

The Gospel of John

Believe and Live!

Lesson 14

John 13:1–38

He Loved Them to the End

In chapter 13, John's attention turns from the themes of *light* and *life* to that of *love*. The Passover spent in the Upper Room with the disciples will prove to be memorable and critical for their final training. With the cross overshadowing Jesus and the authorities pressing in, the mood becomes tense but the significance of the moment will remain with the disciples long after Jesus is gone.

At a glance ~ **Read John 13:1–38.**

While all four gospel accounts detail the time spent in the Upper Room, Matthew, Mark, and Luke's accounts all center on the institution of the Lord's Supper—Communion. John chooses instead to write about what the other three do not mention: the washing of the disciples' feet. As you focus your attention on verses 1–17, what stands out to you at first glance?

When you know the time you have left is short, the increasing awareness that the clock is ticking keeps you focused in on the main thing. For Jesus, getting His affairs in order meant getting His disciples ready to carry on His commission to go into all the world after His departure. It meant modeling for them an example of love and servant leadership that would, in turn, become the basis for future ministry. The grain of wheat falling to the ground and dying that Jesus spoke about earlier was symbolic of His own death and the great harvest of followers—Jews and Gentiles alike—who would follow thereafter.

1. How does He feel about His disciples knowing that His hour had finally come?
vv. 1–5
 - a. What does John say that Jesus personally looked forward to?
 - b. In demonstration of His love for His disciples, what does Jesus do after dinner?

2. What is Peter's initial response to Jesus washing his feet? vv. 6 and 8

It would seem from John's narrative that Peter was the first Jesus approached with the basin and towel and so he was also the first to be shocked by the event.

- a. What does Jesus tell him? v. 7

Initially, Peter was offended but then he realized the foot washing Jesus performed on all of them was symbolic of the cleansing of sin. Jesus tells Peter, "*Unless I wash you, you have no part with Me.*" In essence, what Jesus meant is that pride was getting in the way of Peter's relationship with Jesus and, unless he put his pride aside, he could have no fellowship with Jesus.

- b. Once Peter understood this, what is his humble reply? v.9

Picture it~ Read Luke 22:24–27.

Luke's gospel tells us that as Jesus was preparing to institute the Lord's Supper, the disciples were arguing among themselves as to who was the greatest. At some point in time, Jesus rose from the table, removed His outer garments, and knelt before the disciples wearing only the loincloth of a slave. With a towel and a basin, He began to wash the disciples' feet, one by one—even Judas'.

- Imagine if *you* were one of the twelve in that Upper Room. What impact would the Lord washing your feet have on you?

- What does Jesus' example teach *you* about serving?

Jesus elaborates in vv. 10–17 about what He was doing in washing the feet of His followers. He was teaching that those who have had the washing of spiritual regeneration—a complete cleansing—need only to have their feet washed from time to time in order to be clean. In other words, they don't need to be saved all over again; they only need to keep a short account with God by confessing and receiving His forgiveness.

3. If you're willing to live out what the Bible says in 1 John 1:9, you'll receive continual cleansing and enjoy fellowship with God. What does this verse say?

4. What did Jesus mean by the statement, “*not all of you are clean?*” (v. 11).

The disciples accepted Jesus as their Teacher and Lord, as their Authority (vv. 13–14). After He had washed their feet and put on His garments, He sat down to teach the lesson He had just modeled.

5. According to verses 14–17, what lesson did Jesus want them to learn from His example?

a. If they were obedient to apply what He modeled for them, what would result?

Selah ~

Since the servant is not greater than his master, we who choose to serve the Lord must follow Jesus’ example. No one should be in Christian ministry who is not willing to do what Jesus did: pick up a towel and serve! His example teaches us that those who are humble are His choice to bear the mantle of authority in the church.

In focus ~ (Key words) **Teacher; Lord**

The disciples recognized the authority of Jesus and responded by following Him. Look up these words using the resources you have on hand (Bible translations, dictionary, concordance) and write a definition.

Teacher: _____

Lord: _____

What is it about the authority of Jesus that attracts *you*? _____

Take a closer look ~ John 13:34–35

(Memorize and meditate on the memory verse each time you open your lesson.)

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Write out these verses in the space below and work at committing them to memory each time you open your lesson.

The New Commandment

Outlook ~ Read John 13:18–38.

