

Sunday, October 18, 2020

This will be the third in a series of sermons on John 13-17, commonly known as “The Farewell Discourse.” The outline that I’m following is:

1. [Jesus loves His own \(13:1\)](#) [7/5/2020]
2. [Foot washing \(13:2-17\)](#) [8/30/2020]
3. **Identifying the Traitor (13:18-30)**
4. Christ’s Glory and how we are to live in His temporary absence (13:31-38)
5. Preparing a Place (14:1-4)
6. The only way to the Father (14:5-7)
7. Seeing God (14:8-14)
8. Peace and Comfort (14:15-27)
9. Loving God (14:28-31)
10. Abiding in Christ, the True Vine (15:1-11)
11. Friends of Christ (15:12-17)
12. The hatred of the world (15:18- 16:4a)
13. The work of the Holy Spirit (16:4b-15)
14. Your sorrow shall be turned into joy (16:16-24)
15. Prayer in His name (16:25-32)
16. He’s spoken that you might have peace (16:33)
The High Priestly Prayer (Intercessory Prayer)
17. Jesus prays for Himself (17:1-5)
18. Jesus prays for His present people (17:6-19)
19. Jesus prays for His future people (17:20-26)

We’ve talked about Jesus loving His own to the end (i.e., to the max, to the uttermost, ∞), and we’ve talked about Christ washing the apostles’ feet. If you’ll recall, last time, I mentioned that there are both spiritual and practical components to the foot washing. The spiritual meaning is that even though we have been cleansed by the blood of Christ, we still accumulate filth as we sojourn through this land, and we must be regularly cleansed of that to maintain fellowship with Christ. The practical meaning is that we’re supposed to be humble servants to one another. After the sermon, one of the young men in the church asked a good question: “Do we have a responsibility to wash the stain of the world from each other regularly like Christ did, or is that a power exclusively reserved for Christ to do?” There’s a lot to say about that, but I believe the short answer to that is that we do have the responsibility to help one another with this. And we see it in places like this:

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Reading the scripture, obeying the scripture, speaking often to one another about the scripture, provoking one another unto love and good works and exhorting one another according to the scripture, will all cleanse our way:

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word.” (Psalm 119:9)

As a reminder, Christ ended the foot washing by saying, “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.” (John 13:17). In other words, it’s one thing to know what you ought to be

doing, but it's another thing to actually do it. There's a happiness and blessedness that you just can't experience unless you put those things into practice. You're not a blessed person unless you do them. And He segues immediately from that to Judas Iscariot, the traitor, in today's passage:

“I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am *he*. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped *it*. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some *of them* thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy *those things* that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.” (John 13:18-30)

I'm going to break this up into three parts: the prophecy of the treachery, the reaction of the apostles, and the dismissal of the traitor.

Prophecy of the Treachery

“I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am *he*. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.” (John 13:18-21)

After telling them of the happiness that they will possess in ministering to the sheep of God, He makes a stark line of demarcation. He makes it very clear that He's not talking about everyone in that room. There's one among them that does not get to partake of that happiness. There's one among them that is not among the chosen of God. He knows whom He has chosen (“I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep” – John 10:14), and He's not

talking about that one whom He has not chosen; He's not talking about the reprobate in the room. A year earlier, Jesus had already warned them about this:

“And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot *the son of Simon*: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.” (John 6:65-71)

Here we have Christ giving Judas as the prime example of one who cannot “come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.” Peter thought they all believed, but Christ says, “That’s not quite right, Peter. Only those that were given to Me by My Father will believe, and there’s one among you who is a devil.” For some reason, this didn’t appear to have much of an impact on the apostles; it’s like they didn’t understand what He was talking about.

