

A NEW COMMAND

John 13:18-38
Key Verse: 13:34,35

#37

Jesus and his disciples are eating the Passover together for the last time. They are in the Upper Room. Jesus, knowing that the time had come for his arrest and crucifixion, and knowing that he had come from God and was going to God, wrapped a towel around his waist as a slave would do and washed his disciple's feet. He did this with two problems on his mind and in his heart. One was the lack of love among his disciples; the other was the problem of Judas Iscariot, the betrayer. Peter's deep rooted pride and his human love for Jesus was exposed. He needed to receive Jesus' grace. Jesus taught him this when he washed his feet. He told the disciples that as he, their Lord and teacher, had washed their feet, so they must wash one another's feet. The disciples had been washed clean by receiving Jesus' word, but they still needed periodic foot washing, for they were still living in the world. And they needed to wash one another's feet.

HE WHO SHARES MY BREAD (18-30)

Jesus was not talking about all the disciples when he said, "You are clean." He had chosen them, but one was a betrayer. One had not accepted Jesus' words and had not accepted Jesus' love. Jesus had to deal with this problem before he could finish his teaching and before the act of betrayal was executed. He began by quoting Psalm 41:9, "*even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.*" These words were spoken not only to move Judas to repent, but also to plant faith in the disciples' hearts, hearts which would be broken by the betrayal.

Jesus predicted the betrayal and again reminded the disciples and Judas of the life and death seriousness of the mission to which he had called them. He had chosen them to send them into the world with the life-giving gospel. Whoever accepts them, accepts him. Whoever accepts Jesus accepts God who sent him. The converse is equally true. Whoever rejects the person Jesus sends rejects Jesus. And whoever rejects Jesus rejects God, the giver and source of life. To reject God is to go to hell. Jesus told them about the betrayal so that they might know that "I am He." Jesus' disciples must believe that Jesus is Jehovah God, the Lord, the Christ. "These are written so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you might have life in his name." (20:31)

Jesus was deeply troubled to speak of betrayal. But he said in anyway. He had to prepare the disciples for this potentially faith-destroying event. He said it plainly, "I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me."

The disciples had no idea who he was talking about, and Judas himself did not even blink an eye. They stared at each other, at a loss to understand. Judas must have been deeply loved and completely trusted by his fellow disciples. Trust and love go together. Love is broken when trust is broken. Finally, Peter quietly asked John, "Ask him who he is talking about." Jesus still did not expose the betrayer—except to the betrayer himself. Jesus said the betrayer is one to whom I give this bread. They were eating the Last Supper. The bread represented Jesus' body. He broke the bread saying, "This is my body." He gave this bread dipped in wine(?) to each of them. So they did not recognize the betrayer. Judas took the bread, but he did not accept Jesus' love. It was the same as in Chapter 6. Jesus fed the 5000 bread, but when he sought to give them spiritual bread, himself, they refused and left. At that time, Jesus knew that Judas would betray him. (6:64, 70) Judas did not accept him as the Holy One of God. He did not accept spiritual bread. He did not accept Jesus' word in his heart, so he accepted the devil's prompting. When he took the bread from Jesus, Satan entered into him. He took the bread and went out and darkness night descended on his soul .

JESUS' COMMAND (31-35)

After Judas left Jesus told his disciples three things. First he told them that the time had come for him to be glorified. God was glorified by his obedience to death on the cross, for God's redemptive plan was accomplished. Satan was defeated. The way was open for sinful mankind to come back to the Creator God. So, Jesus was leaving this world. He was leaving his disciples. In some ways he felt like a father leaving his helpless little children. He said, "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and, as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going you cannot come."

Second, he told them how they must live after his departure. He gave them a command. He called it a new command: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." This doesn't seem to be a new command. He told them from the beginning (1Jn 3:11) But the thing that is new is that he taught them how to love one another. He said, "As I have loved you..." Jesus set the standard and gave the example for unselfish love. Jesus' love is giving love, not getting love. Jesus' love is faithful; he loved to the end. Jesus' love is patient. He patiently waited on Simon to grow into Peter. Jesus' love believed and hoped. He could entrust the evangelization of the world to these doubtful and weak disciples. Jesus washed his disciples' feet and told them to wash each other's feet. Jesus was a good shepherd and he told them to feed his sheep and be shepherds of God's flock. Jesus laid down his life for his sheep and he told them to lay down their lives for each other.

Third, Jesus predicted Peter's denial. Peter refused to accept Jesus' words. He was confident that he could follow Jesus to the end. But Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew himself. He loved Peter and accepted him as he was. So Peter could be himself

and Peter could grow. And when Peter failed, he could cry and come back, knowing that Jesus would welcome him. Jesus last words to him were just like his first words: "Follow me."