

Week 29

A New Commandment

John 13:21

Jesus was very troubled by Judas betrayal. John keeps telling us of Jesus divinity but often reminds us of His humanity. Of course, He knew that Judas would betray Him and yet there is always hope. Just because you know something painful is going to happen does not lessen the pain when it occurs. Within hours of this conversation both Jesus and Judas would be dead.

Here we should consider again what a powerful enemy the devil is. Remember, the devil put it in the heart of Judas to betray Jesus, John 13:2.

The devil knocked on Judas' heart, the door was opened and the devil came in and took over the man.

We are told to resist the devil and he will flee, James 4:7, this is our responsibility. Jesus told us to pray daily to be delivered from temptation, friends, this is serious. Jesus is our powerful Shield and Deliverer.

John 13:22

Another warning to Judas, Jesus as much as said, I know what you are planning to do.

Have you ever been troubled in spirit? How does it feel, horrible I think. Its terrible to be betrayed by someone you love and trust, but to know ahead of time he is going to do it, its impossible to imagine.

John 13:23-26

John was sitting nearest Jesus, and Peter motioned or whispered, ask Him who it is. It's ironic to note that according to commentaries on the culture and manners of that day, the host of a dinner who personally offered food to a guest showed special friendship.

John 13:27-30

Many people have tried to guess Judas motive for what he did and we can only speculate, however, he was responsible for his choice. He made his heart available to Satan and Satan took advantage of this opportunity to set into motion the events that would result in Jesus' murder. Please notice; Judas was responsible for his action. Clearly Satan assumed that the death of Jesus would be victory for him and thwart God's plan to provide a way of salvation for the world. Again, God used Satan to accomplish His will.

John comments that none of them understood why Jesus had said this, they supposed He was telling Judas to get the food for the feast of Unleavened Bread which followed Passover.

John 13:30

It was definitely night or dark for Judas.

John 13:31

Now Jesus seems to be looking past the events which were going to happen that night, to the time of His resurrection. He allowed Judas to leave to follow up on his plan when He could have easily stopped him. So the hour had come.

John 13:32

Glorify, again we see this word and it is a word we don't use now but in view of the fact that Jesus was thinking of His coming resurrection and ascension, think through what He was saying. In the bible the glory of something was not only its appearance but also what it would accomplish. To glorify would talk about exalting by bringing it to pass. The wonder of God's amazing plan of salvation for all sinners would become obvious after Jesus had died and was resurrected.

God is glorified in Jesus as Jesus reveals His complete obedience to God and at the same time Jesus is glorified as He resumes the glory He had with the Father before the world began.

Quoting JC Ryle;

"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 would justify, and yet be the justifier of the ungodly, it showed Him faithful in keeping His promises, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpents head, Genesis 3:15. It showed Him holy, in requiring His law's demands to be satisfied by our great Substitute. It showed Him loving in providing such a Mediator and Redeemer."

"The crucifixion brought glory to the Son. It glorified His compassion, His patience, and His power. It showed Him compassionate, in dying for us, suffering in our stead, allowing Himself to be counted sin and a curse for us, and buying our redemption with the price of His own blood. It showed Him patient, in not dying the common death but willingly submitting to such pain and unknown agonies that no mind can conceive, when with a word He could have summoned His Father's angels, and been set free. It showed Him powerful in bearing the weight of the world, and vanquishing Satan." John 13:33

Dear children, the phrase refers to closeness, intimacy, fondness, He is leaving to return to His Father and that intimate relationship, and the disciples could not go with Him just yet.

John 13:34-35

The disciples knew the 10 Commandments; we talked about them just last week. The last 5 commandments are about loving others, but this is loving in a new way. Loving as Jesus loved. How can anyone tell if you are a disciple or follower of Jesus? Would it be by some type of special clothing, never cutting your hair, wearing a cross, attending certain churches? No, that is all too easy and you and I can do this in our own power.

To truly love, as Jesus is describing is possible because of Jesus love for us, the fact is that His Holy Spirit indwells us when we are reborn from above and His love flows out of us.

What do people see in you? Love is much more than warm and fuzzy feelings. Love is helping others when it's not convenient, giving when it's a sacrifice, devoting yourself to the best interest of someone else. Its not feelings, it's a choice. And it's hard to do, impossible as a lifestyle without Jesus. Jesus suffering and crucifixion was not based on warm fuzzy feelings.

A tiny new born baby can cause all kinds of warm fuzzy feelings especially when he is clean, fed and asleep, but let that little critter awake at 2:00 AM with a dirty diaper, hungry and/or just wanting attention and you will need more than warm feelings to get up and take care of him. It's doing what is best for someone else when it's not convenient or pleasant. Its hard, its almost non-existent in our culture, is that why mothers and/or fathers continue to abandon their children, they are too inconvenient? Self-sacrificing love is a mark of distinction, the mark of a true believer. How are you doing at loving?