But what do we make of Him saying that He has “chosen you twelve?” What does that mean? Was Judas one of God’s elect, but then exercised his free will to say, “I don’t want to be one of God’s elect – I’d rather be a devil?” Is that what’s going on here? After all, it’s the same word – “chosen.” Of course, that’s not what it means – everything has to be read in its context. In John 6, Jesus is saying, “I chose twelve of you to be apostles.” Jesus chose Judas to be an apostle – He did not choose Judas for eternal life. Judas was there for one reason; he was chosen as an apostle for one reason: “that the scripture may be fulfilled.” That is, that the eternal plan of God as prophesied in the Scripture would be fulfilled. There are a lot of prophecies in the Old Testament concerning Judas, and the one that Jesus quotes here is:

“Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up *his* heel against me.” (Psalm 41:9)

So, we have a familiar friend – someone with whom He had lived in peace for a period of time (the Hebrew word for “familiar” is “shalom”). Christ treated Judas as a friend, and Judas pretended to be Christ’s friend – this is why Christ calls him “friend” when he comes to betray Him in the Garden (Matthew 26:50). Judas was someone in whom Christ had trusted to some degree – for example, He had entrusted the gospel to him to preach, He had entrusted the bag of money to him, etc. This was someone who had eaten of His bread (and will eat one more time on this very night when Christ gives him the sop), signifying close friendship, communion and fellowship. This is the man who lifted up his heel against the Son of God! There are various interpretations of this “lifting up the heel” concept – for example, turning your back on

someone, kicking them while they're down, a fed beast kicking its master, tripping someone in a sports competition in order to get ahead, etc. Whatever it means, it is an act of treachery. Friends, we have all experienced betrayal by someone, but no traitor is quite as despicable as the one that you had a close and trusting friendship with. And the despicable among the despicable are the ones who turn their backs on the Lord Jesus.

“For it was not an enemy *that* reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me *that* did magnify *himself* against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, *and* walked unto the house of God in company.” (Psalm 55:12-14)

This betrayal of Christ had to happen. It was prophesied of hundreds of years before. “This scripture must needs have been fulfilled.” (Acts 1:16). There had to be a Judas. There was no free will that Judas could have used to thwart the eternal plan of a sovereign God. In fact, there was no force in the universe that could have kept Judas from betraying the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet, in the mystery of providence, Judas was not coerced into doing this; he was not forced into doing this; he did it because he wanted to do it, and he did it for sinful reasons. He had a responsibility all along the way to reverse course, repent, and believe. He will be held accountable for all eternity for this evil that he did here. I can't fully explain this coexistence between the absolute sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man, but there's no question that the Bible teaches it.

“The Son of man goeth as it is written of him [Luke 22:22 says “as it was determined”]: 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.” (Matthew 26:24)

Under no circumstances do we get to blame God for our sins – we can't say “God is a sovereign God and predestinated everything, so I'm off the hook – it's His fault that I sinned”:

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren.” (James 1:13-16)

Jesus tells them that it's going to happen before it happens so they will “believe that I am He.” The original simply says, “believe that I am,” which I believe is another of the “I am” statements in the book of John, being an allusion to His deity – “I am that I am” (Exodus 3:14). Only God can know precisely what's going to happen before it happens. He also knows the hearts of the apostles – He knows the weakness of these men – He knows what kind of an

impact the next 24 hours is going to have on them - He knows that their tendency would be to say, "what's going on here? Did Jesus make a mistake? Why is this happening? Why are we following this guy?" So, He warns them ahead of time, and lets them know that this is all part of the plan - no mistakes; no surprises. So, when it did happen, it would be so far from causing a crisis in their faith that it would do the opposite and confirm their faith. And didn't He tell us that this kind of stuff would happen to us, too? For example, Luke 21:16 – "ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends..."

