

That You May Believe & Love One Another

John 13

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, September 30, 2018

The question I have for you this morning as we start this sermon and kind of get our minds around this passage in the Gospel of John is this, why don't we serve more? I think you guys do a wonderful job of serving, so I'm not asking that as if we're lacking in this area. I don't think we are. But if you think about it, why don't we do more for the Lord? And we do a great job for a weekend at Family Camp, but why don't we do that kind of thing every weekend? Why don't we do that every week? We do it for special things like mission trips, outreach events, but why don't we serve that way all the time?

I looked it up and according to some latest statistics, Canada is a very generous country. It's very service-minded. An article published by the Canadian government in 2016, said that in 2010, about half of all Canadians they polled, contributed their time, energy and skills to a non-profit organization - about half. And they said the number has actually gone up since then. They said that about 80% of the people in the country help people in an informal way. They rake leaves, they pick up groceries, that kind of thing, for their neighbours. Canada is a very generous place, very service-minded. But the question is, why don't we do more? Especially as a church, as a people of God, why don't we stand out in this area?

And I think there's a lot of ways to answer that question; one, simply, is time. We don't serve more because we don't have enough time. You guys are very busy, you have a lot going on and to think of doing more is overwhelming. That's one way to answer the question.

I think another way to answer the question is sometimes we don't know what to do. We would do more if we knew how to get involved and how to help and how to serve. But I think one answer is this, and this is what I want to talk to you about this morning because it ties into our sermon. I think one reason we don't serve more is we don't love each other enough. And again, I don't say that as a criticism to our congregation, I think you guys are marvellous at this, but I just mean the church in general. I think the one reason we don't serve more is because we don't love more. We need to grow in our love for each other.

Maria Dryer was born in 1837 on the mission field in China, and she had to come home at the age of 10 because both of her parents died of disease and they left her an orphan. She was then raised by her uncle in England. But she returned to China several years later to Mary Hudson Taylor, the founder of the China Inland Mission. In effect, Maria became known as the "Mother of the Mission" because she did so much for it. The missionaries, called her "Mom" because she just gave and gave and gave. Her story's actually a sad one in some ways because she paid a high price for this. She had nine children and five of them died in infancy. There wasn't the medicines and things to take care of them and they died. And Maria herself, died in her mid-40s. She died at 43 years of age of some of the same disease that her parents did. But right before she died, she told a friend of hers, she would do it all over again. She said it was worth it, and she said (here was the reason), "Because I love the Chinese people." I think we could all learn from that. If you love people, you serve them, right? If you love them, you give and give and give to them.

It's been said that you can give without loving, but you can't love without giving. It can't be done. You love people, you give to them.

It's also been said, you can't be a Christian without love. You can be a farmer and not love anybody. You can be a carpenter or a doctor or a lawyer and not have love, but you can't be a Christian. Because the church is built on this principle. The whole thing rests on loving each other.

Let me say it this way, did anybody get paid for what you did at Family Camp? Because if you did, I want everybody to go talk to that person and find out. Did anybody get a check in the mail for how you served in the kitchen or on the worship team or stacking chairs or mopping floors? No, you didn't get paid. Why? Because you did it in love. You see you did it because you love one another. That's how the church works. That's how the whole thing is built, on the principle of love. And sometimes the reason we don't do more, is because we don't love enough.

That leads to our passage for today. If you want to turn over to John chapter 13 ... the text for this morning that Kevin just read to us, John chapter 13. And if you're joining us for the first time today, we're in the middle of a series called "The That You May Believe" series. Because John says that he wrote this Gospel so that you may believe. That was his intention in writing. I just want to read this to you. John 20:30-31 says, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name." That's why John wrote this book. That's why he put it in the Bible, so that you would believe and have life in His name.

One way John did this, that we've seen as we've gone through this book, one way he wrote is by giving us a story from the life of Jesus and then explaining it. That's kind of John's method of writing. He gives you a story, then explanation, story, then explanation. And the story we'll get into in a moment, it's the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. Very interesting story, maybe one of the most interesting ones we've seen.

