

If I Have Not Love, Week 2

Loving Tough People | John 13:21-38

[21] After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." [22] The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. [23] One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side, [24] so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. [25] So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, "Lord, who is it?" [26] Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. [27] Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." [28] Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. [29] Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. [30] So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

[31] When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. [32] If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. [33] Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' [34] A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. [35] By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." [36] Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward." [37] Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." [38] Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.

> Introduction

- Culture --> Moralism --> Moralism has hijacked Christianity, ejecting love.
 - Moralism asks, "What do I need to do to go to heaven?"
 - Moralism has an unhealthy preoccupation with self-betterment
 - To moralists, love is inconsequential or only a nice add-on; a supplement
 - This isn't merely an oversight; its grave error.
 - Growth is good; we should be growing into Jesus' image (who loved until the end!)

> Text

- Text is framed by:
 - vs. 1 — *Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, **having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.***
 - vs. 34 — **A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another:** *just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.*
- Text pivots on the “new” command to love one another
 - ...to love like Jesus loved —> **Love is evidenced by lowly serving.**
 - An aggressively loving culture should fill the void of Jesus’ physical presence (Romans 12:10 — *“outdo one another in showing honor”*)
- Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy

“It is then hard to do the things with which Jesus illustrates the kingdom heart of love? Or the things that Paul says love does? It is very hard indeed if you have not been substantially transformed in the depths of your being, in the intricacies of your thoughts, feelings, assurances, dispositions, in such a way that you are permeated with love. Once that happens, then it is not hard. What would be hard is to act the way you acted before.” - Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy
- Willard corrects any notion that this is about fashioning ourselves into something new. God has already done that...
 - vs. 1 — **“...he loved his own...”**
 - vs. 10 — **“And you are clean, but not every one of you.”**
 - vs. 17-18 — *“If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. [18] I am not speaking of all of you; **I know whom I have chosen.** But the Scripture will be fulfilled, ‘He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.’”*
- Function in the grace you've been given!

> Who do we love? To whom do we give ourselves in lowly, meek service?

- Luke 10:25-37 — **We love those who repulse us; those who bring out our hidden bigotries.**
 - A teacher of the law asked Jesus what one should do to inherit eternal life
 - Jesus asked the lawyer how he read the law. He answered to love God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself and Jesus agreed.
 - The teacher asked who was his neighbor
 - Jesus told the story of a man traveling who was mugged by thieves and beaten
 - Left for dead, a priest and a levite ignored him
 - But a traveling Samaritan had compassion him and cared for him
 - He bound his wounds, carried him to an inn, and payed for his room and treatment
 - Jesus: *[36] Which of these three, do you think, **proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?*** *[37] He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."*
 - The Samaritan loved a person who, at least, looked down on him.
- Jesus practiced what he preached -- he washed Judas' feet — **We love those who betray us. Who deal unjustly with us.**

> **But how do we love those we despise?**

- 1. If you truly follow Jesus, remind yourself that you are of him.** This means that the ability is within you and must be drawn out through training and teaching.
- 2. Remember that Jesus is always at work in the background of every situation.**
 - John 13:3-4 — *"**Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, [4] rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist.**"*
 - Galatians 1:4 teaches us that we are no longer under the dominion of this present evil age, but under the rule of Jesus. Jesus was totally submitted to the will of the Father and trusted him.

- This is why he was able to serve Judas and didn't feel the need to “fix” him or “stop” him. Likewise, **We don't have to seize control!** We don't have to render judgment because we know that Jesus will return to judge.
- 3. So we serve all people without prejudice.** We serve those whom we love, like John the beloved disciple. We serve our betrayers, like Judas Iscariot. And we serve the rest (most people probably fall into this category) - those like Peter who pledge to us their loyalty, but let us down.

A Concluding Word...

- We should refrain from attempting to identify our Judases and remember that we are all like Peter. And we've all denied Jesus far more than three times.
- Remember that we are in grace as you seek to practice this...
 - Jesus calls us his own despite our multitude of betrayals.
 - Should we not love others in the body of Christ the same way? If you and I are in Christ, I am yours and you are mine. And no matter the depth and frequency of our transgressions against one another, that will never change. We are one in the Spirit.
- Want to be blessed? Happy? Joyful? Then do verse 17 — **“If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” - John 13:17**