

## STUDY ON THE TEACHING OF JESUS

### TEACHING ON SERVANTHOOD

Read John 13:1-11,31-35

#### **Introduction**

Jesus lived His life in anticipation of this hour. He knew when it had not yet come. For example, He said Himself in John 7:6,

*“Then Jesus said to them, “My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready.” (John 7:6)*

Not only did Jesus knew His time had not come up to this point, but Jesus knew He enjoyed a unique protection because His hour had not yet come – for example:

*“Therefore, they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.” (John 7:30)*

*“These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.” (John 8:20)*

Now, Jesus knew that His hour had come. He spoke of this awareness in the chapter before that for this purpose I came to this hour.

*“But Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour. “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose, I came to this hour.” (John 12:23-27)*

This was a painful, sorrowful, and troubling time for Jesus. He knew He was at the brink of the hour He had been speaking about. Jesus' public ministry is over. In close to 24 hours, Jesus will hang on the cross. This is the beginning of the end, and Jesus will use these last precious hours to minister to His disciples.

#### **The Hour Had Come (v1-3)**

*“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. And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God” (vv1-3)*

John makes two assertions to introduce this transition in his Gospel.

1. Jesus knows that his time had come to be crucified -- that he has come from God and is returning to God.
2. Jesus knows that Judas will betray him, but it is under the Father's rule.

Knowing these two facts would cause you and me to panic, but Jesus acts deliberately in full assurance that this night will play out precisely according to his Father's will.

It is a difficult time in Jesus’ ministry and it is time to demonstrate a teaching His disciples will never forget.

## The Cross

The cross is not specifically mentioned in John 13:1 but casts a shadow over almost every word.

- We see the shadow of the cross over His hour had come.
- We see the shadow of the cross over loved them to the end.
- We also see the shadow of the cross over depart this world.

It is phrased softly, but there is an iron-hard reality underneath the soft cover. Jesus would only depart this world through the cross.

### Having Loved His Own:

Surely, Jesus had loved His disciples. He led them, taught them, cared for them, protected them. What Jesus had given them already was more than any other teacher or leader could give his followers. There is a love Jesus has for all people, and then there is a love for His own. It isn't so much that Jesus' love is different, but the dynamic of the love relationship is different. The love of Jesus for His own is greater because it has a response, and love answers to love.

Jesus had loved His own. But He hadn't finished loving them. He would love them to the end. The idea behind the phrase to the end is "to the fullest extent, to the uttermost." Jesus poured out the cup of His love to the bottom for us.

### The Devil & Judas

Judas was led by the devil. Before this chapter is finished, John will show us the extent of Judas' depravity. Luke 22:3 describes how Satan entered Judas shortly before this.

*“Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve.” (Luke 22:3)*

Satan was looking for a man to betray Jesus and had probably been "cultivating" Judas for a long time. But now the choice was made. Judas was his man and Judas fell for it.

### Character Traits of Judas

#### 1. Devilish

*“Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?” He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.” (John 6:70-71)*

#### 2. Thief

*“But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, who would betray Him, said, “Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.” (John 12:4-6)*

#### 3. Betray

*“And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. 48 But Jesus said to him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”” (Luke 22:47-48)*

#### 4. Hypocrite

*“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.” (John 13:27-29)

#### 5. Stay Physically but Heart Far-Off

“From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.” (John 6:66)

Many departed from Jesus when they could take it no more. The teaching was offending them, but Judas stayed on.

#### **Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands:**

This wasn't something that Jesus came to know just at this hour. Several years before in His ministry, Jesus said: “The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.” (John 3:35) But this means that at this particular time, and in this particular circumstance, it was important that Jesus knew the Father had given all things into His hands.

- **It was important because of the hour.** Jesus is about to face the agony of crucifixion and the terror of standing in the place of guilty sinners before the righteous wrath of God the Father. At the same time, Jesus went into this situation as a victor, not as a victim. He could have backed out any time He wanted to, because the Father had given all things into His hands.
- **It was important because of the circumstance.** Jesus is about to lower Himself, literally stooping in humble service to His disciples. But as He serves in this humble way, He does not do it from weakness. He does it from a position of all authority, because the Father had given all things into His hands.

#### **Washing the Disciples' Feet (13:4-5)**

“...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.” (vv4-5)

At this moment of deep meaning, Jesus did something that must have almost seemed crazy. He began to do the job of the lowest servant in the household. He began to wash the disciples' feet.

Jesus completely gave Himself to washing their feet. Look at how thorough He was in this work. First, He rose from supper. Then Jesus laid aside His garments, which had to remind Him of what waited in just a few hours, when He would be stripped of His garments and be crucified. Jesus then took a towel and girded Himself. Finally, Jesus poured water into a basin. If Jesus wanted to just display the image of a servant, He would have had a servant or one of the disciples do all this preparation work. He then would have quickly wiped a damp cloth on a few dirty feet and consider the job done. That would give the image of servanthood and loving leadership, but Jesus gave Himself completely to this work.

As Jesus went around the table, washing and drying the feet of His disciples, it was a dramatic scene. Luke 22:23 says that the disciples entered the room debating who was greatest. By what He did, Jesus illustrates true greatness.

We know this whole lesson did "stick" powerfully. Decades later, when Peter wrote to Christians about humility, he put it like this: “... Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” (1 Peter 5:5). More literally, Peter wrote: "wrap the apron of humility around yourself. " Surely, what Jesus did stick up in his mind, and in his heart.

## Mr Peter

*“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 said to Him, “You shall never wash my feet!” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.” 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.” For He knew who would betray Him; therefore, He said, “You are not all clean.”” (vv6-11)*

Probably, Jesus came to Peter last of all. Perhaps Peter thought, "All these guys missed the point by letting Jesus wash their feet. I am going to protest that Jesus might know that I am different or perhaps, I can be the greatest." Peter protested...

If we do not accept the humble service of Jesus to cleanse us, we have no part with Him. Jesus does not wash our feet literally, as He did for the disciples. But He did humbly die on the cross to cleanse us, and we must receive it. It is pride to want to cleanse yourself any other way.

### **From one extreme to another:**

*“Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!”* Peter, in his request to be fully washed, is still reluctant to let Jesus do as He wants. Peter wants to tell Jesus what to do. Jesus - though the servant of all - is still God's appointed leader. He won't allow Peter to monopolise this situation and set things on a wrong course.

Sometimes we show a servant's heart by accepting the service of others for us. If we only serve, and refuse to be served, it can be a sign of deeply rooted and well-hidden pride. Man's humility does not begin with the giving of service; it begins with the readiness to receive service.

## The New Commandment

*“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. 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.”” (vv31-35)*

In verses 31 & 32, it is emphasised in these two verses: glorified ... glorified ... glorified ... glorify ... glorify. Five references to glory in two verses! Jesus saw the cross in terms of glory, instead of humiliation. Now, that is seeing from the Father's perspective.

- What is this New Commandment?
- To what extent are we to manifest this new commandment?
- How will the world know we are Jesus' disciples?

The specific ancient Greek work used here for new here implies freshness, or the opposite of outworn, rather than recent or different. The command to love wasn't new; but the extent of love just displayed by Jesus was new, as would be the display of the cross. Love was newly defined from His example.

What have you learnt from Jesus today?

What changes will you make to your life by the teaching of today?

