

## **IV. Jesus' Self-Disclosure in His Cross and Exaltation (13:1 – 20:31)**

### **A. The Last Supper (13:1-30)**

At the beginning of this Gospel account two things were stated in connection with the outcome of Christ's mission and ministry: (i) the nation, as a whole, "did not receive Him": this has been demonstrated especially in chapters 5 to 12; (ii) second, those who did "receive Him" were given the right to become children of God. In chapters 13 to 17 we see Christ alone with His own, separated from the world, telling them of their special portion and privileges. It is here that we have the great and faithful Bridegroom of the church speaking to His bride and assuring them of His special and enduring love for them. The bulk of the truths given in the next five chapters are not for everyone – but for the Lord's people only. As marriage is a private and special intimate relationship, so too has Christ taken unto Himself His own special people. It is fitting, therefore, that He would have these special, loving and tender words for His betrothed before His departure.

This is not partiality; this is grace! It has nothing to do with any supposed merit in God's people – for there is none. It is simply that when man had rejected God, choosing to go their own way, God in infinite mercy still elected to save and bless some. If He had not done so, not one soul would have been saved. That He has done so – is tremendous!

Who are Christ's own? The answer has been given many times in John's gospel account. They are those who have been given to Christ by the Father (6:37,44). They are those for whom Christ was about to die (10:11,15). They are those who were born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (1:13). They are those to whom Christ gives eternal life, who shall never perish, and who shall never be plucked from Christ's hand (10:28-29). Christ alone has done the "plucking" and He has plucked out a people from out of the world to receive grace and mercy and great kindness forever. [Note: world (kosmos) is the world collectively; can mean the world system with its values. 105 of the 185 uses of this word in the N.T. are by John]. God has done some things for all men – that is everyone in the world. He has created them, sustained them, kept them from the worst that is possible, even tolerated them, and kept them for a time from hell. On the other hand, God has done all things for some men. These are His own, and they will never lack any good thing.

#### **Overview of some of the themes in the coming chapters:**

1<sup>st</sup> – The first and greatest teaching of these chapters is that Jesus specifically loved those who are His own. It begins right in 13:1 and ends in 17:26. Later the disciples would know Christ's love through His atoning death. In the upper room, they got a glimpse and

foretaste of His ultimate act of sacrificial love through Jesus condescending to wash their feet.

There is a sense in which the love of God extends to all men, but the love we are speaking about here is that special saving love of intimate relationship reserved for His own. This special privilege also leads to special obligation. For if they are loved, they are also to love. This is the love of the new commandment (13:34).

2<sup>nd</sup> – A second glorious truth is that Jesus has gone to prepare a place for His people and that He will return to bring us there.

3<sup>rd</sup> – Jesus is going to send a representative to dwell with us – the Holy Spirit – while He is gone.

4<sup>th</sup> – Empowered by the Holy Spirit, His disciples are commissioned to a special work for the growth and furtherance of the Kingdom; including divine truth (the scriptures of the New Testament), and prayer to bear fruit in the life of war in which the world will hate us and to find true and lasting joy.

### ***(i) The Humility of Love (13:1-17)***

*V. 1 Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.*

Notice it doesn't just say that Jesus should return to heaven, but to the Father. It was the Father's presence His heart desired!

What a blessed expression - "His own"! "You are not your own," we are told in 1 Cor. 6:19; we belong to Christ. "His own" are the objects of His love; "unto the end" is the extent of His love. It is His own, He loved to the end. Why did He love us? No explanation is given. Obviously not because we are lovable for we are not. There is nothing in us that God should find us desirable. In fact, God could well say, 'You are wrong from head to toe and if you had your way in your rebellion, you'd throw Me off the throne, but I have love you with an everlasting love!' He is holy; we are unholy. He is just; we are unjust. He is loving; we are filled with selfish hatred and all manner of sin. What a marvel that He loves us. What do you say to these things?