But the explanation is found down in verses 34 through 35. So, if you just want to jump ahead a little bit. Here is the explanation for this story. Verse 34, Jesus says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." Now that's said toward the end of the story. But toward the end, Jesus explains, He says, "I did this to show you how to love one another. I washed your feet, I served you in this strange way to teach you the new commandment of love."

Just to give you some background for this, John 13 occurs in the last week of Jesus' life. In fact, it occurs in the last night. If you look back in verse 1 of chapter 13. It tells you when this happened. It says, "Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end." And then it says in verse 2, "During supper ..." That's the reference to the Passover Supper. The Passover meal that was held the night before Jesus died. During that supper, He washed the disciples' feet.

I've told you before that the Gospel of John is not divided up chronologically, which might make it a little bit confusing. And what I mean is, the first 11 chapters cover a three-year period of time, and the rest of the book covers one week. So, when you go from John 12 to the end of the book, that's just one week of time. Because it's all leading up to the cross. In fact, John 13 through 18 occur in one night. Just to show you this, if you remember from last time in John 12, Jesus shares a meal with Mary and Martha and Lazarus. That occurred, chapter 12:1 says, six days before the Passover. Passover was on a Friday. We'll talk about that in a moment. Six days before the Passover would have been the Saturday before, or the Sabbath before.

And I didn't say much about the rest of chapter 12. So, let me kind of walk you through it real quick, so you kind of see where we're at in the life of Jesus. If you look in chapter 12:12, you can see another indication of time there. It says, "On the next day." So, this is the day after the Sabbath. "The next day [on Sunday] the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees and went out to Him, and began to shout, 'Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.'" That event is known as "The Triumphal Entry" or "Palm Sunday," we call it. It's the day Jesus entered Jerusalem to the sounds of "hosanna". The word "hosanna" in Hebrew means "save us now" or "give salvation now". So, as Jesus enters Jerusalem, the day after the Sabbath, the people lined the streets and they say, "Save us now Jesus, because You're the king of Israel. Bring salvation now."

Now, if you understand the context of the first century, that's a death sentence in Israel. You don't come into Jerusalem in the first century to people saying, "Save us, you're the king," and walk out alive. The Romans will kill you for that. The Pharisees will kill you for that. All the leaders will murder you for that. And that's what you see happen at the end of this week.

To make matters worse, if you still have your handouts from last week - I don't know if any of you stuck this in your Bible. We had a timeline last week, if that's familiar to you. Does anybody have any of these? Okay, if you'd like to see a copy of this, if you can see Jordan Henderson, it would be great. She can give you one. We had them in the bulletins last week, and then I lost my voice. So, we had it all lined up.

But this is a timeline of the last week of Jesus' life. And to make matters worse, the day after Jesus enters Jerusalem like that, He cleanses the temple. John doesn't talk about that, but the other Gospels tell us that on the Monday after that Sabbath meal, Jesus throws all the riff raff and thieves out of the temple, which means that if they weren't going to kill Him before, they were really going to kill Him now. He was a marked man at this point. The day after that, He gives the Olivet Discourse. The day after that, He has this meal in John 13 with the disciples. It's on a Thursday. And the day after that, on Friday, He dies on a cross.

Maybe a little confusing to read of two different Passover meals, but the Northern Jews celebrated the Passover on Thursday night, and the Southern Jews did it on Friday morning. There were so many lambs to be killed, there was so much to do. They couldn't do it all at one time. So, they separated it that way. And so, what you read here is on Thursday night in John 13, Jesus shares this meal with the disciples, the Passover meal. And the next day, Friday morning,

as the lambs are being slayed for the Southern Jews, Jesus dies as the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world.

We can talk about perfect timing, right? Everything fell perfectly into God's sovereign plan and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. And in light of this, you would think that at this time in John 13, as He's about to die, somebody would have washed His feet, right? You would think that as He's about to die on a cross for the sins of the world, the most amazing act of love and selflessness ever committed in human history, somebody would have done something nice for Him. And instead, you read here that Jesus washes the disciples' feet.