In the middle of all this we find verse 20 – "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." Why is this verse here? I think it's here for two reasons. The first reason is for the comfort of the saints. It's to remind them that even though there's a traitor in the room, they still have a blessed job to do. This wicked man is going off and committing a crime against God, but that can't be attributed to you – you can't be burdened with that – you have a job to do. There's a direct line between the messengers of God and God the Father. The Father sent the Son, and the Son sends His messengers. And the bond is so tight that if you receive one of His messengers, it's the same as receiving Christ, which is the same as receiving the Father. A traitor might cause a temporary disturbance, but he can't do anything to sever that bond. So, don't let a treacherous, two-faced son of Belial derail you from what you've been sent to do. There will always be traitors, beloved. Matthew Henry: *"There is a mixture of bad with good in the best societies, a Judas among the apostles."* William Burkitt: *"Can we wonder to find friends unfriendly or unfaithful towards us, when our Saviour had a traitor in His own house?"*

The second reason is to shame and warn the traitor. Don't forget that Judas **had** been sent out to preach ("These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying...preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." - Matthew 10:5-7). And he despised that blessing! So, he doesn't get to take part in that union with Christ and the Father. And the warning is that it goes the other way, too. If you receive one, you receive all; but if you reject one, you reject all. And Judas here is rejecting Christ, the Father, and the company of the saints.

The whole situation is a troubling situation. Anyone who has dealt with a traitor knows what it's like to be troubled. Jesus was troubled in spirit, too. It's a strong word – it means to be agitated, to have inward commotion, to be restless. Like your emotions are roiling, and you just can't feel settled. Judas is here, infecting the whole room with the noxious, oppressive miasma of treachery, and Jesus is troubled by his very presence. He is troubled about the wickedness of what Judas is about to do. He is troubled that this foolish son of perdition, who knows better, is jumping headlong into eternal damnation. He is troubled that this familiar friend, in whom He had trusted, who had eaten His bread, is now about to lift his heel against Him. He is troubled at the impact it is going to have on His beloved disciples. And He is

troubled that it is imminent – Jesus had known from the beginning that this was going to happen, but now that the time is drawing nigh, He is troubled. Remember He is a man, “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15). It’s comforting to know that Christ went through this very human response to the treachery of an evil man and can therefore succor us when we are troubled in spirit in similar circumstances.

Reaction of the Apostles

Jesus has made some ominous, but cryptic, statements on this night (“ye are clean, but not all”; “I speak not of you all”; “he that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me”). In verse 21, He is very clear: “one of you shall betray me.” And here’s what happened:

“Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.” (John 13:22-26a)

So, the response from the apostles is stunned silence. All they can do is look at each other in wonder, probably with wide-eyes and gaping mouths. They were perplexed. They were at a loss. They didn’t know what to do. I think we’ve all been in situations like that and can understand what was going on here. We know from the other accounts (Matthew 26, Mark 14) that the apostles eventually spoke, and each was worried that it was himself. “Lord, is it I?” Matthew adds that they became “exceeding sorrowful.” This is an example of what it means that charity “thinketh no evil” (1 Corinthians 13:5). Instead of pointing fingers at one another, each man examined his own heart. It never entered any of their minds that Judas might have been the one – showing what a masterful hypocrite he was.

Now, this scene of Peter beckoning to John to ask Jesus who the traitor is, is an interesting thing. Probably they were arranged with Jesus at the position of prominence, with John on one side of Him, and Judas on the other side of Him. Peter would have been somewhere such that John was in between him and Jesus. When we sit down to eat a meal, we generally sit on chairs. That’s not how these guys did things at this time in history. The table would have been much lower than the tables that we’re familiar with, and they would have had pallets or low sofas arranged around it. Rather than sitting upright like we do, they would have reclined on their left elbows so they could use their right hands to eat. The words used here in John 13 indicate that they were reclining. For example, in verse 12, after the foot washing, it says that Jesus “was set down again.” The Greek word for “set down” means “to lie back, lie down, recline at a table.” In verse 23, it says that the disciple whom Jesus loved “was leaning on

Jesus' bosom." The Greek word for "leaning" means "to lie at a table, eat together, dine." (The same word is used in verse 28, where it's translated "at the table."). It's kind of an awkward translation in verse 23, which makes it sound like John is resting his head on Jesus's bosom while they eat, but the meaning is that he's reclining at the table very close to Christ's bosom. Jesus would be reclining on His left side, and John would be reclining on his left side next to Jesus with his back towards Jesus. So, when it comes time for John to talk to Jesus, he twists his body and leans backwards, which would put his head on Jesus's breast.