This love Jesus refers to is a love that will draw unbelievers to Jesus and keep believers united with each other.

This phrase is repeated by Jesus in John 15:12 and John 15:17. John repeats it 4 more times in his letters.

I hope you have grasped how important this is to your life as a believer. If you say you are believers and you have no interest in others, if you won't be inconvenienced by the needs of another, if your life is too full of me, myself and I, to think of others perhaps you should take stock. You are not keeping this commandment; and it's not a suggestion. And I admit this is a struggle, and not natural, I can only do this in the power of the Holy Spirit. Friends, this is the test of Christianity. If it comes naturally, it would not be commanded.

There have been times when, in order to obey this command, I have asked God to put love in my heart for certain people and give me the power and strength to choose to act on that love.

John 13:36

How about how Peter seems to ignore this New Commandment and instead of saying, "how can we do this", says, "Where are you going?"

Jesus let Peter know he would be following later into glory.

John 13:37

Peter loved Jesus and he wanted to be with Him, he did not understand any reason for Jesus to die; in fact he planned to protect Jesus.

Peter is brave but he is proud too. Remember he didn't want to accept the work Jesus did for him in washing his feet. Have you been too proud to accept Jesus' work for you? Have you accepted His sacrifice for your sin, or do you prefer to do something for yourself to obtain salvation?

John 13:38

Do you ever look at people in trouble and think you would never stoop that low? Obviously, Peter could never dream of denying Jesus, yet he did. It is well to remember if you are thinking harsh thoughts about someone, "there but for the grace of God, am I". 1 Corinthians 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. Much better to admit weakness and lean on Christ, rather than depend on your own strength.

Do you think the disciples might have wondered whether Peter was the betrayer?

Jesus knew exactly what Judas would do, but also what Peter would do, He didn't stop loving them. He knows what you have done and what you will do, He never stops loving you unconditionally and He is ready to forgive.

There is no time break between chapters. Jesus is continuing His teaching that began after the Passover dinner.

John 14

A chapter full of precious truths which Jesus gave us the night He was betrayed. Someone has said that on these verses troubled hearts can believe more thoroughly, trust more entirely, rest more unreservedly, lay hold more firmly, lean back more completely.

John 14:1

This chapter of John I have titled "Don't let your heart be troubled". A way of being sure you understand what a chapter is teaching is to title it.

Through this chapter, Jesus has given us a list of all the reasons we should not let our heart be troubled. And the first one is; you believe in God, believe also in Jesus. Why would Jesus say this at this time?

He has just told the disciples one of them would betray Him, He was giving them a New Commandment and also He was going away and they could not go where He was going. To finish it off then, He told Peter he was going to deny Him. Isn't all that enough to cause them heart trouble?

But Jesus says, no, don't let your heart be troubled because you believe in God and so concentrate now on believing Jesus.

John 14:2

Here is another reason to not be troubled; He is going to prepare a place for them in the Father's house and there was plenty of room for all of them. And there is plenty of room for us too, friends, these promises are for us.

So here are some plain things about heaven; it is a Father's house. In other words, its home. That vague sense of homesickness you get occasionally, it's for the Father's house.

Heaven is a place of mansions or permanent dwellings. We will be settled down at last in heaven, don't you long for that place of settled happiness? There is room for all believers, for great saints and little saints. No believer will be shut out, no unbeliever will come in.

Best of all, it's a place where Jesus will be present; "where I am you will be too". We don't know exactly what we will see in heaven, except this, we will see Jesus.

Heaven is a place prepared for a prepared people. Jesus is right now getting it ready for true believers. He prepared it by giving the right for every sinner who believes to enter into it. He has prepared it by going first and taking possession of it, planting a flag in the heavenly realms where He rules. You will be expected.

If you don't know if you will be in heaven when you die, please listen carefully. The greatest gift ever has been given to you; eternal life in heaven, in the Father's house. It is free; you cannot earn it, work your way there or discover the path. After Jesus told the disciples about His Father's house in heaven He told them, and us, that He is the door to that house.

If you desire eternal life in heaven then admit you are a sinner in need of a Savior. The entire penalty for your sin has already been paid; all you have to do is accept by faith forgiveness, freedom from your guilt and the righteousness of Jesus, given to you. Nothing unholy can ever enter heaven; you can become holy, free from sin, by faith. Consider Ephesians 2:8 'For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.' Will you admit your works are not enough to earn your place in the Father's house, will you accept that free gift, free to you and me, costly to Jesus? If you will bow your knee to Him today, you are eternally secure; your new life begins now.

Pray with me; Father, I am a sinner, I cannot save myself. I want to be forgiven, to accept the free gift Jesus has provided, eternal life in heaven. I give you my old sinful life and with gratitude accept the new life you give so freely. Thank you for forgiving my sin, thank you for new life in Jesus here and now and eternal life in heaven. Amen

Jesus is waiting to welcome you home.