God has not loved us because we first loved Him (1 John 4:10). He is not merely returning our love. God has not loved us because of anything we could do for Him; for

we have nothing to offer, and God doesn't need anything (Acts 17:25). He doesn't need our praise. He has angels for that. The reason God loved Israel is because He loved them (Deut. 7:7-8) and that is the case with the true people of God – the church. His love is unexplainable; at least from our perspective.

When we read the glorious phrase “*having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end,*” we are taken from past to present to the future. His love is eternal. He has loved us with an everlasting love (Jer. 31:3). And because He loved us, He drew us to Himself. His hour had arrived. He loved us by dying for us. No earthly father or mother or husband or wife will or can love you like this. Only Jesus loves with a perfect and everlasting love, and without such love, you'd be lost forever. He had always loved His own, now He was going to show them the full extent of His love (first pre-figured in the washing of their feet) [15:13].

“*to the end*” (telos) – to perfection; completely; to the uttermost; with the total fullness of love. The word “telos” is the root of the word “tetelestai” which Jesus said in the cross (i.e. “It is finished, or completed, or perfected”). Therefore, it carries the idea that Jesus loves His own completely and fully – as much as a redeemed human could be loved by a God whose love knows no limits! Secondly, it carries the idea ‘to the end (i.e. all the way to the end; it never changes). Therefore that love will never falter or turn to hate. He will continue to love His own. This is because His love is not dependent upon us. If it was, it never would have been directed to us in the first place. Thirdly, the word carries the idea of forever (i.e. 14:3 – to dwell together and share life together ... forever!). All of these ideas can be contained in the term “telos.” This degree of love is limited to “His own” and it is comprehensive and complete. It lasts through all of life and on through eternity, and Jesus is about to make the single greatest demonstration of that love by dying for those He loves. He loves His own perfectly and through all of life, and forever and ever and establishes an everlasting covenant sealed with His own blood – the blood of the ultimate Passover Lamb!

Only absolute humility can generate absolute love (1 Cor. 13:5). You can't love and be occupied with self. When arrested, Jesus arranged it so His disciples would not be. On the cross, He made sure John would care for His mother in the years to come. On the cross, He reached out to a dying thief. How could anyone reject that kind of love? People do it all the time. Judas did.

*V. 2 And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him,*

What a fearful contrast! (i.e. contrast Jesus in v. 1-17 with Judas in v. 18-30). Here was a man who basked in the light, yet lived in darkness... tragic. Though He was hated by this greedy man, in a little while, Jesus would be kneeling and washing his feet.

*V. 3-5 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and*

*began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.*

Following the statement of verse 2, we'd almost expect it to say that Jesus laid aside His garment and defeated the devil and Judas with an unstoppable blast of divine wrath and power. Instead, we read He washed the disciples' feet – including the feet of the betrayer. Like that old joke about the stubborn donkey who wouldn't move, and the farmer whacked him on the head with a two-by-four, and then the donkey responded to a "giddy-up" in a normal voice. He had to get his attention first! That is what Jesus is doing here. He is getting the attention of His disciples for what He will do before the day is done.

Roads were not roads we typically have here, and sandals did little to keep the dirt and stuff off the feet. Normally, foot washing was the duty of the lowliest slave. It was only days before this that the Lord had said to the twelve, "*You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whosoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*" (Matt. 20:25-28) This came on the heels of their bickering about who was the greatest.

In this scene we see Jesus "taking the form of a servant" and it is difficult not to think of Phil. 2:5-8.

The foot washing truly is an anticipation of Jesus' own climatic Passover act as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus is not giving just an example of humility in this act. He is picturing the ultimate humility.

i.e. verse 4 – Jesus rose from supper and laid aside His garment = in a far greater way, He rose from His throne of glory to come into this world and laid aside His glory.

- and girded Himself with the garb of a servant and He washed, as He would do in the atonement.

- in v. 12 when He finished washing He sat down – read Heb. 1:3!

