

AND WE BEHELD HIS GLORY - Studies in John's Gospel

Part fifty-three - Sunday, July 21st, 2024, 10 a.m.

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LIVING IN THE PRESENCE OF JESUS AFTER HE'S GONE

1) THE THREE LESSONS JESUS TAUGHT AFTER JUDAS LEFT THE ROOM

IPAD TEXT - John 13:31-35 - "When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. [32] If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. [33] Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' [34] A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. [35] By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

From his own account it is certain John knows about the betrayal of Judas immediately. From Matthew's account it is likely that they *all* knew shortly after. So Jesus now moves to comfort His disciples in the middle of this horrifying moment. Just when it looked like the bottom was falling out of all they had been living for, Jesus reminds them of three key pillars of truth:

- a) *This impending death only felt like a disaster now. It was actually a moment of intense manifestation of divine glory.*

IPAD TEXT - John 13:31-32 - “When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. [32] If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him *at once*.”

Notice those two time references - “*now*” and “*at once*.”

Jesus is emphatic. Something absolutely *glorious* was happening *immediately upon His death*. And it would take us weeks of teachings to drill down into them all. The *redemption of the repentant*, the *satisfaction of the just wrath of God*, the *securing of our eternal happiness*, the *casting out of the ruler of this present world*, the *complete fulfilling of the law of God on our behalf*. Glorious accomplishments, these!

- b) *Jesus prepares them for the loss of His visible presence as they had known it.*

IPAD TEXT - John 13:33 & 36 - “Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going you cannot come.’[36] Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered him, “*Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward.*”

The *nature* of the relationship they would have with Jesus would change. But that would not make it any less *authentic*. They would have to wait to be reunited with Jesus *visibly*. And even this was a promise-filled word. All but one of these Christ-followers would die of execution for loving their Lord. And even in the face of such pain and suffering Jesus tells them now this death will merely be the means of uniting them more directly with Himself.

This should encourage *us* because Jesus is preparing His disciples to follow and serve and trust Him under the *same* conditions you and I must trust and follow Him without visibly *seeing* Him. Jesus explains this is part of the plan, not a mistake.

- c) ***Visible love for each other in the church sustains disciples while Christ isn't here physically.***

IPAD TEXT - John 13:34-35 - “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. [35] *By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*”

It is striking the way this summons to *mutual love* in the church comes on the heels of the announcement of *Jesus’ departure* from them. The world in which disciples live is hostile to their values and Lord. It can be costly to love Jesus in such a culture. Mutual visible love is our Lord’s means of encouraging and supporting the body of Christ. We are to *serve* each other as our Lord demonstrated in washing His disciples’ feet.

We might find it strange at first glance that we are not told in this text that the world will know we are Christians by our love for *God* or our love for *Christ*. Probably this is because it is much easier to sing and speak about our *God-love* and our *Christ-love* than it is to *express service-love* for the visible community of faith.

The church needs to rediscover the rather robust idea that, in this present world, *church-love* is as important as our *Christ-love*. That’s a concept definitely in need of reviving in our “*I love Jesus, but not the church*” age.

2) **JESUS' TWO LESSONS FOR PETER AND HOW THEY RELATE TO THE CHURCH**

I believe we're meant to hold on to a blending of two lessons in Jesus' last two conversations with Peter. Let me put them together for you:

First, **John 13:8-10** - "Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." [9] Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" [10] Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, *but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you.*" - IPAD TEXT

Second, **John 13:37-38** - "Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? *I will lay down my life for you.*" [38] Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, *the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.*" - IPAD TEXT

Very quickly, here are the two tandem lessons that must never be divorced. **First**, Jesus tells Peter there is no need to doubt his standing as “**completely clean**” just because he will repeatedly need to have his feet washed. Rest in a finished redemption. You are not cast out every time you are called to repentance. Grace is mighty and certain.

Second, there is more weakness in our own hearts than we are usually aware exists. “No Peter, you aren’t as pure in your devotion to me as you think. Denial is close at hand.”

I think you can see where Jesus is leading Peter. And you and me. **Confidence** must be married to **carefulness**. There is mighty certainty relying on Christ alone. And, at the same time, there is more weakness than we imagine when we **assume** a standing without diligently abiding in Christ through understanding and repentance.

Entire theological systems construct themselves around one of those truths without the other. Live in the balance. Rest in Christ alone. Wrestle against self, the world, and presumption.