

I. Intro

- A. One of the first surprises about the Gospels is how small they are.
1. John Isaacson's biography of Steve Jobs is 656 pages.
 2. William Manchester's biography of Douglas MacArthur is 816 pages
 3. Joseph Franks 5 volume work on Dostoevsky is 2,500 pages – the condensed version is almost 1,000 pages.
 4. The Gospels – of course here is now depends on the size of the font and how many study notes it contains – but they are more like 25 pages, certainly less than forty.
 5. Which makes it clear that whatever is in them is important.
- B. So... what is in them? What is covered? Last week John spoke about Jesus washing the disciples feet - tossing social convention aside and doing for them what they would not do for each other. Demonstrating what is expected. Modeling a kind of leadership that was not only radically different from what was on display with Caesar and Herod the Great, but from what we often embrace today.
- C. There are two other themes in the second half of John 13: betrayal and love. We are going to focus on the second.
1. In John 13:18 – 30, the section we are skipping over – Jesus lets Judas know that he knows that Judas is about to betray him.
 2. This all unfolds during the evening meal. Jesus announces that he is about to die, and then adds that this will happen because one of those in the room is going to betray him.
 3. This changes the mood in the room and also leads to some confusion, because apparently not everyone can hear what is being said, or perhaps they can't believe they heard what was said. But in the tense moments, Jesus and Judas exchange a few words. And then Judas gets up and leaves – to go betray him.
 4. The others in the room do not seem to realize all that is going on. But Jesus knows that when Judas leaves that the clock is ticking. In fact, the last thing he says to Judas is, “the things that you are about to do, go and do quickly.”

II. Our text for today begins right after that in verse 31. **When he was gone, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man (remember – big term) is glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.**

- A. Let me read that again: now the Son of Man is **glorified** and God is **glorified** in him. If God is **glorified** in him, God will **glorify** the Son in himself, and will **glorify** him at once.
- B. A lot of use of the word “glory” here – the Greek word doxa, from which we get doxology. What does it mean? Well, glory is a bit hard to define. We are going to see it a lot.
1. In John 17 – Jesus's High Priestly Prayer – it is a theme. And, of course it is not new. In my devotions today I was reading in Exodus where Moses asks God to show him his glory.
- C. What is glory?

1. It is the overwhelming beauty of all God's attributes put together. It is "beauty beyond bearing" – which is what we get in Exodus. God says to Moses, "You can't see my face or my glory and live, but I will show you my goodness."
 2. A couple years ago I heard Tim Keller – the now retired pastor from New York – reference the The Crowne (the Netflix show about the Royal family)
 - a) His point at that point was the Americans – who do not technically have a royal family (for which I suspect we are increasingly thankful. I am not sure we are learning a lot about glory from them at this moment).
 3. But, Keller's point – to the extent I remember it – was that in the first season, when Elizabeth was crowned Queen – you got some efforts to display glory. And it was this beautiful, regal opulence. Some effort to display the power and beauty and wealth of the British monarchy.
- D. I don't want to slow down too much here. But I do want to note, the kind of glory Elizabeth was basking in is not what Jesus gets initially.
- E. As we read John 13 there is a sense in which Christ's glory is being displayed at the cross, which was an exceedingly horrible, ugly, grotesque, public, form of death.
1. This is not Socrates drinking hemlock. This is not Louis XVI dying by guillotine during the French Revolution. This was a slow, painful, public act of torture and humiliation. Designed to horrify. Designed to keep people in check.
 2. Isaiah 53 suggests Jesus was beaten almost beyond recognition before they nailed him to the cross.
 3. And for our freedom he loses his – there is almost no method of more significantly losing your freedom than that of being nailed to a cross.
- F. There is a stunning claim being made here that this unthinkable and horrific violence being exercised against Jesus – who is perfect and who has done nothing wrong and who could stop this at any time - is not only the most important act of history but it is also the only stage on which we can hope to see how good and loving – how glorious – Jesus is.
- G. I don't want to get sidetracked here because "glory" will come up again at greater length in John 17.
1. And we know there is another side to all of this. Jesus will be exalted in a way full of splendor and light and joy. We are promised as much in Philippians 2. Because Jesus stoops, God highly exalts him, and bestows on him the name that is above every name.
 2. But there is overlap here with the Greater Glory theory, which is to my way of thinking, the best answer to the problem of evil. And it says, in light of eternity, God has allowed bad to happen so we could see how much he loves us, which is on display in the crucifixion.
 3. There is a lot going on here. Moving on

III. Moving on: V33: My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come. A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

- A. We might ask, how is this new?

B. Can you imagine if, during the time out near the end of a basket ball game. There is 2 seconds left and you are down by 1 point and the coach calls a time out and says, “OK. I have got a New Idea. Let’s score two points and win.”

C. When our oldest son was running cross country, we used to helpfully say, “hey, we were talking and we’ve got an idea for his meet tonight. Run faster and you can win. All you have to do is run faster.”

