

Text: John 13:1-11

Title: "Believe because He loved His own to the end"

Time: 7/20/2025 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction: Chapters 12 and 13 mark a turning point in the Gospel of John. Throughout the book, John's purpose is to write so that his readers would believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing have life in His name (20:31). The first 18 verses of this Gospel taught us that we must believe because Jesus is the eternal Word become flesh, the Creator who enlightens all with His truth.

The rest of chapter 1 through chapter 12 gave us reasons to believe in anticipation of what John calls Jesus's *hour*. We must believe because John the Baptist was Jesus's forerunner, because Jesus is the One anointed by the Spirit at His baptism, because His disciples follow Him, because He turned the water into wine, because He was zealous for His Father's house, cleansing the temple of moneychangers, because He was the gift of the Father's love as Nicodemus learned, and because He is the Bridegroom promised by the Old Testament.

We must believe because the Samaritans believed, because Jesus healed the nobleman's son and a lame man and a man born blind, because His works and the Father's works are the same, because these and other witnesses prove He is God's Son, because He fed 5000 with 5 loaves and 2 fish, because He walked on water, and because He is the Bread of Life and the Light of the World.

We must believe because the world hated Him, because no man ever spoke like this man, because He is from above and existed before Abraham was, because He is the Good Shep-

herd who gives eternal life to His sheep, because He is the Resurrection and the Life who raised Lazarus from the dead.

We must believe because Mary prepared Him for His burial, because He entered Jerusalem miraculously and triumphantly on the 10th of Nissan as the Passover Lamb brought into the house, because a voice came from heaven telling us to believe Him, and because Isaiah saw His glory and spoke of Him.

All of these and more are reasons we must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing have life in His name, according to the Gospel of John. They are reasons given in anticipation of His hour. But now in Chapter 13, we are given the ultimate reason to believe on Jesus, for His hour has now come, and we find that this amazing hour is an hour of complete love.

John refers to himself in his Gospel as the *disciple whom Jesus loved*. As He describes Jesus's final hour of complete love, He wants every disciple of Jesus Christ to know that we too are the disciples whom Jesus loved. In the first 11 verses of our chapter, we find four things to be true about Jesus's love for His own.

I. He loved His own with sacrificial obedience (vv. 1, 3).

Illustration: The Passover feast was unique in that it is the one feast of Judaism that was not given to the Jewish people by the Law. The Passover feast predates the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, stretching all the way back to the Exodus from Egypt and the birth of the nation. Psalm 81 commemorates this history, and it was a Psalm that the Levites proclaimed during this feast in Jerusalem each year. Just like Jesus's priesthood was better than the priesthood of Aaron, which came from the Law, so the sacrifice of the Passover

Lamb was better in an important way than all the other sacrifices that were prescribed by the Law. Without this sacrifice, there would have been no Israel, no Mount Sinai, and no Law, no Aaronic priesthood, and no other sacrifices.

Application: So Passover was about the ultimate sacrifice, and Jesus knew that in this year – A.D. 31 – the sacrifice made on the 14th of Nissan would be the fulfilment of all those years of Passover feasts since the Exodus. Jesus was the Father's Passover Lamb that year. He would die so that His people might have life. This death was a sacrifice of love, and this love was strengthened by two things that Jesus knew to be true about this death.

1. His death was the path to His joy ("Jesus knew . . . that he should depart"). Jesus knew that His death was simply a relocation from this world into the presence of His Father. He knew that His Father is God, and that God does all things well. He knew that the timing of His death was perfect, for His hour had come. He knew that His death was not the end, but only the beginning of unimaginable joy.

Heb. 12:2, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God the Father." Jesus disrespected the suffering of the cross in light of the joy of His love for His own. The cross will cause Him great anguish of spirit as well as bodily pain, but the joy it would bring Him was still greater – the joy of securing the salvation of His own, those who believe.

2. His death was the path to possession of all things (v. 3). You may remember that Satan had offered Him a shortcut during His temptation in the wilderness. "Worship me," he said, "and I will give you all the glory of the kingdoms of the world." Jesus answered that only God must be wor-

shipped. He would wait for blessing to come God's way. He obeyed unto death, even the death of the cross.

As His own, we ought to respond with sacrificial obedience to Him. He gave Himself for us. What have we given for Him? Have we given Him ourselves? Have we taken up our cross to follow Him? Will we love Him to the end because He first loved us to the end? Our passage tells us about Judas, who answered these questions, "No, I will not."

II. He loved His own bearing diabolical betrayal (2, 10b-11).

Illustration: Acts 27 describes a storm at sea that results in the shipwreck of the Apostle Paul and his fellow passengers on their way to Rome: "But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon" (v. 14).

Application: In the original Greek, the phrase *arose against* in Acts 27:14 translates the same action that Satan does to Judas in our verse, *having put into*. The idea is that at some point Judas fell to the temptation that Jesus resisted. At some point he had become convinced that following obediently as Christ's disciple was no longer worth it. At some point he had grown tired of being a loving sacrifice and wanted instead to get from this life what he could for himself.