At the beginning of John 12 we behold the feet of the Lord; in John 13 we see the feet of the disciples. The "feet" of Christ were anointed, those of the disciples were washed. Note, also, that the anointing of the Savior's feet is given before the washing of the disciples' feet—in all things He must have "the preeminence" (Col. 1:18)! (i.e. no burial, no cleansing).

When you are tempted to think of your "rights," open your Bible to John chapter 13 and get a good look at Jesus – clothed like a slave, kneeling and washing dirt off the feet of sinful men who are utterly indifferent to His impending death. And He didn't stop there.

Behold Him naked and dying on the tree; and you are demanding what “rights”? What humility and evidence of genuine love in the humility of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*V. 6-7 Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this."*

Peter seemed to do most of his thinking out loud. His whole level of thinking here seems to be on social acceptability. There seemed to be no place in the Jewish mindset for the Christ to be humiliated. So Jesus had to make him realize that the Christ came to be humiliated. This foot washing was nothing compared to what Jesus would do for him on the cross. It would not be until “after this” (i.e. not after the foot washing, but after the glorious humiliation on the cross to which the foot washing pointed).

The foot washing was shocking to the disciples, but not nearly as shocking as the shameful death of crucifixion – the death of the damned – that He would perform.

“And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know;” [1 Cor. 8:2] this, too, was Peter’s mistake. He should have suspected his thoughts, and waited in all submissiveness on Him who does “all things well. The thoughts of God are not like ours, and saints slip into those of man, unless they are taught of God, by faith, not to trust themselves in anything. God the Father will have the Son honored; and He is honored most when He is believed in and followed in His humiliation. As Peter was astray when he rebuked the Lord for speaking of His suffering and death, and again now when he responds, ‘You shall never wash my feet!’

*V. 8 Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."*

The message of the Lord seems to be: “Peter, unless by means of My entire work of humiliation – of which this foot washing is only a part – in which I cleanse you you’re your sins, you do not share with me in the redemption benefits granted.

The word "part" has reference to fellowship. This is seen from our Lord’s words concerning the sister of Martha: "Mary has chosen that good part" (Luke 10:42). We also get a glimpse of the meaning of this word "part" in 2 Corinthians 6:15, "And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?"

*V. 9-10 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you."*

The statement, “you are clean,” refers to them being sharers in the redemption that His humiliation merits for them. Once your inner person has been bathed or cleansed in redemption, you are clean and you do not need to be redeemed again every time you

commit a sin. You just need to wash the dust off your feet as you walk through this world and get dirty feet (i.e. 1 John 1:9). The only washing a bathed believer still needs is a daily foot washing to counteract the defiling effects of this world. A. W. Pink comments: 'Our daily contact with the evil all around causes the dust of defilement to settle upon us so that the mirror of our conscience is dimmed and the spiritual affections of our heart are dulled. We need to come afresh into the presence of Christ in order to learn what things really are, surrendering ourselves to His judgment in everything, and submitting to His purging Word. Who is there who, even for a single day, lives without sin? Who is there who does not need to daily pray, "Forgive us our trespasses"? Only One has ever walked here and been unsoiled by the dust of earth. He went as He came, unstained, uncontaminated. But who is there among His people who does not find much in his daily walk that makes him blush for shame! How much unfaithfulness we all have to deplore! Let me but compare my walk with Christ's, and, unless I am blinded by conceit or deceived by Satan, I shall at once see that I come infinitely short of Him, and though "following his steps" (not "in his steps" as it is so often misquoted), it is but "afar off." So often my acts are un-Christ-like in character, so often my disposition and ways have "the flesh" stamped upon them. Even when evil does not break out in open forms, we are conscious of much hidden wrong, of sins of thought, of vile desires. How real, then, how deep, is our daily need of putting our feet in the hands of Christ for cleansing, that everything which hinders communion with Him may be removed, and that He can say of us, "You are clean"!'

