

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

JOHN 12-13

“Put your best foot forward” is an old English phrase. Its first use dates back to the year 1613. It means “to embark on a journey or task with purpose and gusto.”

Well, Jesus is headed to the cross, and in John 12-13 He *puts His best foot forward*... He heads to Jerusalem for His last Passover... And it’s interesting that our chapters tonight start and finish with feet...

They begin when a woman anoints *Jesus’ feet* with expensive perfume. They end with Jesus taking a bowl and towel to wash *His disciples’ feet*... Jesus is about to save the world, and He *puts His best foot forward*...

Verse 1, “Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead.” And what a joyous reunion it was! *Imagine the conversation*...

“There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard...” Spikenard was a perfumed-oil imported from India. And it was super expensive - worth about a year's wages. It may’ve constituted Mary's life savings.

She took the oil and “anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.” Jesus has brought her brother back from

the dead. Now no cost is too extravagant to show Jesus how much she adores Him.

And nowhere in Scripture do we find an act that better epitomizes true worship than right here...

No one required Mary to pour out her expensive oil, and worship is always born out of *love* not *legalism*.

True worship is not so much *ritualistic* or *religious* as it is *romantic* - it flows from the heart. Mary's expression was the overflow of an exuberant heart.

“Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, Why was this fragrant oil not sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor?” Then John adds, “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.

Judas' noble-sounding concern was a smokescreen. He wasn't worried about the *poor*, but his own *purse*.

Jesus had made Judas the treasurer of *The Jesus Christ Evangelistic Association* - and it's a good thing Judas was never audited. It would've been a scandal.

Judas had been skimming off the top.

Judas was *pilfering*, but his excuse was *pragmatism*.

In essence Judas said, “*What about the enormous needs in the world? Let's be practical - there are missions, soup kitchens, homes for unwed mothers, and political action committees that desperately need our support. Why waste this money on worship?*”

But understand that worship is not as *practical*, as it *spiritual*. Worship is not designed to satisfy or benefit human beings. Worship is an attempt to bless the heart of God. It's unselfish, and non-utilitarian, and relational.

Worship is like buying a dozen roses for you wife.

Practically speaking, flowers are a waste. They bloom a few days and shrivel. They serve no function.

But relationally flowers are a valuable gesture to the person you love. They're worth every penny you pay.

Flowers are only appreciated by lovers, and so it is with worship... Obviously, Judas was not a lover of God. The name "*Judas*" means "*praise*," but Judas knew nothing of real praise and worship. *If he had*, he would not have objected to Mary's extravagance.

Verse 7, "*But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."*

Perfumes were placed on a deteriorating corpse to mask the odor, but Mary believed that the body of Jesus would not rot. She believed in the resurrection He had foretold, so she anointed Him *before* His burial.

Its interesting, we'll find later that Mary of Bethany was not among the women who came to the tomb on Easter Sunday. *Why?* She had already anointed Jesus!

"Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also

see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.” Lazarus had become quite a celebrity.

When you look closely at these three family members - Lazarus, Mary, and Martha you'll find the three ingredients of Christian discipleship... Martha was known for her **work**, Mary was famous for her **worship**, and Lazarus was the ultimate **witness**.

Work, worship, witness should be our priorities.

Verse 10 uncovers a scheme. “But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.” Lazarus was such an impressive witness for Jesus he was also on the priestly hit list.

I don't know why the Jews weren't afraid to kill Lazarus, Jesus might just resurrect him a second time!

Remember the story Jesus told in Luke 16 of the rich man and a beggar named “Lazarus.” The rich man died and went to Hell. The beggar went to Paradise.

The rich man asked Abraham to send Lazarus back to earth and let him witness to his brothers, lest they come to the place of torment. Abraham replied, “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.”

But the rich guy persisted, “No, Father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.”

Note Abraham's reply, “If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.” And how ironic a man name “Lazarus” does rise

from the dead, and Abraham was right - rather than listen, the Jews try to kill him.

Verse 12 **“The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast...”** During Passover the city of Jerusalem was swarming with visitors. The permanent population of 80,000 people would swell to 250,000.

“When they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: “Hosanna!” Which meant **“save now.”** It’s a political statement - a cry of liberation from Rome... Palm branches were symbols of Israel. They spoke of Jewish nationalism and independence.

The Jews that day turned Jesus’ entry into the city into a political rally. They wanted salvation from Roman rule, more so than freedom from sin and selfishness.

They shouted Psalm 118, **“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! ‘The King of Israel!’** It was a Messianic psalm. Yet they thought their Messiah would be a *political deliverer*, not a *spiritual Savior*.

“Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written...” John quotes Zechariah 9:9, **“Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt.”** The prophet predicts Messiah will come to Jerusalem riding a burro.

Jesus’ triumphant entry was predicted by a host of OT prophets. Daniel 9 pinpointed it’s exact date 500 years in advance. Usually, Jesus steered away from the public spotlight, but not here. His entrance into Jerusalem was the

only public demonstration He ever orchestrated, **and He did so to fulfill Scripture.**

“His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.” The significance of these events dawned on them after His resurrection.

Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, “You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!” It was the resurrection of Lazarus just days earlier that had fueled these large crowds and produced such an enormous reception.

Verse 20 “Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”

Philip was the only disciple with a Greek name. Thus, these Greeks chose to ask Philip for an interview with Jesus. They figured he’d be more sympathetic.

“Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.” We're not told if Jesus spoke personally to the Greeks, only what He told Andrew and Philip in response to their request to see Him...

“But Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.”

Have you ever heard the expression, “Fifteen Minutes of Fame”? At some point, everybody gets their own brief time in the spotlight - *their fifteen minutes!*

On August 19, 1951, a 3’ 7” midget, named Eddie Gaedel had his fifteen minutes of fame. The St. Louis Browns were playing baseball against the Detroit Tigers. Gaedel in uniform #1/8th came out of the dugout to pinch hit for the Browns. It was a publicity stunt.

His strike zone was a mere 18 inches, so he walked on four pitches. After the incident, the American League barred midgets from baseball. Yet Eddie’s 15 minutes of fame earned him a place in baseball lore.

Here Jesus announces that His moment of glory has finally come. It sounds strange to think of Jesus having a single moment of glory - His own fifteen minutes in the spotlight, so to speak. His life was full of glory.

What about on the mountaintop where He was transfigured in the bright light of His eternal splendor?

The life of Christ was glorious from start to finish.

Yet Jesus says here, “*The hour has come that the son of man should be glorified.*” Jesus’ moment of glory has now arrived. What monumental event will this include - *a few lightning bolts or serious thunder claps?*

How about **a wooden cross...** **Jesus’ crucifixion was His glorification.** *The cross was the culmination of His coming -*

the ultimate act of obedience - the brightest display of character - the greatest fulfillment of divine will and love... all this occurred in six hours on a cross.

It's ironic, but Jesus' *crucifixion* was His *glorification*.

Verse 24 "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."

Plant a kernel of wheat, and the moisture in the soil softens its shell and it releases its seeds. The seeds germinate, and sprout, and grow toward the sunshine. Here's the point, "The mystery of life involves death."

When the kernel of wheat dies to being a kernel; then it becomes a harvest of wheat. Likewise, when we die to our selfish ways; then we begin to bless others.

And nowhere is *this principle of life from death* more evident than at the cross of Jesus. The Lord's death spawned life for millions. Jesus is the single grain that falls to the ground, and has produced a global harvest.

And this principle of life and death applies to us...

"He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."

Real living doesn't start until you're first willing to die to selfishness. Verse 26, "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 honor."

Verse 27, "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.” Jesus was putting *His best foot forward... not a reluctant, hesitant foot.*

Jesus was born to die. He was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. The magi gave Him myrrh, a burial spice, at His baby shower. His journey led to the foot of the cross. He's not about to cop out now.

“Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.” Imagine, the audible voice of God was heard.

“Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to Him.” Jesus answered and said, “This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.” Jesus didn't have to hear the voice from heaven to be assured of His mission, *but the disciples did.* During the dark days that would follow,

I'm sure they recalled God's voice thundering in their ears. The Father had said, *Jesus would be glorified.*

According to Jesus there were two reasons a *gory* cross became His moment of *glory*... On the cross “*the world was judged*” and “*Satan was cast out.*”

On the cross Satan was defeated.

The devil didn't want Jesus to be crucified. He did all he could to keep Him off the cross. When Satan took Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted, he promised Him the kingdoms of the world - *but without the cross* - all Jesus had to do was bow down and worship him.

The reason Satan used Judas to betray Jesus, and tried to sift Peter and the disciples like wheat, was because He wanted to discourage Jesus. The Lord was hurt by the people He came to save. Satan hoped the pain would cause Jesus to abort His mission.

Of course, the devil's strategy failed. Jesus went to the cross and judged Satan. Colossians 2:15 tells us, "(Jesus) disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it."

Today, Satan is still putting up a fight. He's like a guy in a gun battle who's run out of ammunition. Satan is now shooting blanks. His arrest is just a matter of time.