It's staggering to think about. I don't know about you guys, but they always talk about what would you do if you were going to die the next day? I don't think anybody would say, "I want to wash some feet." Right? You would want to go jump out of an airplane, right? Or climb Mount Cheam or eat all the food that you're not supposed to eat.

It was said that Gandhi died during peace talks in India. That's a very admirable thing to do. He was killed while trying to make peace. Jesus died after washing feet. And I don't think words can express the humility of something like this. I don't think you can express this kind of love. But Jesus' point, is that this is what love does - it serves people. This is what love does - it washes feet. Jesus Himself said, He said, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many." Jesus says, "This is what I came for. I came to serve people." In Luke 22, this was said the same night before He died. Luke 22:27, He says, "I am among you as one who serves. That's what I came here to do."

Other passages, another helpful one is Matthew 20:16, He says, "The first shall be last and the last shall be first." I don't think I have to tell you that you can't get any lower than feet, can you? I mean, there's nothing lower than washing someone's feet. And if your Master can do that for you, then you can surely do that for Him, amen? If He could humble Himself like this and serve you, then you could humble yourself like this and serve others. That's the whole point of this chapter. The missionary C. T. Studd said, "If Jesus died for me, then surely no sacrifice is too great for Him." You could not come up with a sacrifice too great for this kind of Saviour. Hudson Taylor said it this way, he said, "If I had a thousand pounds, I would give them all to China, and if I had a thousand lives I would give them too." And he said, "But no, I wouldn't give them to China, I would give them to Christ because can we do too much for such a precious Saviour?" And I would say that we can't.

That brings us to the rest of this chapter, because in John 13, Jesus gives us four lessons on the subject of love. So, if you're taking notes this morning, that's our outline for today. It's a pretty simple one: Four Lessons on the Subject of Love. Why don't we serve each other more? There's a lot of ways to answer that question. But one simple answer is because we don't love each other enough. And to remedy that problem, to help us with this, in John 13, the disciples were struggling with this issue of not loving each other enough. Jesus gives us four lessons on the subject of love.

The first lesson is this: you need to love others because Jesus loved you. That's simple, right? We can all get that. You need to love others because Jesus loved you. In First John 4:19, it says, "We

love because He ...” what? “... He first loved us,” right? He did it first. It all begins with Him. And you read that in verse 1, if you want to read in verses 1 through 4 with me. It says,

1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come, that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. (In other words, the end of His life, the end of all time).
2 And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him, 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, 4 got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself.

I've already said a little bit about this, but John starts off by telling us that this occurred at the Feast of the Passover. The Passover was a memorial feast that was held to celebrate the Jews' deliverance from Egypt. If you remember your Old Testament history, during this time, the Lord told the Jews to kill a lamb, sacrifice a lamb, one for each household and put the blood over the door post of your home so that when the angel of death came in to kill the firstborn of the Egyptians, he would pass over your house.

That word “Passover”, it's very interesting. William Tyndale actually invented that word. And until he translated the Bible into English, there was no such word, it didn't even exist. But he was trying to express what the Hebrew term meant. And he said, “the angel passed over”. That was the whole point. Judgment passed over Israel and went to Egypt. And the Lord said, “In light of that, you'll hold this feast.”

And at the feast (this feast here), in John 13:2 it says the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas to betray Him. Other Gospel accounts say the devil actually entered into Judas and possessed him.

The devil can't possess a believer. There's no instance of that ever happening. In fact, the devil is not an omnipresent being. In other words, the devil is not everywhere all the time. Does that make sense? People often say, “Well, the devil is tempting me.” You know, you're probably not that important. I mean, the devil tempted just a few number of people in Scripture, right? He didn't tempt everybody all the time, because he's not omnipresent. He can't be everywhere. His demons are all over the place. But here, the devil himself sees the importance of Judas in trying to destroy Jesus, and he possesses him and makes him betray the Lord. In fact, we'll talk about that in the weeks to come.