This same distinction is seen in the Old Testament. When Aaron and his sons were consecrated, they were bathed all over (Ex. 29:4; Leviticus 8:6): but at the "laver" it was only their hands and feet which were daily cleansed (Ex. 30:19, 21).

*V. 10 For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean."*

Christ here referred to Judas, though He did not name the traitor. Judas must have known what He meant, but his conscience was seared as with a red-hot iron, and his heart was harder than stone. Even this condescending love and grace of Christ toward His disciples made no impression upon him. In less than one hour he went out to sell his Master. It was not a matter of his losing spiritual life, but of manifesting the fact that he never had it. It was not a sheep of Christ becoming unclean, but of a dog returning to his vomit. What a solemn warning this is for those who, for a time, maintain an outward form of godliness, but are strangers to its inward power. Christ knows!

*V. 11-15 So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you."*

If we read this statement of Christ carefully, it is clear that Jesus is not instituting a new sacrament – a sacrament that can be performed in pious pride. Jesus is not saying, "Do

the same thing I have done.” Rather we are to lay down our lives in humble, loving, sacrificial service “as” He has done.

To insist upon literal foot-washing from this verse is to miss the meaning as well as the spirit of the whole passage. Its deep symbolic significance is clear. First, the Lord’s words to Peter saying, *“What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.”* (John 13:7). Certainly Peter knew that his feet had been literally washed! Secondly note that here in John 13:15 the Lord does not say “You should do what I have done to you,” but “as I have done to you!”

Gal. 6:1 tells us how we are to wash our brother’s feet. As recipients of such amazing grace, we should not be as those who ‘bite and devour one another,’ but be as those who ‘wash one another’s feet’ We need to be emptied of all sense of self-superiority before we can love as Christ has loved us.

The following hymn by Brian Wren says it well:

Great God, in Christ you call our name,  
And then receive us as Your own;  
Not through some merit, right, or claim,  
But by Your gracious love alone.  
We strain to glimpse Your mercy-seat  
And find You kneeling at our feet;  
Then take the towel, and break the bread,  
And humble us, and call us friends;  
Suffer and serve till all are fed,  
And show how grandly love intends,  
To work till all creation sings,  
To fill all worlds, to crown all things.

Real cleansing occurs through the Word (John 15:3). This is spoken to the disciples after Judas was gone. No ritual or ceremony – not even one performed by the Lord Jesus – effects any real spiritual cleansing. Judas may have been washed – but not cleansed by the Word.

*V. 16-17 Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.*

No slave has the right to think any task beneath him when his master has already performed it. Now Jesus’ followers have no conceivable reason for refusing to serve and take the lowliest role. In fact it is safe to assume: no humility – no follower of Jesus.

It is worth noting that our Lord does not say, ‘Happy are you if these things are done to you,’ but ‘Happy are you if you do them.’ Fleshly men think that happiness is having others love us, and serve us. However, in the judgment of Christ, it would bring about a greater happiness if our hearts were like His; full of love to all our brethren, and our

hands like His, ever ready to serve them with even the most humble acts of kindness. How often do we make ourselves unhappy by thinking that we are not treated with the respect and kindness to which we consider ourselves entitled? According to Christ, if we would be really happy, we must think more of others and less of ourselves.

Secondly, notice that our Lord does not say, 'Happy are you if you know these things,' but 'Happy are you if you do them.' Knowing is important. You can't do what you don't know, but it can't stay there. Husbands may think they know what their wives should do to make them happy. Wives think they know exactly what's wrong with their husbands that is keeping them from being truly happy. Young people are sure they know what their parents and everyone else should be doing to bring about happiness in their lives. Everyone seems to know how they should be served, but this is the opposite of what Jesus says. In fact, it will lead to frustration, not happiness. Happiness comes from knowing these truths Jesus declares and then doing them ourselves. Blessed are the poor in spirit (Matt. 5:3-16). The truly humble are the happy and grateful people. Can we really trust His words?