Don't let him frighten you - or cast doubt - or stir up guilt. James 4:7 tells us to resist the devil and he'll flee.

Satan was defeated at the cross of Jesus. Stand in Jesus' victory and you'll overcome the wicked one.

And the second reason the cross was seen as Jesus' moment of glory is in verse 32... "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." This He said, signifying by what death He would die."

The cross is a divine magnet that draws the hearts of people out of death and darkness to life and light.

It's where the broken find healing - and the sinner finds forgiveness - and the guilty and bitter sense love. It's the one lighthouse in the stormy sea called life.

Verse 34, "The people answered Him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how can You say,

'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? "Who is this Son of Man?" The Jews understood "*lifted up*" as a euphemism for the cross. But in their minds they couldn't comprehend that Messiah was destined to die. The OT predicted He would be an everlasting king, who would reign over an eternal kingdom.

Jesus realized they were looking for an excuse not to believe in Him. "Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light. These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them." This was His last exchange with the crowds. From now until the end He's words will be focused on His closest followers.

Here's John's verdict on the crowds, "But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled (he quotes Isaiah 53:1), which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?"

Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again (Isaiah 6:9-10): "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, lest they should see with their eyes, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them." These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him." The Jews rejection of Jesus had also fulfilled Scripture.

Verse 42, “Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” What an indictment. What kind of insanity causes a man to forfeit the approval of the Almighty God to *pacify pions* and to *impress idgits*.

Of course, there are folks today, who *believe in Jesus*, but won't *confess Him*. They fear reprisals at work, or from family, or by friends. You fear being put out of the in-crowd, or family cluster, or circle of friends.

When the reviews come out it's better to get *high marks in heaven* than to be spoken of *well in hell*.

Think of the regrets we'll be forced to admit... *an “in” with the guys... a spot in the foursome... an invite to a party... acceptance in a club... promotion at work... a membership in a fraternity... popularity at a school mattered more to you than the praise of God?* You'll cry and weep and shutter for eternity at your stupidity.

“Then Jesus cried out and said, “He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.” This was a declaration of His deity. He and the Father were one.

Verse 46, “I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words,

has that which judges him - the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.”

Deny the evidence - ignore the obvious about Jesus, and it's not Jesus who judges you! He loves you! It's your rejection of Him that brings judgment on yourself.

“For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.”

Chapter 13:1 is one of the most amazing verses in the Bible, “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.”

This verse becomes more meaningful when read at the end of chapter 19... *After the disciples argue over who among them is greatest... After Peter, James, and John sleep rather than stand with Jesus prayer... After Judas betrays His Master with a kiss... After Peter denies the Lord three times... After all twelve disciples forsake Jesus and flee at His arrest... Then* read these words again, **“He loved them to the end.”**

The disciples let Him down and broke His heart. Jesus was forsaken by the very people He came to save. To me the strongest proof of His deity was not walking on the water, or multiplying the fish and chips, or even busting up Lazarus' funeral – it was His love.

That despite the personal hurt He endured, Jesus loved them to the end. Only God has that kind of love.

1 Corinthians 13 describes God's agape love, "Love suffers long and is kind... does not seek its own, is not provoked... bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails."

God's people fail, but His love for them never fails.

Only God has a love that never quits, even in the face of people's betrayal and rejection. This is the love with which Jesus loved His disciples during this *last week*, and it's the love with which He loves us every week. Your failures don't dilute or divert His love for you. Jesus still loves His disciples *"to the end."*

Verse 2, *"And supper being ended..."* This is Passover. It's the night before Jesus was crucified.

This *"supper"* is the Seder, *and after it 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..."*

This is high drama - the equivalent of a drum roll! *His origin and destiny are divine - He begins and ends with God. All things are in His hands. He holds the mystery of life, the power of the atom, the forces of creation. This is as impressive a set of credentials as possible...*

The universe has become the Lord's workbench, *now what will Jesus do with such power and authority? What tool will the Master use to fix a broken world?*

Verse 4, “(He) 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.” He chooses a towel and a bowl.

Jerusalem streets were dirty. When you entered a house you got your feet washed. It was a courtesy.

But washing footsies was a degrading job - only the lowest slaves - Gentile slaves - toweled toes. It was against rabbinical law to force a Jew to wash feet.

Jesus' job is to fix a fallen world and change our hearts. His resources are unlimited - all power is given to Him - *now what does He do?* He picks up a towel and water bowl, and washes the dust off His disciples' feet. *What a strange way to change the world!*

I like how one author interprets this earth-shattering event, "Until that moment the whole point of things had been for someone to get on top, and once he had gotten on top to stay on top or else attempt to get farther up. But this man already on top - rabbi, teacher, master, (God Himself) - got down on the bottom and began to wash the feet of His followers. In that one act Jesus symbolically overturned the whole social order."