D. That kind of advice is not helpful. But that is sort of what this “a new command I give you” sounds like: love one another? Haven’t we been hearing that all along? Didn’t Moses talk about this?

IV. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

A. So, what is new about this? Well, what is new is the call to love “as I have loved you.”

B. This is where we return to something I mentioned a few weeks back. The Greeks had a few different words for love, but when they set out to translate the Old Testament into Greek – this is during the intertestamental period after Alexander the Great took over the known world and forced everyone to learn Greek. They did not have a Greek word strong enough to capture the radical nature of God.

C. There is sort of a progression of loves:

1. Eros – from where we get erotic – is not only tied to sexual activity. It is the longing for an object to fulfill our own needs. In this sense, an infant longs for food and attention. There is a sense in which eros is about the warm, delirious drive to meet my needs.

2. Phileo – next level up. This is generally explained as “brotherly love” – which is why Philadelphia is the city of “brotherly love.” Well, at a slightly deeper level it is the bound of natural affection that drives us to “affiliate” (hear the link – phileo and affiliate)? We feel an affinity to some people and they become friends. Phileo is essentially about the drive to enjoy companionship that meets my needs and, happily, the other person’s as well.

3. Then, at the next level there is storge – which can be translated as pity or charitable compassion. It’s been noted that this kind of love tends to emerge in the early teen years. Not always – sometimes earlier and sometimes later (or never). But this is the concern you feel over those who are suffering or being excluded. It’s the impulse to help.

D. The point is, these three all have limits.

1. Others emerge to attract our erotic desires.

2. Our friends disappoint and do not always act like friends.

3. Even storge breaks down – we hit compassion fatigue or resentment, because the people we are helping are not being as thankful as we expect.

E. This is where the new term – agape – comes in.

1. Jesus – who has just selflessly washed his disciples feet, washed the feet of Judas who he knows is about to betray him.

F. The new part of this command is that Jesus – who is about to die for others – says: my example is the new standard.

V. V36: Simon Peter asked him, “Lord, where are you going?”

A. At this point you can almost imagine Jesus looking at Peter and saying, “seriously? Peter, can you stay on point. I am talking about love.”

B. I actually think there is something here for us, because I think a lot of people are far more focused on Christ’s return than on the model of love. I get 100 questions about Christ’s return for every one I get about what this love is supposed to look like.

VI. That aside, Jesus speaks to Peter’s question. Jesus replied, “Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.”

A. Jesus will later say that he is going ahead to prepare a place and that he will return.

VII. Peter asked, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”

A. Well, we know how that goes. He will deny Christ three times in the next 24 hours. He will eventually die for Christ. Ten of the twelve will. Only Judas (who ends his own life) and John, who is tortured and banished to an island and then apparently dies of old age, but in the next few days, Peter will not die for Christ.

VIII. V38: Then Jesus answered, “Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!

A. In his defense, the other disciples are not even hanging out in town. They seem to have run further away. But, under the brutal questioning of a 14 year old girl, he withers.

B. I thought about parking here – on the topic of repentance, because it is the way forward. We are going to fail. And Peter is an example of recovering after failure.

1. Peter messes up, but Peter owns up and Peter will also grow – the Peter we see at the end of Acts is much wiser and more thoughtful.

2. But first he confesses. He repents.

3. We see the same, by the way, with David. Both the Old and New Testaments give us the contrasts between those who repent and those who do not.

a) In the Old Testament, both Saul and David have high profile sins. With Saul it is pride and turning his back on God, with David it’s adultery and murder.

b) Saul may have regretted his sins and perhaps even had remorse. But he does not repent and ends up throwing himself on a sword. David writes Psalm 51 – a profound example of confession.

4. In the New Testament, both Judas and Peter betray Christ. Judas clearly feels regret, but he does not repent. Instead he commits suicide. Peter will confess and be restored.

C. I thought about focusing on our need for repentance.

IX. But I want to focus on what Francis Schaeffer called “the marks of a Christian”¹ instead. Our need to love one another.

A. Schaeffer – the philosopher and theologian, who by the way, completely deconstructed his faith after being a missionary (you can read about that in a recent article on deconstruction by Keller). He was so put off by the lack of love he saw in the fundamentalist circles he was running in that he questioned everything. He later started a retreat center for those who had lost their faith.