So, Peter beckons to John with his head (the word means "to give a nod"). Knowing Peter's personality, it's a little bit surprising that he didn't yell across the table, but he may have been a little bit humbled by what had just happened with the foot washing (although if that's the case, the humility didn't last for long, as we'll see next time). John leans back onto Jesus's breast and quietly asks Him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus quietly responds, "He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped *it*." I say the conversation was done quietly and privately because nobody else in the room knew what was going on, as we'll see shortly.

One question to answer about this little section is, why does John refer to himself as the "disciple whom Jesus loved"? He refers to himself like that, in fact, 5 times (here, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, and 21:20). He never refers to himself by name, but rather as the "disciple whom Jesus loved," and it is this beloved disciple that wrote this gospel of John (see John 21:24). But Jesus loves all His disciples, doesn't He? Why single himself out? Surely, he's not saying that Jesus loves him to the exclusion of the other disciples. Many commentators say that Jesus had a special affection for John. That may be true, but I think John is just enthralled by the fact that God loves him! What else would be more important than to be loved by God? What would be more amazing than that, that God would love a man? And not just a man, but a sinner! ("But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." - Romans 5:8). And not just a sinner, but an enemy! ("...when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son..." - Romans 5:10). "All nations before him *are* as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity." (Isaiah 40:17). But He condescends and loves us, His people, and has saved us to the uttermost! (Hebrews 7:25). And this is how John saw himself, so he calls himself the "disciple whom Jesus loved." And that's really all that needs to be said. Who are you? I'm the one whom Jesus loves.

Dismissal of the Traitor

"And when he had dipped the sop, he gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some *of them* thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy *those things* that we have

need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.” (John 13:26b-30)

A sop is a piece of bread that is dipped into some kind of liquid. Giving it to Judas served as a sign to John of who the traitor was. Several commentators point out that it was a tradition for the master to give the first sop to the guest of honor at a meal. Whether that’s true or not, we can certainly tie it back to verse 18 (“He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.”). And Jesus is bestowing a blessing on Judas here by eating with him. Beloved, sometimes the Lord gives sops to reprobates. “If thine enemy hunger, feed him.” (Romans 12:20). The very thing that should have knocked some sense into Judas – the very thing that should have pricked his conscience and caused him to repent – has only caused him to become more stiffnecked and hard of heart.

Something about Christ giving that sop to Judas causes his hatred of God to solidify in his heart. And now Satan takes full possession of him. Satan works in stages, friends, and that’s why it’s essential to resist him at the first signs. A year earlier, Christ had already identified Judas as a “devil” (John 6:70) – i.e., Satan was already working in him. He had entered Judas to some greater degree earlier in the week: “Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.” (Luke 22:3-4). And now he takes full possession. Satan doesn’t enter people without people letting Satan enter. This is why in Acts 5:3, Peter doesn’t ask Satan why he entered Ananias’s heart – rather, he asks, “Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart...?” Judas is not a poor demoniac, being forced to act against his will – he opened the door wide and invited Satan in. Haven’t we seen this happen to people? Little by little, they become more and more energized by Satan, and then all of a sudden (it seems) the mask comes off, and they behave in ways that they’ve never behaved before.

But how did we get to this point? How is it that we have an apostle of Jesus Christ betraying Him? This boggles my mind. I’m perplexed at how someone could live three years in that blessed situation and then turn on his Lord like a rabid dog. Judas went out with the others and preached the gospel. He had been given the supernatural gifts of healing, raising the dead, casting out devils (Matthew 10:7-8). He listened to the greatest preaching in the history of this world. He observed amazing miracles. He had mysteries expounded to him. And it appears that while the eleven grew in love towards Christ, Judas grew in hatred towards Him. How could this happen? Of course, the answer ultimately is that this thing must happen “as it was determined.” (Luke 22:22). But what was going on in Judas that led to this? It might help us to avoid some of those things in ourselves.