Verse 16 actually begins with "Amen, Amen," as Jesus calls attention to the truth of what He is about to say. Can your heart add, "Amen, Amen," and then do these things? It is much easier to "amen" these things than actually live them. That Jesus is Lord (Master) and we are His servants (and thus not greater than He), we'd all agree. Yet, do you ever prefer or choose your judgment over His judgment? True happiness is found in self-sacrificing love for the glory of our Lord.

### ***(ii) Jesus, the Ultimate Prophet, Foretells of His Betrayal (13:18-30)***

*V. 18 I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.'*

Not all of the disciples have this promised blessing. There was no happiness for Judas. Before him lay "the blackness of darkness forever."

The choosing of the 12 included Judas, not due to oversight or a sign of weakness, but to fulfill Scripture. Judas meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.

The Old Testament scripture reference in Psalm 41 is to what David suffered at the hands of Ahithophel, but that was but a foreshadowing and type of what the Savior suffered from Judas. It is thought by most commentators that Ps. 41:9 is a reference by David to Ahithophel, his most faithful counselor, who nevertheless sided with Absalom at the time of Absalom's rebellion (2 Sam. 15 – 17). The revolt of Absalom had caught David unaware, and he and his mighty men had been forced to flee from Jerusalem. Ahithophel remained behind (2 Sam. 15:12). When David heard that Ahithophel was with Absalom, David was greatly concerned for Ahithophel gave inspired counsel (2 Sam. 16:23). "Then someone told David, saying, 'Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.' And David said, 'I pray, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness'" (2 Sam. 15:31). In time God answered David's prayer, not by causing Ahithophel to give

bad counsel to Absalom, for Ahithophel continued to speak wisely, but by causing Ahithophel's good counsel to be disregarded. The story concludes by saying, "Now when Ahithophel saw that his advice was not followed, he saddled a donkey, and arose and went home to his house, to his city. Then he put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died; and he was buried in his father's tomb" (2 Sam. 17:23).

Ahithophel had eaten David's bread, at his own table, and he betrayed David, even as Judas would betray the Lord of glory. We should pause and ask the question, "Are you really a child of God or are you just in the company of Christians?" Do not rest until you have actually come to the Anointed One in repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

David is a type or model of the great David's greater Son. This does not mean that everything that happened to David finds its echo in Jesus, but that many of the broad themes of his life are to be understood that way – an echo of the greater coming King (i.e. see Psalm 55:12-14).

Christ, through this statement, assures the disciples that everything which befell Him, which greatly tested their faith, was but the fulfillment of what had long ago been recorded. He was the great One typified and prophesied throughout the Old Testament, and He now assures the apostles of Judas' part in the grand scheme of things, that they might know Jesus had not trusted in him, nor had He been deceived by him, as had David by Ahithophel! Thus, instead of the apostles being stumbled by the apostasy of one of their number, it would strengthen their faith in every written word of God to know that very Word had long before announced what they were on the eve of witnessing.

The quote from Psalm 41:9 is given as if Judas would inflict upon Christ the Serpent's predicted wound (Gen. 3:15).

*V. 19 Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He.*

The reason Jesus tells them of this impending betrayal is that when it happens, their faith will be strengthened. Our hearts are an open book to the great I Am (note again: literally "I am.")

God gives us prophecy to reveal who He is (Isa. 48:3).

*V. 20-21 Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me." When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me."*

We see parallels to this statement in Matt. 10:40 and Luke 10:16. His sent ones are connected to the highest authority – God Himself. His apostles represented Jesus to the world (John 17:18; 20:21 – thus the need of the Spirit). Their mission would not end with His betrayal and death. Rather, this would kick it into high gear.

Christ being troubled in spirit could be due to His anticipating the cross and bearing the sin and separation from His Father. Or possibly it was for the sake of Judas and the hell he would suffer.

At that moment it seems the betrayer knows he is about to be exposed and is confronted with the choice to either hurry and execute his wretched plot or renounce his evil and beg for forgiveness.