- B. Schaeffer wrote prophetically about where the West was headed, and his predictions are largely playing out.
- C. But alongside all his predictions about the future, he wrote a little booklet on John 13 and John 17, which focused on this call to love one another.
- D. He focused on the idea that the world will make their assessments – their evaluations – on our love: **By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.**
- X. There are heavy implications of this. One of them is that:
- A. If those around us are turning away from Christianity – and many are. The decline of the church is not as significant as some say. I will remind you, the church is growing rapidly outside the West. But, in the US and Western Europe it is declining. Jesus says: others will be paying attention to the way you treat each other in general and the way you love in particular.
- B. And so, this seems to beg the question: how are we treating each other and others? Are we treating others per the standard Jesus set – this new commandment?
- C. If there is a sense in which love is the final apologetic – and please, do not hear me say there is something wrong with reason and arguments. But that isn't what Jesus says will carry the day. If there is a sense in which love is the final apologetic, then we should ask ourselves, how are we doing.
- D. There are some high profile successes to point to:
1. I was re-reading the details in the 2015 shooting at the church in Charleston, where Dylan Roof – a young Neo-Nazi - was invited to attend a prayer meeting at a black church and then shot and killed 9 of them. And the family members publicly forgave him.
 2. Or before that, when a crazed man shot and killed a bunch of Amish children in Lancaster, PA and they forgave.
- E. There are some high profile stories of love and grace to point to.
- F. And there are many other examples. I was in Dallas this week visiting the Local Good Center that a friend has set up – looking for ideas about how we do a better job locally of loving broken people.
- G. And I would add, there is lots and lots of good going on – with Renew and the Justice Center. And ongoing tutoring and food distribution and car repair and HOGS and more.
- H. But as a general rule, at the moment the world is not stunned by our love. And so it's worth asking: Are there parts of my life that are hard to explain for reasons other than the love and example of Jesus?
- I. We need people like Jesus who are able to take pain and anger and vitriol out of the system. Too many simply amp up and say – if you are doing that to me I am going to do 2x back at you. Anybody can do that. Anyone can get mad. Anyone can swing back. Anyone can return insults. Jesus is modeling something quite different and calling us to something quite different.
- J. This is NOT a winning short term strategy. I will say again what I have said many times: if what you see is all you get. If there is no life beyond death, then Christianity does NOT make any sense.

1. Loving our enemies; turning the other cheek; washing the feet of others – this does not make any sense.

K. And those who follow Jesus in this are chumps. Naïve, gullible chumps most to be pitied.

L. But if! But if – as Jesus says – there is life beyond death. If he is coming back, then we need to live in light of eternity. And the way to store up treasure in heaven is to serve. Is to think about others. It is to follow the example of Jesus. It is to be betrayed and YET TO LOVE.

M. And by the way, don't miss this: This is what Jesus did for us. The idea that Jesus loves his betrayers is not about Jesus loving others – it's about Jesus loving me. I have betrayed him. And so have you.

N. We are not superior to Judas. We are not superior to Peter. We are just as guilty. This story should not leave us to think about how much better we need to be, it should remind us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. And from that platform of being right with God, we look to share that love with others.

XI. Let me end with a story told by Eusebius – an early 4th century church historian, who tells a story about the apostle John in his old age, after he had returned from exile on the island of Patmos.

A. John won a young man over to Christ and started to disciple him. In his journey, John took the young man to a bishop and asked the bishop to look after him and take care of him while he was away traveling on mission.

B. While John was gone, the young man started to hang out with thieves and criminals. Over time, they had influence on his life. John returns to the bishop and asks about the young man. The bishop tells John that the man is dead. John is undone and asks, "How did he die?" The bishop says, "Finally he's dead to God." He begins to tell John what had happened and that the young man was living in the mountains with the rest of the thieves.

C. John the Apostle, forgetting his age, gets on a horse and makes his way to the mountains. He is captured by the thieves and asks to be taken to their captain. With the captain and leaders is the young man who John had won over to Christ. He recognizes John, and Eusebius records that the young man left – he couldn't bear to look John in the eye. John went after him and he caught up with him:

D. "Why, my son, dost thou flee from me, thine own father, unarmed, aged? Pity me, my son; fear not; thou hast still hope of life. I will give account to Christ for thee. If need be, I will willingly endure thy death as the Lord suffered death for us. For thee will I give up my life. Stand, believe; Christ hath sent me." –The Church History of Eusebius

E. The young man dropped his weapon and embraced John, and John brought him back to the faith. What would cause an old man to chase someone like that? We've heard stories like that today, where people have wandered from the faith; where people we know who were doing well and growing in Christ are just done with the church. We hear stories like that, and how have we responded? "That's too bad. That's a bummer, that's unfortunate. I remember they were doing so well. They're doing that again?"

F. Where does John get this kind of courage and confidence? What would cause him to chase someone and put His life on the line? It comes from the love of God for himself. If Jesus didn't first chase him, he'd be lost. So for John it's a given – Jesus willingly laid down His life for me, why wouldn't I chase after others? This is where his confidence, boldness, and evangelism comes from. John knew that Jesus chased him and laid down His life for him. Why would he not do otherwise? This is how much God loves us.

G. If you are not completely convinced of the love of God for you today, this will be prophetic. You will walk in fear, anxiety, and performance. God has not called His children to live that way.

H. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 4:9-10

I. I'm convinced that we will never really understand the love of God for us this side of eternity, but we are called to behold it, accept it, dwell on it, rest in it, and live out of it. Tim Keller says, "The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope."

¹ In 1970, Schaeffer wrote a book called, *The Marks of a Christian*, which was an exposition on John 13 and John 17.