But verse 3 says that, Jesus, knowing this is about to happen, knowing that He had come from God, was going back to God. In other words, knowing He was about to die because of this betrayal. At this point in time, He's got just a number of hours to live. He gets up from His supper and puts on, verse 4 says, puts on a towel. He girded himself with it, tied it around His waist. Some translations, I think the ESV even says that He tied it around His waist. Which if you think about it, it's a strange thing to do at a supper. I don't know about you guys, but if I was at your house and I got up and went to tie a towel around my waist, you would probably ask me to leave, right? It's kind of an odd thing to do. Why did He do that? Was He going to go jump in the pool out back? No, there was no pool out back.

In the ancient world, people walked everywhere they went. And they wore sandals, which means their feet were always filthy. Close toed shoes were not invented yet and neither were socks. So, that if you went anywhere, you always ended up with dirty feet. It was just a never-ending problem.

And you could add to this, that the Jews ate their meals lying down or half lying down. They would sit at a low u-shaped table, and they would prop themselves up on their elbows, maybe with a pillow or something like that, so that their feet were next to their neighbour's face. Does that make sense? Close enough to smell them. I'm very grateful that when we have our meals here in Canada, my food's a long way away from your feet. No offense. I'm sure some of you have lovely feet. You can talk about them all you want to, but just keep them away from the food. In that culture, they were close together, and you didn't want your feet to be dirty. That would be rude. You didn't want them to stink. So, the Jews would typically wash them before a meal. They would take a bath in the morning and they would wash their hands and their feet before they ate. And when you entered someone's home, it was customary for a slave or a servant of the lowest rank to come up to you with a towel around his waist and a bowl of water, and he would wash your feet with the bowl and dry them with the towel. That was a very normal thing in the first century world.

If you read between the lines here in John 13, apparently, nobody did that at this meal. Maybe there was no slave around or servant around to do that. And it wasn't really customary to wash your own feet, that wasn't a normal thing to do. If you read between the lines as well, it just appears that the disciples were just too proud to do it. So, they ate the Passover supper with dirty feet in each other's faces, I might add. Verse 2 says that, "After the meal had began." That's kind of interesting. The meal's already started, they're already eating. Jesus "got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself." He took off His garment or His outer garment and put on a towel. And verse 5 says this, just to continue the story, it said, "5 Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. 6 So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, 'Lord, do You wash my feet?' Jesus answered and said to him ..."

By the way, can I just say something here in the middle of this? He washed Judas' feet too. Wouldn't have thought about that, but Judas hasn't left yet. So, He washed the traitor's feet. And He goes down the line, he comes to Simon Peter,

And he said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" 7 Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you did not realize now, but you will understand hereafter." 8 Peter said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" And Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." 9 So Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, then wash not only my feet, but my hands and my head as well." 10 And Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet (in other words, you took a bath in the morning, so that's already covered), but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." 11 For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean."

Now, that's a funny encounter here. Typical of Simon Peter, right? Swings from one end to the other. "Don't wash me," and then "wash all of me," right? Just extremes.

And I won't say too much about it, but I want you to notice this phrase "you are clean" is another way of saying you are clean on the inside, you're clean in your soul. There's some symbolic stuff to that. It's another way of saying you're saved. Jesus says, "You don't need to take a bath, Peter, because you're saved. You don't need to wash your hands and your head because you're clean on the inside. I've taken care of that. I have saved you, all of you except for Judas." The point that Jesus is making here is that, "You need to do the same thing for others because this is what I did for you. You need to love others like this, Peter, because that's what I'm doing for you. I got the ball rolling, I started it, and now you need to do it for other people." I think we all get this, but when you think of all Jesus did for you, you can't help but want to love other people, right? I mean, when you think of all the sins He forgave in you, and all the mercy He extended for you and all the grace, you can't help but extend that to other people.

