II. HE MUST GO AWAY (33, 36-38).

A. I go; you stay. (33)

- 1. I am only with you a little longer.
- 2. You will seek me.
Oh, how we miss Him and long for Him!
- 3. You cannot come where I go.

Notice though the difference in what He says to His own disciples compared with what He had said to the Jews earlier (8:21-22; cf. 7:34)
"Little children"—The only use in this Gospel or all of the gospels; elsewhere it is used 7 times by John in I John. This term expresses **tender affection** and **concern** to help them.

He did not say, "You shall not find me."
Nor did He say, "You will die in your sins."
Nor did He make a strong contrast between Himself and them by the pronouns He used.

B. You follow later. (36)

- 1. "Where are you going?" asks Peter.
- 2. "Where I go, you can not follow Me now."
Note that Jesus does not directly answer Peter's question. Of course, He is leaving the world and going back to heaven, to the Father.
Peter's time to die is not yet; that will come in due time (21:18-19). In the meanwhile, he has work to do for the Lord. Moreover, he is not ready spiritually to follow Jesus to heaven. The Lord has more work to do in him.
- 3. You be faithful (37-38).
 - a. "Why can't I follow you now?" He is determined to stay with his master.
 - b. "I will lay down my life for you."
These are really the words of the Good Shepherd (See 10:11). Will Peter be

the one to die on behalf of Jesus? Hardly! Jesus is about to **die on behalf of Peter**. Peter has it all wrong!

c. “Will you lay down your life for Me?” Peter did attempt to defend Jesus with a sword in the Garden of Gethsemane, but later when the issue was settled and Peter saw his impotence to change the situation, he cowardly stood down and denied the Lord.

d. “A cock shall not crow, until you deny Me three times.”

The watch of the night that was identified as “cock crowing” was 12:00-3:00 AM. Here, Jesus speaks of an actual crowing that Peter hears once Jesus’ prediction has been fulfilled.

Jesus speaks solemnly here: *truly, truly*, and a *double negative* (never crow). **Peter would not merely deny** (disown, repudiate) **Jesus once, but he would deny Him three times**.

There are several points to be noticed about Peter’s affirmation of His loyalty under duress as seen by comparing the information in all four gospels.

- These words were spoken both before and after Christ’s prediction of denial.
- Mathew shows that Peter made a very emphatic rejection of Christ’s prediction (26:35).
- Mark says that he spoke with “great vehemence” (14:3)
- Peter was copied by the others (Mk. 14:21)
- There are three “alls” in the later statement of Jesus (Mk. 14:27; Mt. 26:35, 56): You will **all** be ensnared; they **all** said it was impossible; **all** the disciples forsook Him and fled. Note that they were all ensnared, but Peter went further and actually denied Him.

We are often far too self-assured about our loyalty and perseverance for the Lord.

Jesus not only prepares the disciples by showing them His plan and warning them of their weakness and failures, He also shares with them their **responsibility**.

III. THEY MUST LOVE ONE ANOTHER (34-35).

A. A New Commandment (34)

Compare Lev. 19:8

1. New as to its basis—the love of Christ for them (“Even as I have loved you”)
2. New as to its relationship—the new brotherhood created by the work of Christ (“Love one another”; twice repeated for emphasis)

B. Testimony of God’s Love (35)

1. “All men will know”—come to understand by observation of the love of Christians for one another.
2. They will recognize them as Christ’s disciples—thus acknowledging who Christ is and what He is like.

3. The love that Jesus speaks of if “**genuine, deep-seated, constant, and self-sacrificing**” (Hendrickson).

*How can you lead to Christ your boy
Unless Christ's method you employ?
There's just one thing that you can do—
It's let that boy see Christ in you.*

*Have you a husband fond and true?
A wife who's blind do all but you?
If each would win the other one,
That life must speak of God's dear Son.*

*There is but one successful plan
By which to win a fellow man;
Have you a neighbor old or new?
Just let that man see Christ in you.*

*The Church that hopes to win the lose
Must pay the one unchanging cost;
She must compel the world to see
In her the Christ of Calvary.*

CONCLUSION

As a young believer I remember a chorus entitled, “*You will know that they are Christians by their Love.*” Probably many have misunderstood what kind of love Jesus is speaking of here. But, the truth is that Jesus did make the statement. The kind of love described above is still the hallmark by which genuine Christians are known.

It is a love that is loyal to the Word of God, the Truth contained in that Word, and the people who have been transformed by the saving message found in that Word.

It is a love that manifests itself the way Jesus did with His disciples—**genuine, deep-seated, constant, and self-sacrificing.**

We began by saying that there are **three necessities** by which we can show the world who He is. The first two He has fulfilled: *He has been glorified; He did go away.*

Now we must love one another as He has loved us.

WE MUST MANIFEST OUR SAVIOR TO THE WORLD