Prior to this moment the world was a pyramid and the goal was to climb up to the pinnacle of the pyramid.

Greatness was measure by the number of people who served under you, but Jesus flips the pyramid.

Greatness in His Kingdom is measured by the people *you* serve, not *who* serve you. Jesus chose to change the world by **redefining its concept of greatness**. He climbed *as low as you can go*. He stripped away His right to be served, took a towel and bowl, became a servant, and washed a bunch of feet.

Verse 6 **“Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, “Lord, are You washing my feet?”**

In other words, **“No way, Jose”**

Cross-reference this event with Luke 22 and you discover Jesus performed this foot-washing **“after dinner”** - and Luke tells us that it was **“after dinner”** that a rivalry broke out among the disciples. They argued over who was greatest. Usually feet were washed when the guests first entered the house. It's now after dinner and everybody still has dirty feet. Obviously, all the disciples felt they were too good to wash feet.

Now imagine, in the midst of their feud Jesus gets up, takes a basin, and starts washing their feet. It was stunning, especially for Peter. This was so foreign to his ideas of leadership, and authority, and greatness. The action just didn't compute for Pete, so *he resisted*.

And it seems that the Lord understood. **“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!"

Peter wasn't always a quick study, but he was *sincere*. Here he says, "If You have to wash me for me to be part of You, then don't stop with my feet, wash my whole body." Peter is giving all that He is to Jesus.

Verse 10 "Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean..." When a person came to a social event he would take a bath at the public bathhouse.

Then he'd walk to the party in his laced up sandals.

By the time he arrived his feet were dirty - *but only his feet*. The party-goer didn't need another bath. All he needed was the street dust to be washed away.

And this is the case for a Christian. Come to Jesus and you get a bath. The blood of Jesus cleanses you of all your sin - past, present, future. In Christ, our inner man is as spic-in-span as we can get - but outwardly we still have to walk through this wicked world.

And we can pick up street dust. Our attitude, lingo, habits, disposition get affected by worldly associates and surroundings. The world's negativism sticks to us.

We don't need another bath - our inner man has been washed once and for all in the blood of Jesus. What we need are daily and regular foot-washings, where we need knock off the influences of this world.

Jesus says to His disciples, "You are clean, but not all of you." For He knew who would betray Him (that is, Judas); therefore He said, "You are not all clean."

Verse 12, "So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?"

You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you." What a memorable example!

Some Christian groups take Jesus' example literally. They believe He gave His church three ordinances to practice: **baptism, communion, and foot-washing.**

Most churches though maintain only baptism and communion are to be observed by the church.

Here's the test we use: "Was it initiated by Jesus, was it practiced by the early church, and was it taught in the NT letters?" Baptism and communion pass all three tests. Foot-washing fails on the last two.

But even if foot-washing was never meant to be *ritualized*, it should be *actualized*. In fact, we can wash each other's feet, even if we have no towel and bowl.

The world beats us up, and gets us down. It defiles and dirties us. Thus, *when we encourage someone, or speak healing words, or laugh and cry together, or refresh with an act of kindness, or reinforce in each other our identity in Christ, or treat each other with dignity and respect, or build up*

each other's faith... Do these things and we are washing each other's feet.

When was the last time you washed your spouse's feet... or your children's feet... or your boss's feet? Be great in God's kingdom, aspire to be a foot-washer!

In verse 16 Jesus says, "Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed (happy) are you if you do them."

Wait a minute... Did Jesus just say what I think He said? Did He say that if you want to be happy you'll start washing feet? That is exactly what He said!

And before you reject the idea, I want to challenge you, "Has Jesus ever lied to you?.." Most of the time we're miserable and unhappy anyway - why not give it a try? What have you got to lose? **Wash some feet!**

Why don't you try to put your best foot forward?

Verse 18, "I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.' He quotes David in Psalm 41:9.

The complete verse reads, "My own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me." David was speaking of his counselor, Ahithophel, but John sees it as prophetic of Judas.

Verse 19 "Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He."

Rather than a surprise, Jesus uses Judas' betrayal to affirm His own deity. They'll recall it was predicted.

Verse 20, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.

When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me." Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke." This is the exact moment Leonardo da Vinci immortalized in his famous painting, "The Last Supper." The disciples are around the table looking at each other with quizzical expressions on their face.