I quoted Hudson Taylor to you earlier, but the story is told of a time when Hudson Taylor was waiting for a boat ride in China. He was waiting for a ferry when a rich man came by and pushed him into the mud. He just sort of shoved him out of the way and he fell and got covered in dirt and filth. And the boat man was so furious by what the rich man did that he wouldn't let him cross. He was so upset at what the man had done to Hudson Taylor that he wouldn't let him on the boat. Until Hudson Taylor got up from the mud, forgave the rich man, gave him the Gospel, and then he asked the boat man to forgive him too. He did it, he said, "Because this is what Jesus did for me." He says, "This is how Jesus loved me." That's what he told the rich man. He said, "I pushed Him into the mud, I shoved Him out of the way with my sin and lust and pride, and He forgave me and loved me, and now I want to love you." You can't help but do that, can you? When you think of all Christ has done for you. That's what this passage is saying. Jesus taught you how to do this. He gave you the example to follow. He set the standard.

In fact, Jesus says a lot about love on the night before He died. Again, you're thinking, you got, what? You got 12 to maybe 20-ish hours to live, what are you going to talk about? This is your last time with the disciples. Do you know what He talked about? He talked about love. The word "love" appears more than 30 times from John 13 to John 17. It's like seven times per chapter. It was always on His mind. He didn't talk about judgment ... He talked about judgment a little bit, but He didn't keep going back to that. He talked about law some, but He didn't keep going back to the law and the wrath of God. He kept going back to the fact that He loves His disciples, because that's why He was about to die.

That leads to another lesson we learn about love here. The first lesson is that you should love others because Jesus loved you. Here's a second lesson we should learn here. And that is, that you should love others because a slave is not greater than his master. That you should love others because Jesus loved you and cleansed you and washed you off. He washed your feet, so to speak. Second lesson is this: you should love others because a slave is not greater than his master. Jesus says, "Listen guys, don't misunderstand Me. You're not greater than Me because I did this for you. Don't get the wrong impression here. You're not higher than Me." He says, "I'm still the Master, you're still the slave. And if I could do this as your Master, then surely you could do this for one another. If you look in verse 12, it says,

12 So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again (in other words, He washed their feet, cleaned Himself up, came back, sat down for dinner), He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? 13 You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you’re right, for so I am. 14 If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. 16 Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is the one who is sent greater than the one who sent him.”

Just to put some of the pieces together. The other Gospels say that just before Jesus did this, the disciples were arguing about which one of them was the greatest. Which might explain why nobody washed anybody's feet, because nobody wanted to stoop to do that.

And maybe just to give you some context for that, the Passover occurred during the rainy season in Israel, which means that everybody's feet would have been especially dirty because there would have been mud everywhere. I'm learning, you can get out of the rainy season here in Chilliwack, but you always seem to go back into it. But they had a rainy season there where it was very dry certain times of the year. And then November through April in Israel rained - it rained a lot. Passover occurred in April. So, it occurred right at the tail end of the rainy season. Which means the roads would have been wet, covered in filth because most of the roads there were dirt roads. And they would have dragged that mud into the house that they were having supper in. They would have carried it right up to the dinner table.

As they're sitting there with those muddy feet, Luke 22:24 says that as they sat down to eat, “There arose a dispute among them as to which one of them was the greatest.” That could be, because they started arguing about who was going to wash whose feet. It could have been because they were trying to figure out who would have taken care of the mud. So, as they began this meal, to teach them a lesson Jesus says, “I'll do it for you. I'll wash your feet to show you what greatness truly is.”

He says in verse ... we just read it, but in verse 15, “For I gave you an example that you should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master.” There you see the word “greater”, “nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him.” In other words, greatness – you see the word “greatness” repeated there. Greatness to God is not determined by being served, but by serving others. Greatness to God is not determined by getting your feet washed, but by washing feet.