We read about that point in Judas's life in Luke 22:1-6. It was the love of money that cause Judas to open the door to Satan's influence in his life. You may remember from the previous chapter that just two days earlier the disciples, led by Judas, had objected to Mary's use of an expensive perfume to anoint Jesus for His burial (John 12:1-11). Uniquely, Judas objected because he was stealing from the Lord. There are many ways to steal from the Lord and His work. One way is to betray the Lord to His enemies for thirty pieces of silver.

But the Bible teaches that the satanic trap that captured Judas's heart is one that is laid out for our hearts as well. Paul warns us that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And for those servants of the Lord ministering in a context like this, Paul counsels: "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

Jesus will teach His disciples at this table to love one another as He does them, and it was the love of money that caused Judas to fail to do this. And so Jesus had to love His own while bearing diabolical betrayal. Sadly, He still must do so.

III. He loved His own demonstrating true greatness (vv. 4-5).

Illustration: I am told that the Jewish Passover celebration involved four cups of wine mixed with water. Once the guests were reclining at the table with their feet extended outward, the celebration began with the head of the supper pronouncing a blessing on the first cup that said: "Blessed are Thou, Jehovah our God, Who has created the fruit of the Vine!" (Edersheim). Next the head of the supper was to wash the hands of the participants.

Application: On this occasion, Jesus rises after praying the blessing on the first cup, and dressed like a slave He washes, not the hands, but the feet of His disciples as they are reclined at the table. One commentator noted that this is the only occurrence in ancient Jewish or Graeco-Roman sources where we find a superior washing the feet of an inferior (Carson). Back then, one did not even wash the feet of his peers. That was the work of slaves and inferiors.

What John does not mention, and what the other Gospels do tell us, is that while taking their places an argument had erupted among the disciples about who should be considered the greatest. Evidently, the seating arrangement was a significant factor in this regard. Jesus had rebuked them for their pride, had told them that the Kingdom of God works differently than the kingdoms of this world, and said that true greatness in the former is defined by humble service – like washing feet, doing dishes, cooking the meals, mowing the lawn, cleaning the bathrooms, taking out the trash.

Perhaps the humblest act of the Lord in this regard was when He made His way to the feet of Judas. As hard as it would have been to wash the feet of those men, washing that pair of feet would have been the most difficult. Yet, Jesus did not skip His betrayer. He knew the scheme that was coming and would later reveal what He knew (v. 11). In fact, He had directed His disciples to find this place of the feast through miraculous means, likely to make sure Judas did not know ahead of time where they would be meeting, so they could celebrate uninterrupted.

And yet, grace is extended one more time to the betrayer. Greatness is demonstrated to him as lowly service. Tragically, this grace only hardens the traitor's resolve even more. He has no respect for a King who would humble Himself in this way. He would not be caught dead washing feet.

Are we willing to serve one another in this way? True greatness is to be found in the people who serve their brothers and sisters in Christ in these ways. It is among them that His churches will find the great leaders God has prepared for them in these dark days.

IV. He loved His own with instructive patience (vv. 6-10a).

Illustration: *Ex opere operato* is a Latin phrase that means *by the work worked*. In Roman Catholic theology, the church's sacraments are described as *ex opere operato*, meaning that they give grace whenever they are administered, that it is the rite that changes the life, not an understanding and acceptance of its meaning. The idea undergirds the practice of infant baptism. It is believed that the infant receives grace because of the ritual, even though it has no understanding of or faith in what is going on.

Application: One commentator pointed out that since Judas received this foot washing, it at least was in no way *ex opere operato*. He received no grace from it. Peter would receive grace from Jesus's actions only when He came to understand the meaning of what Jesus did (v. 7). At first, Peter does not understand. In fact, he objects and questions (v. 6). Unsatisfied with the Lord's answer, he emphatically refuses (v. 8). Jesus patiently explains the consequences of his refusal, and Peter swings the pendulum the other way, instructing the Lord this time that He was not doing enough (v. 9).

Jesus loves us with patient instruction, just like He loved Peter. His point is that there is a difference between needing a bath and needing your feet washed. To be given a bath at salvation is to be given new life that cleanses us from all our sins, past, present, and future, in the blood of the Lamb. Paul calls this the washing of regeneration in Titus 3:5.

To need your feet washed is to need the cleansing that John speaks of in the first chapter of his epistle, the washing of renewed fellowship (1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"). We need the bath of regeneration to have a relationship with God in the new birth, and we need the foot-washing of confession to have close fellowship with God as we grow in greater Christlikeness.

Conclusion: And so John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, wants us to see that this same Jesus loves all of His own unto the end. For that reason, we should believe He is the Christ, the Son of God, and have life in His name. He loved you and me with sacrificial obedience, bearing diabolical betrayal, demonstrating true greatness, and patiently instructing us even this morning with His precious Word.

Peter had an excuse for not fully understanding this love. Jesus said He would understand after the hour of His love was ended. It was then that Peter finally understood (2 Pet. 1:12-15). Once he understood, Peter helped others understand until he met his end. Looking back this morning, you and I should be like Peter, those who give their lives to their dying day to the good news that Jesus loves His own to the end. We can see clearly the Lord's love for His own in this passage. The time for us to know, to believe, to receive, and to imitate His love for His own is now.

“A man came—I think it was actually in Philadelphia—on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction—the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

—David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*