It's a testimony to Jesus' love for Judas that the disciples didn't already know Judas was the betrayer.

Jesus knew it was Judas from the beginning, yet He never tipped His hand. He never assigned Judas the dirty work. He was never spiteful toward him. To the contrary, Judas was given every opportunity to repent.

"Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved." This was a humble way for John to speak of himself. "Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke." Peter wants John to ask Jesus to identify the betrayer.

"Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it." And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon." Jesus and His disciples were probably eating dinner at a Roman

table called a “Triclinium.” The word literally means “*dinner-bed.*”

It sat low to the ground and was U-shaped. The host, which on this night was Jesus, sat at the base of the U. There were no chairs so everyone reclined on pillows.

Since most folks are right-handed, to free up their right hand to eat they'd lean on their left elbow. John leaned on Jesus' shoulder, which placed him in the seat to Jesus' right. Peter spoke to John so he must've been next to John in the second seat to Jesus' right.

Since Jesus could dip His bread in the bowl with Judas it meant they sat side-by-side, putting Judas on Jesus' left side. Seats adjacent to Jesus were positions of honor. John was to Jesus' right. Judas to his left.

And in the midst of the meal the host could pay tribute to an honored guests by dipping their bread into the sauce together. It was a toast of friendship and love. Jesus loved Judas. It's amazing that He toasted His friend even while Judas was plotting His betrayal.

Recall verse 2, it was the devil who sparked Judas to betray Jesus. The Temple guard didn't need Judas' identification. They knew Jesus. Satan moved Judas to betray Jesus in order *to hurt Him - to wound Him.*

Imagine, being betrayed by one of your best friends? The deepest cuts are caused by the folks closest to us.

Satan must've thought he could use Judas to make Jesus bitter, and cause Him to abandon His mission.

I believe Satan's goal was NOT to nail Jesus to the cross, but to keep Jesus off the cross. Yet Jesus loved every one of His disciples *“to the end”*... even Judas.

Verse 27 *“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. Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.”* *It was the dark of night* in more ways than one...

“So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him.”

The cross was Jesus' moment of glory. *It's at the cross of Jesus that we see man at his worse, and God at His best.* *“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.

Verse 34, *“A new commandment I give to you...”*

The word *“commandment”* in the Latin version is the word *“mandatum”* or *“mandate.”* This is why Thursday of Passion week is called *“Maundy Thursday.”* It was the day Jesus gave a new mandate to His disciples.

And here is the *“new commandment...”* Jesus gives to His disciples... *“That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”*

Now if you'd read Leviticus 19:18 you might protest. Moses ordered Israel to love one another, so how is this a new command? *Don't miss what Jesus does here.* He takes an old command and adds five words to it that transformed it into a revolutionary new concept. Here's the transforming phrase, ***"As I have loved you."***

The Jews were expected to love, but not in the way Jesus loved. ***When you love people do you love them to the end? A friend wasn't there when you needed her... a child betrayed you... a parent ignored you... a spouse let you down... a co-worker refused to stand up for you in the pinch... have you stopped loving them?***

Or are you determined to be like Jesus and love them to the end? Verse 35 ***"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."***

Notice the identifying mark of a Christian is not his leather bound Bible, or his witness T-shirts, or the aluminum fish on the bumper of his car. What distinguishes him is not even his Bible knowledge, theology, or expertise in apologetics - its not his church involvement, or acts of service, or ability to sing. It's not how he walks, or talks, or looks - ***it's how he loves!***

Do you love the way Jesus loves? Michael Card writes, ***"The only distinguishing mark of the disciples ever given in Scripture is their ability to love."***

In 200 AD the early church leader, Tertullian, noted how the pagans viewed Christians with astonishment. They would say, ***"See how they love one another?"***

And the distinctive attraction hasn't changed. They'll know we're Christians if we have love for one another.

Verse 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 shall follow Me afterward." Of course, Jesus spoke of the cross.

Church history tells us that in 65 AD Peter was martyred for his faith. He was sentenced to crucifixion, but he considered himself unworthy to be crucified as his Lord, so he had them turn the cross upside down...

Here, Jesus predicts Peter will follow Him in death on the cross, but that was not on Peter's mind at that moment, "Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake."

When Peter is finally crucified He will be full of the Holy Spirit. But at this point in his life he was *full of it* all right - but full of hubris, hutzpah, and self-confidence.

"Jesus answered him, "Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times."

Jesus might've put His best foot forward, but sadly not Peter. He's headed for a crushing defeat, yet as with all the disciples Jesus loved Peter... *"to the end."*