Jesus says (you know, He's about to die, and He says), “You guys have it all backwards.” You would think if He didn't know the sovereign will of God and He didn't trust in the providence of God, Jesus should have been discouraged at this point in His ministry, right? You're about to die, and your disciples have it all backwards. God doesn't care who comes out on top, He cares who comes out on the bottom, where the slaves are. God doesn't care who's first in line. He says, “The first shall be last.” Right? And you guys get this. I saw you serving this way at Camp. I saw you were washing dishes and cleaning up spills in the kitchen. I saw you changing dirty diapers and wiping runny noses. I think we set a record for runny noses at Camp. At least my family did. We were sneezing and coughing the whole weekend. I saw you setting up sound system, preparing meals, getting things ready for the baptism, stuff like that. The Lord is pleased when you do that.

He's honoured when you serve one another in love and do the lowly tasks, and you put yourself last because that's what Jesus did. 12 hours left to live, something like that, He washes feet and He dies on the cross because that's what greatness is to God.

And His point here is, you can't be a slave if you don't follow the Master. You can't be His disciple if you don't follow the Lord. There should be nothing too low for you to do in the church. That's another way to say this. Foot washing was the lowest task in the first century. The worst slaves were reserved for this because it was too gross. And if Jesus could do this for you, you could do this for Him.

It leads to a third lesson we see here, and that is this, you should love others because you'll be blessed if you do it. That's the third lesson. He goes on to tell us, you will be blessed if you love others like Jesus did. The disciples needed a blessing here. They needed some encouragement because Jesus was about to die and leave them and go to be with the Father. And if you look in verse 17, that's the next thing He talks about. He talks about the idea of blessing and He says, "If you know these things (this stuff about love, this stuff about service, this stuff about greatness) you are blessed if you do them."

The word for "bless" here is *makarios* in Greek, which means "blessed" or "privileged". It's the same word that was used in the Sermon on the Mount. If you remember, the Sermon on the Mount, He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." That's this word here. "Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted;" *makarios*. And it doesn't mean easy or painless. It doesn't mean that if you do this, you'll have a pain-free life. That's not the idea of blessing here. It doesn't mean if you do this, you'll get a brand-new Cadillac and a Rolls Royce and a wristwatch. It means if you do this, God will bless you in heaven, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." It means if you do this, you will be comforted, "for they shall be comforted."

One Bible dictionary defines this word this way. It says in most of the places where we see this word *makarios*, it takes the form of a pronouncement. That is though the situation is difficult and the times are tough, you can be encouraged by the prospect of future blessing from God. Though things are hard now, you can face your trials with courage, peace, and hope, because you know God will take care of you. That's what Jesus is talking about here. If you love others, you will be blessed like that. God will take care of you.

If you read on in verse 18, He says,

I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I've chosen; but it is that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "He who eats my bread has lifted up his heel against Me." From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur (my betrayal, when His betrayal does occur), you may believe that I am He.

"I saw it all coming," He says. "I knew Judas would do this."

Then he says in verse 20, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me." Verse 20, if you're reading along in

that passage, it sounds a little strange because it's kind of hard to follow the flow of thought. But the idea is that the disciples will be shocked by what Judas did. It's going to shake them to their core that one of their own could betray them. And they might be concerned that people might ask, "Well, if you can't trust one of the disciples, how are you going to trust any of them?" If Judas could betray Jesus like this, then what about the rest of them? Jesus says in verse 20, to calm them down, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me." In other words, you go under My authority, you go under My protection, don't worry about Judas.

Going back to the theme of this passage, Jesus says, "This is what will set you apart from him if you love one another. This is what's going to make you guys stand apart from Judas, is if you wash people's feet." Verse 17 says if you know these things, if you know how to love one another, you will be blessed that way. This is not works-based blessing, where, I do this and I get this from God. That's not the idea. This is grace-based. God does this, Jesus does this, and now, I live it out in my life and I'm blessed.