*V. 22-23 Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.*

The disciple whom Jesus loved is here introduced. This title will appear again in 19:26-27, and at the empty tomb in 20:2-9; by the sea of Tiberias when the risen Jesus appeared to seven of His disciples (21:1, 20-23), and in the final two verses that ascribe this gospel narrative to him (21:24-25).

The phrase, which literally refers to reclining in His bosom, calls to mind John 1:18, where the Word of God – the unique one, Himself God – is said to be in the bosom of the Father. This beloved disciple was in a relationship with Jesus like the relationship Jesus enjoyed with His heavenly Father.

This self-description is not arrogance (i.e. see, I am loved more than others) but rather a humble sense of receiving great grace (i.e. what a wonder that I should be loved by the incarnate Word). He is glorying in the Master's love for him. This disciple is but a voice; his identity does not matter. What matters to him is the One to whom he bears witness.

*V. 24-25 Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke. Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"*

The announcement of the betrayer by Jesus has resulted in shocked silence. (Note: v. 25 shows that Leonardo Da Vinci's conception is off the mark; so I wouldn't trust that he had some code of any more accuracy than that!)

*V. 26-30 Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it." And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, "Buy those things we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.*

Jesus' answer must have either been quietly to John or else misunderstood, for the others do not seem aware of Judas being singled out as the one.

Judas left the presence of Christ, who is the light, and stepped deeper into the spiritual darkness of death and damnation.

## **B. A New Commandment (13:31-35)**

*V. 31-32 So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately.*

The waiting is over. The hour has come – the moment of supreme, divine disclosure. The greatest moment of displayed glory will come in the shame of the cross (see Isa. 49:3 and its surrounding context). God’s splendor is seen in the perfect obedience of the Son’s sacrifice. Both Jesus and the Father are glorified in this incredible event.

If God glorifies His Son in the cross event, God will most certainly glorify Him in His exaltation – giving Him the name that is above every name. Jesus will come again in that glory. In that day will you look upon Him as one you have spurned?

Every genuine disciple is concerned for the glory of God.

*V. 33-35 Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you. 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."*

Jesus prepares His disciples for His departure and begins to layout what He expects of them while He is away. The command to love one another is such a simple command and yet, oh so profound. The depth of this standard of love demands supernatural enabling. The newness of the command is brought out in the “as I have love you.” Jesus brings us to the fullest expression – the fulfillment of the law! (This reflects the relationship of love that exists between Father and Son).

Is our love evident? Can you put “I” in place of “love in 1 Cor. 13? Jesus can! How we need to find ourselves praying, “O Lord Jesus, teach me to love others as You love.”

If the church existed in that kind of love – selfless, sacrificial, forgiving, etc. we would absolutely overwhelm the world. Instead, too often there are factions, people gossip, backbite, talk too much, and criticize ... while the people of the world gaze on. Real love is costly. It is humble, forgiving, quick to repent, and strives to make things right.

I believe that this new commandment to love one another as Christ has loved us is our New Covenant foundation. (“as I have loved you” – justification as illustrated by the footwashing. Compare Romans. Chapters 1-11 speak of all that we have as a result of Christ loving us. Chapter 12 and following bring on the “therefore” – the practical

response. In Ephesians, chapters 1-3 unfold Christ's great love and all we have as a result. Chapters 4-6 extends the call to walk worthy of such a high calling. In other words to "love one another as [Jesus has] loved you.") If our Lord and Master has washed our feet (i.e. cleansed us, served us, and forgiven us), how much more ought we to love one another?

What makes this commandment new? The call to love was given before. I believe the newness is the connection with the cross ... "as I have loved you." The New Covenant provides the new heart to motivate obedience. Where do we go for the example of love? We go to the cross, where Jesus laid down His life freely for His people.

Compare John 13:7 with 1 John 3:16-18, 4:10-11, to see what John "knew" after the resurrection. We see clearly in John's first epistle that John came to realize what Jesus meant in John 13.

