

"A new commandment I give to you"

John 13:31-38

31 Therefore 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 will glorify Him immediately. 33 "Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 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, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

36 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" 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 right 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, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times.

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As we ended last Sunday, Judas had left the upper room, and entered the night.

With him gone, Jesus will prepare His faithful disciples for what is coming soon. He will teach them how they are to live thereafter.

/These eight verses tell of a great drama that is about to unfold. It is a drama of glory, departure, love, and denial.\

It is a story about the power of God and the weakness of men. Above all, it is a story of victory and hope in the face of tremendous evil and darkness.

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1. The glory: (verses 31-32)\

John 13:31 Therefore 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 will glorify Him immediately.

The word “Now” tells us that something is about to happen, something which will glorify the Son of Man, and in turn glorify His Father.

/Glory is the revelation of God’s majesty.\ Something is about to happen that will reveal God’s majesty : His power. His love. His genius. His grace. His righteousness.

Jesus had declared previously that this hour had come.

John 12:23-24

And Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

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/He is referring to His impending death on the cross, and the glories to follow.\

And notice here, as in our passage today, it is the Son of Man who is about to be glorified. /This refers to the glorified humanity of Jesus. \

As John declared in the prologue in chapter 1:

John 1:14-18

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. ...18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

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/Jesus explained the Father by showing who the Father is.\ “I and the Father are one”. In other words, He revealed His Father’s glory. He explained the Father many times in His life. But His death and resurrection explained the full measure of the Father’s character: the breadth and length and height and depth.

/So, in John 13:31-32, the glory in view is that of the death and resurrection of Jesus. \

And God the Father is glorified in Jesus’ obedience, sacrifice, death, resurrection, and exultation, every bit as much as Jesus is.

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2. The departure: (verses 33, 36)\

John 13: 33 "Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.'

John 13:36 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later."

Earlier in the chapter, John told His readers where Jesus was going.

John 13:3-4

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.

/Very simply, Jesus is going back to His Father.\

Jesus makes two points to his disciples in verses 33 and 36.

/First, He tells them that where He is going, they cannot come.\

/He is going to the cross. They cannot die on the cross with Him.\ Only the Lamb of God can take away the sin of the world.

/He is going to be buried in the tomb. \It's His burial and no one else's.

/He is going to be resurrected from the dead.\ He is the first, the firstfruits of what is to come.

/He is going to ascend to the Father in heaven.\

/And He will be seated at the right hand of the Father, a seat no one else can occupy.\

On the other hand...

/The second point He makes is that “you will follow Me later”. \ Not now. The road I am about to travel on, I must trod alone.

But later on, you will follow Me. He speaks directly to Peter.

/Peter won't follow Jesus now in His suffering and death.\ But later on, after Jesus sat down at the right hand of the Father and sent the Holy Spirit to indwell the hearts of believers,

/Later on, Peter would have the strength to proclaim Jesus and suffer to His sake, to the point of being crucified Himself (according to tradition anyway).\

Such that the Resurrected Jesus could say to him by the Sea of Tiberius,

John 21:18-19

18 "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." 19 Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me!"

/Later on, Peter did follow Jesus. All the way to heaven.\

John 14:1-3

"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

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3. The love: (verses 34-35)\

John 13: 34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

/If you really want the gospel to spread.....love one another as Christ has loved us.\

It's a new kind of love. /The love that Christ has for us far outstrips the love that was commanded in the Law.\

Mark 12:28-31

28 One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" 29 Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; 30 AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' 31 "The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

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/The kind of love that Jesus commands us to have was not revealed until Christ sacrificed Himself for us, the innocent for the condemned. \

The law could bring us to the point of loving with all of OUR heart, and with all of OUR soul, and with all of OUR mind, and strength.

/But this new love comes not from our mind, our strength, but from Christ's. \

/The law said to love our neighbor as OURSELVES.\ It was limited to the kind of love we had for ourselves.

/This new commandant tells us to love one another as Christ loved us. \

John 15:12-13

12 "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.

13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

/Now it's going to be HIS love. HIS joy (John 5:11). HIS peace (John 14:27).\

The chapter ends with a sobering fact.

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4. The denial: (verses 37-38) \

John 13:37 Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right 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, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times.

Peter said he would lay down his life for Jesus. But he can't. He won't.

/The good shepherd lays down His life for His sheep – not the other way around.
\(John 10:11)

Peter meant it at the time. /But in the decisive moment, he failed.\ The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak.

Matt 26:69-75

69 Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean." 70 But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." 71 When he had gone out to the gateway, another servant-girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth."

72 And again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." 73 A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Surely you too are one of them; for even the way you talk gives you away." 74 Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know the man!" And immediately a rooster crowed. 75 And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, "Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

/Good intentions voiced in a tranquil setting can dissipate quickly in the moment of danger.\ Or as the great boxer Mike Tyson said once, "Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth". <picture> So don't judge Peter too harshly.

/After all, Paul taught us that nothing good dwells in our flesh either. \

Rom 7:19

For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.

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We are every one of us wretched without the power of God. But thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

/Apart from Him, we can do nothing. Through Him, we can do all things. \