I came across an article this week that listed several blessings you get from loving others. It was really good. It said that loving others allows you to use your spiritual gifts. You can use your gifts in the church by loving others. That's the whole principle of the gifts. You can see miracles or you can see God at work in people's lives when you love each other. You can experience the joy of the Lord. You can grow in your faith. That's all well and good. But I think maybe the greatest blessing you get from loving others is the comfort that comes from knowing you're saved. The greatest blessing you get from loving others is the assurance that I wouldn't do this if I wasn't a disciple of Christ. I wouldn't wash people's feet, I wouldn't wipe runny noses. I wouldn't change dirty diapers at Family Camp if I didn't love Jesus and do the task of a lowest slave. I hope you guys are encouraged by that, because when I think of all the ways you guys serve, I put you guys into this passage right here and I know you're being blessed for this.

But this leads to a final lesson we learn here, and this kind of summarizes the whole thing. Just to review the first one, you should love others because Jesus loved you. That's the foundation for this. That's how He starts. Then He says, you should love others because a slave is not greater than his master. You should love others because you're blessed by it - that's the third lesson. Here's a fourth one, this is the final one, kind of sums this up. You should love others because it shows that you're Jesus' disciple. It just goes right in line with what He's been saying. He's repeating the same idea from different angles. But He says you should love others because it shows that you're Jesus' disciple.

In the context of John 13, we could say it this way, it shows you're not like Judas. Judas wasn't a real disciple, right? He was a fake. He didn't believe in Jesus, he didn't love Him, he didn't love others. As a matter of fact, if you remember back in John 12, Mary does that amazing act of pouring ointment out on Jesus' feet, and what does Judas talk about? He talks about how much it cost. And after saying some more about Judas in verses 21 through 30, Jesus says in verse 34 that "This is what will separate you from him. This is what's going to make you stand out." In verse 34, He says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you're My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Verse 30 says that just before Jesus said this, Judas left, which is important because that means the devil left the building. If you remember, the devil had possessed Judas. And so, when Judas left, Satan went with Him. And as a result of that, the rest of this conversation is very positive.

Chapter 13, He kind of goes back and forth with warning them about the betrayer. Which is interesting because he's warning them about the traitor with the traitor sitting in the room. You can imagine, you could probably cut the awkwardness there with a knife, right? He just washed people's feet, that's awkward enough. And now he's talking about the traitor as he's in the room.

But in verse 30, the traitor leaves, and Judas turns this in a very different direction ... or Jesus turns this in a very different direction. He says, "Yes, I'll be crucified. Yes, I'll die on the cross, but shortly after that ..." He says in verse 31, "I'll be glorified." "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." Meaning, "God will give Me a glorified body. He will raise Me from the dead."

As He does that, Jesus says down in verse 34, "A new commandment I give you." It doesn't mean new in the sense that it was never commanded before. The Old Testament had a lot to say about love. And if you want to write these passages down, you can read them: Deuteronomy 6:5 has one reference to love in the Old Testament. Another one is in Leviticus 19:18. But this command was new here in the sense that it set a higher or a clear standard of love. "I told you to love like God did." And the Old Testament, really never took it that far, or said it that clearly anyway. In John 13, Jesus says, "I want you to love like I did." And Deuteronomy and Leviticus didn't say it like that. If you think about it, this is a very high standard of love, right? To love like God did. This is incredibly high. First John 4:8 says, "God is love." So, you have to love like love itself, in other words. You have to love like God does. And Jesus says, "This is the new commandment, this is the new law. And as you do that," He says, "by this all men will know that you're my disciples.

It's been said, if you get ten Christians in a room, you'll get 50 different opinions. Have you guys ever heard that before? And you'll get a fight or two or three fights on your hands. See, that's not how you know you're Jesus' disciple, not if you fight. You'll know you're His disciple by loving one another. As you love people like this, everyone will tell you're the real thing. Everyone will tell you're not like Judas.