This must be the foundation of all we do. "The love of Christ constrains me," Paul said – not guilt or tradition or fear (2 Cor. 5:14; Rom. 5:5). If we are not motivated by the love of Christ, it is legalism. The New Covenant ushers forth a new commandment! The world is watching. What do they see – bickering with one another, judging one another? We know we have different preferences and ideas, and that we don't see every jot and tittle the same. We have disagreements, but we must love one another and find out a way to work out differences, and be longsuffering and forbearing. We are all aware of church splits ... and the world watches on.

To follow our King's command takes commitment and effort as constrained by the love of Christ. The law of Christ (Gal. 6:2) is our N.C. law, not O.C. wineskin. Jesus and the New Covenant and the new commandment is our starting point. The event that saves us also commands us how to live! We are motivated by grace and love, not guilt or fear or intimidation. The love of Jesus poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit is what keeps us together and keeps us going. A New Covenant servant is secure in the fact that God accepts him in Christ and for Christ's sake. Thus, the other person's response is not the issue. Too often we get caught up in the other's response and attitude etc. Behold Jesus with Judas. It is nice to have our love returned, but is that our motive? If it is not, then why are we so upset when our reaching out and serving is not received or appreciated as we think it should be? Is our focus the result or loving one another as Christ has loved us? Or are we self-motivated – we want a friend; we want to be liked, we want to be stroked? But if I love like Jesus, I'll be vulnerable and open to be hurt ... just like Jesus. Are we committed to love one another, or do we walk away when difficulties arise ... and they will arise. (God is committed to us! See also Rom. 8.) There seems to be very little commitment in North American Christianity (Luke 12:35-40, 43). Temptation, sin, and evil, are our common enemies. My brother is not my enemy. If we could only combine our efforts to defeat evil. Our brother needs to know we are with him and for him and that his burden is our burden.

Pride hinders our fulfilling the law of Christ (pride is that sin rooted in the devil himself). It is of all sins most subtle and deceiving and difficult to subdue. It is so insidious and

cunning that it can persuade us to think we are something when we are nothing. Pride evaluates itself by comparison with others (2 Cor. 10:12). Do you think you are a little better Christian than most? Is your attitude such that you view that there are sins and failings and attitudes in this fellowship that require far more attention than yours? Do we spend more time wary of and examining our own motives, as opposed to wondering about another's motives or sincerity – for typically we have plenty of weaknesses and temptations and secret sins and failings.

Christ's N.C. command to us should compel us to ask: "Are my actions genuinely influenced by Christ's love?" If our response to such questions as above, immediately cause us to think about how they apply to others, it should tell us something about ourselves. Are we really testing our own actions or somebody else's actions? Are we evaluating ourselves against the standard of Christ or are we comparing ourselves to others? Jesus Christ is our standard. In light of Christ's majesty and glory, our sin shows up in all its true vileness and shame. If we would only remember this when someone criticizes us about one of our faults or failures, we would realize they have not seen the half of it. And when we feel constrained to offer a word of criticism, to a brother, we would likely be more careful and few in words if we saw Jesus at our side and looking into our eyes and heart. This Jesus who is Lord of all and could have rightly commanded His disciples to fall down before Him in fearful worship ... but no, the King of kings took a towel and girded Himself and began to wash the disciple's feet. Wonder of wonders! The King takes the position of a lowly servant, and He wants them and us to see that loving servanthood is foundational in His kingdom. This is the way of blessedness; compelled by the love of Christ (as I have loved you), not legalism which goes hand in hand with pride and erases love. That's why the Lord's table is an "often" event. It takes us to the cross – the "as I have loved you" – which provides sufficient incentive for our kingdom duty to love one another. And this love is the mark of the reality of the Christian faith to the world – not apologetics or elaborate programs, but genuine and discernable love between believers. Without love all else is in vain (1 Cor. 13).

A New Covenant = a new law. A genuine love of Christ cannot be separated by a genuine desire to obey His commandments (John 14:15; 1 John 5:2-3).