In an effort to drive home the practical application of His teaching to the disciples, we will now see Jesus sending out His betrayer; giving His disciples a new commandment, and predicting the future of one of His closest followers.

How is it possible to be a disciple and go through the motions on the outside but all the while be a traitor on the inside? Judas and Peter were both disciples of Jesus Christ. Both had walked with Him for three and a half years; listened to Him teach and watched Him perform miraculous signs and wonders. Yet, the choices and consequences of these two individuals stand in stark contrast to each other. We'll look at them and how they relate to the new commandment to *love one another*.

Perhaps it is because John was sitting directly next to Jesus that allowed him to hear and see more of what was transpiring in that Upper Room. Maybe there was discussion between the disciples at a later date that brought forth more of the conversation but, in any case, John records in detail an extremely difficult moment for Jesus.

1. In verses 18-30, Jesus identifies His betrayer. In fulfillment of the prophecy; what does Psalm 41:9 have to say about it?

a. For what reason does Jesus make this known ahead of time?

b. How do the disciples respond?

c. How does Jesus specifically identify Judas as the one?

Following the piece of bread (v. 27), Satan entered Judas and Jesus sent him out with these words: *“What you do, do quickly*. Breaking bread with Jesus one last time, Judas then went out immediately and it was night (v. 30). It is incredible for us to realize that one of the men who walked and talked with Jesus, who heard the message of salvation over and over, and who witnessed miraculous signs and wonders could betray the very Son of God. And yet, Jesus was longsuffering with Judas right to the very end. No one but Jesus knew that night would be Judas' last. In a few hours he would hang himself from a tree.

2. In verses 36–38, we see a very different response from Peter, who truly was a devoted follower of Jesus. Because Peter genuinely loved Jesus, what great declaration does he make?

Yes, Peter loved Jesus, but his love was that of a friend rather than someone willing to die for Him.

- a. In fact, not only would Peter not yet be willing to die for Jesus, what does Jesus predict that Peter will do in just a few short hours?

Somehow, Peter did not get it; he did not understand what Jesus had been telling the disciples over and over again. But Jesus is patient in His response to Peter: “*Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.*” The Lord’s reply is more in keeping with a childlike level of understanding. Peter was not yet ready to lay his life down for his Lord.

In essence, Jesus tells Peter that he cannot follow Him because He has been called to suffer and die alone on a cross. Tradition has it that approximately thirty years later Peter did indeed follow where Jesus went before him. He was imprisoned in Rome and sentenced to die by crucifixion but, feeling unworthy to die as his Savior had, Peter requested that he be crucified upside down. His request was granted.

3. There remained yet a new commandment Jesus wanted to give His followers before going to the cross. What is this commandment? vv. 31–35

- a. What would the entire world come to realize as the result of Jesus’ followers living out His command?

Through the solitary suffering and death of the Savior, God would be forever glorified! Whenever believers manifest God’s *agape*’ love for one another, people are drawn to Jesus Christ. That dimension of Holy Spirit empowered love is absolutely irresistible! When people hear it and see it in evidence, they are attracted, convicted, and transformed by it. When the world witnesses the family of God loving each other in the power of the Spirit, they know and believe that Jesus is *real* and they want to know Him too. This is truly Christianity in action!

Selah ~

Jesus wasn't through with Peter. After He arose and ascended to heaven, on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), He sent the Holy Spirit to indwell His followers—and Peter was one of them. He became a new man, forever changed because he believed Jesus and was filled with the Spirit. Acts 2:41–43 says the following: *“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.”* If you have time today you may want to read through Acts chapter 2 for yourself. What a fantastic testimony about these men—and particularly Peter—who were empowered to finish what Jesus had begun!

Remember that Jesus isn't through with you either—the possibilities are limitless and, more importantly, the promises are infinite! Get as close to Him as you possibly can and then watch in amazement at what He will do in and through your life to glorify His name! Close your study with a time of prayer. You may note below what He speaks to your heart.

More like Jesus ~

Are *you* becoming more like Jesus? Absolutely! Every time you open the Word and spend time getting to know Him more intimately, you partake in the life-long process of drawing near—going deeper—bearing fruit—becoming more like Him. As you close your lesson today, determine to put into practice what you've learned by noting it below.

- Recite your memory verse _____

- Reflect on a lesson you received _____

- Respond with prayer and praise to God _____

Notes