A police officer once pulled over a driver, and he asked him for his license and registration. And the driver said, "What's wrong, officer? I wasn't speeding, was I?" And the officer said, "No you weren't, but I saw you waving your fist at one car and shouting at another one. And I saw your face flushed red and angry at a traffic stop. And I also noticed, you had a 'Jesus Loves You' bumper sticker on your car. So, I figured it was stolen. So, can I see your license and registration please?" That's right. I mean, nobody's going to think you're Jesus' disciple if you go around driving like that. Nobody's going to believe that you believe Jesus loves you if you live like that.

Which leads me to ask this as we kind of wrap this up. Do you love people like this? Do you love them like God does? Like Jesus does? Do you do it because He first loved you? Do you do it because He started the whole thing for you? Do you love people because He is your Master and you're His slave? Because He'll bless you for it and reward you in eternity?

Let me say it this way (this is important), how low is your love? I mean, how far down does it go? Does it go as far down as this? Does it go as low as this? It's been said that love stoops in order to rise up. The greater it is, the lower it goes. How low is your love? Because if it looks like this, you could be encouraged because it shows you're Jesus' disciple. It's an indication that you're saved.

Just to show you the seriousness of this, the chapter ends on a sober note. It ends with the conversation between Jesus and Peter that goes like this, starting in verse 36. This is how this whole chapter rounds off. In verse 36,

36 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are you going? ..." (Jesus keeps talking about going somewhere) ... "where are you going? And Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later." 37 Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for You." 38 And Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow, until you deny Me three times."

If you remember from earlier in the chapter, Peter's the one who didn't get all this stuff about love, right? It was all lost on him, because he said, "Never shall you wash my feet." Then he said, "Wash my hands and my feet as well." In other words, "I have no idea what you're doing, Jesus. I don't know what you're talking about right now, but just dump it all on me." And Jesus says, "Peter, since you don't get that, you're not going to get what I'm about to do. And you're going to deny me three times. You're going to betray me like Judas did, the only difference is you're going to come back, Peter. And that's the hope for you. You're going to repent. But you're going to leave me first because you don't get this new commandment."

If you remember, Jesus said there are two great commandments in the Bible, and what are they? They are: love your God and love your neighbour, right? If you get that, everything else falls in place. But Jesus is saying here at the end of the chapter, if you don't get that, nothing falls into place. Paul said in First Corinthians 13 that, "If I speak with the tongues of men and angels, but I don't have love, I've become a noisy gong and a clanging symbol." I've done this before with you guys, but I don't have a noisy gong or a clanging symbol up here today, but I do have a pot and a spoon. Some of you remember this when I was a candidate here. Actually, I've been waiting years to do this again. My little boys couldn't believe my wife let me bring these to church today. They were amazed.

But if I started banging on this thing, you couldn't hear what I'm saying, right? It would just drown everything out. Paul says, it's the same way if you do all this stuff in church but you don't love people. It just drowns it all out. It's just a bunch of racket and just a bunch of noise. Love is everything to God, and it should be everything to us as well. And let's pray and ask the Lord for help in this. Let's pray that we would take these lessons to heart and love as the Lord Jesus did. And let's thank Him for His love for us.

Father, we do thank you Lord, for Your amazing love. And we can never plumb the depths of it, we could never say enough about it. As a matter of fact, every verse in the Bible is covered in love. Everything is directed toward that end. And I pray for our church, Lord. I thank you that we

have such a loving congregation. When I look out on our people, I think of so many ways that they're loving one another now. Lord, I just pray that we would grow in that because that pleases You. None of that is said as any kind of criticism. Father, I just want us to excel still more in the things that we're doing right now.

Thank you, Father, for this example of Christ. None of us could even do anything as humble as this - just to think of the Son of God getting down on His hands and knees and doing this before He died, Lord. But may we go out and copy that in our lives today. May the parents here serve their kids, may the kids learn to love their parents properly. Father, may my brothers and sisters in Christ love one another. May we love the people in our neighbourhood who don't know Christ. May we reach out to them with the Gospel. But in all things, Father, may we keep this new commandment. May You be glorified in that. May we be a humble and stoop in order to rise up and love towards You. We pray all this in the name of Jesus' Christ and for His glory, amen.