Well, we don't know a whole lot about Judas. But here's a story that lets us in on a little bit:

“Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.” (John 12:1-8)

This tells us explicitly that he was a thief. We might also learn that he had some level of influence among the apostles, because Matthew and Mark tell us that the other apostles had “indignation” (Mark 14:4) at the “waste” of the spikenard. No doubt, Judas was the first to say something and persuaded the others to go along with him. He was greedy. Covetous. Irrational. Entitled. Selfish. Duplicitous. A first-rate hypocrite. And do I detect some pride? A proud man can't stand to be told that he's done something wrong. The straw that broke the camel's back seems to be that Jesus mildly rebuked him here. I say that because it is immediately after this incident that he goes to make his agreement with the chief priests:

“Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said *unto them*, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.” (Matthew 26:14-16)

He was discontent. Angry. Vindictive. And he despised Christ and held Him in contempt – he sold Him for the price of a slave (see Exodus 21:32). He wants out, for whatever reason (and you can be sure he has something that he's convinced himself is a really good reason). Things hadn't turned out quite the way he had wanted them to turn out. His expectations hadn't been met, because after all, it's all about him. And he's not going to leave quietly - he wants his pound of flesh. You better watch out if you have any of these characteristics. Covetous, discontent, angry, vindictive hypocrites who have had their pride wounded are in a very slippery place. And before anyone gets too puffed up, consider that we've all betrayed God to one degree or another – the only difference is God's grace.

So, whatever steps brought Judas to where he is, here he is in John 13, taking the sop. And Jesus tells him to leave the room: “That thou doest, do quickly.” Of course, Jesus isn't commanding him to go sin – the message is, “I know that you're resolved to do this, Judas. I

know the 30 pieces of silver are in your pocket. I'm on a divine timeline to redeem sinners, and you play a necessary role to set the next steps in motion. So, get on with it." So, Judas leaves immediately, and the section ends with the ominous words, "and it was night." Yes, it was. It is the time of the "power of darkness." (Luke 22:53). It's very symbolic that this dark-hearted man would go out into the night to betray Christ. Judas has left Jesus, the light of the world, and in just a few hours he will die by suicide and enter "outer darkness," where he's been ever since (Matthew 22:13).

As he leaves, it never even dawns on the other tender-hearted apostles that Judas would be the one to betray the Lord Jesus Christ! Even at this moment, they're assuming that Judas is going to do something good – since he was the treasurer of the group, they thought he would be going to buy some provisions, or to give some money to the poor. The last thing on their minds was that he was heading out to prepare everything so he could turn Jesus over in the Garden of Gethsemane! But that is exactly what he did. He betrayed Him with a kiss. As we go through the rest of John 13-17, remember that while Jesus is comforting and instructing His loved ones, Judas is involved in a flurry of activity, working out all the logistics of betrayal.

Well, when you come up with a plan to betray someone, it often sounds really good in your head. But when you execute your brilliant plan, it's not always as sweet and satisfying as you thought it would be. Here's what happened to Judas:

"Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What *is that* to us? see thou *to that*. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself... and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." (Matthew 27:3-5, Acts 1:18)

A shameful end to a shameful man. He hung himself, and apparently either the rope or the branch that the rope was tied to broke, and his dead body hit the jagged rocks below and burst asunder, with his bowels gushing out. The Lord knows how to deal with a traitor, and He often dispatches them to hell in short order.

In the previous section, Jesus had figuratively cleansed them by washing their feet. Here He cleanses them again by removing the traitor. Now that Judas is gone, Jesus can get down to business and speak with His loved ones. The first thing He does is talk about His glory, and then about how we ought to be loving one another. When the traitor has left the room, it's time for the beloved of God to focus on His glory and on loving one another. We'll talk about that next time, Lord willing. I love you. Amen.