

## **Traits of a True Believer, Part 1**

Scripture: John 13:31–38

Code: 43-70

You can open your Bible to John 13. We have come to a very unique section in all of the New Testament. The gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John – give us a history of the life of our Lord, from His birth, to His ascension and coronation in heaven. They tell the story. Most of the texts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are narrative texts. Along the way, of course, some sermons that He preached.

But when we come to John 13 through 17, we come to a text that is unique because that entire sweeping section of John's gospel all takes place on one night. One night. It is Thursday night of Passion Week. It is the night in which our Lord met with His disciples and celebrated the Passover, and then He transformed it into the Lord's Supper. It is the night in which Judas betrayed Him and which He went to the garden and prayed and was arrested and put through some mock trials. It is the night before He is crucified.

The uniqueness of this section, John 13 through 17, is that it gives His legacy to His own. Not only to His true disciples, the true believers who surrounded Him that evening in the upper room, but to all who would come after them. All of us, all believers of all time. We know that because everything He promised to them in chapters 13 through 16, He then prays for in chapter 17, but extends the prayer to all who will ever believe.

So, whatever He gave to them that evening, He gave to us, and to all believers before us, and after us. It is the legacy of Jesus. It is His final will and testament to His own. And it's all activated by the exodus of Judas. You remember, let's pick it up in verse 27. After the Lord had identified Judas as the betrayer, Satan entered into him. Satan entered into Judas because it was now time to activate the betrayal which would bring about the crucifixion at exactly the moment on the Passover when the Passover lambs were being slaughtered. And it was then that our Lord, the true Passover would give his life.

Satan then entered into Judas. Therefore, verse 27, "Jesus said to him, 'What you do, do quickly.'" And He dispatched the betrayer, who had already set up the betrayal and negotiated for the price of 30 pieces of silver. All He was looking for was a time and a place away from the crowds to pick Jesus out so that the authorities could arrest Him. He had to go and do the final act of the betrayal, and that is actually bring the forces that wanted Jesus arrested to the place where He was.

When our Lord says, "What you do, do quickly," He sets in motion all of the events that led to His crucifixion the next day.

Verse 30 says that after Judas had received the morsel – that is, that little piece of bread that He dipped in the sop, as it was called – he went out immediately and it was night. Once Judas was gone, only the true disciples were left. And it is then in verse 31 that our Lord begins His words to His own, exclusively to His own.

And I want to read verses 31 to 38 because that's what we're going to begin to look at. Here's the first instruction – Judas having been dismissed to His own. “And as I said, it is to them and to all who come after them and believe. Therefore when he had gone out,” that is Judas, “Jesus said, ‘Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately. 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.” A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.’ 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.’ Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You.’ 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.’”

There are many popular, familiar symbols that Christians like to use to display their loyalty to Christ. From the ubiquitous and very popular cross, which is part of Christian jewelry. It has been for centuries – to the more modern t-shirts which can be emblazoned with all kinds of affirmations of our Christian faith and declarations concerning Christ. All the way to those familiar and ubiquitous bumper stickers. And we all understand that those are fine, that that's okay to give an open and bold testimony of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Christian logos can be attached to many, many kinds of objects to identify our faith, and can be actually helpful in drawing us, perhaps, into giving a Christian testimony. But at the same time, we understand that every car with a bumper sticker is not necessarily occupied by Christians. We understand that every neck wearing a cross is not necessarily a redeemed neck. We get that. And we also understand that there are a lot of folks who can wear t-shirts that say a lot of things, but may not be the truest and purest representation of what the people wearing them really are.

We understand that you've got to go below the surface of any of those kinds of things, though they're fine, if you want to know whether someone is genuinely a Christian, a true believer. Then you've got to go to the inside and you've got to start talking about something other than external, material symbols.

What marks a true believer is something that happens in the heart, because a true believer has been born again, regenerated, transformed, gone through a complete metamorphosis. And if we ask the question: what marks that transformation? Then we're getting to the reality of who is a true believer. We are known by our character, by our affection, by the things that are important to us, precious to us. In a word, we are known by what we love. In fact, perhaps the simplest explanation of a Christian comes in the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5. But the fruit of the Spirit, that is, the evidence of the Spirit's presence, which is the evidence of transformation and regeneration and conversion, the fruit of the Spirit is love. And out of that flows joy, love, joy of the rest. All the fruit of the Spirit that we're all familiar with. Love, joy, peace, gentleness, long suffering, patient self-control. Those are all attitudes, dominating attitudes that flow out of love.

But what we're to be known for particularly as we look at this text and these words of our Lord, is our love. It is our love that drives all those other things. Jesus had commanded Judas to get out and activate the betrayal. And he did. Hypocrite went out to the night of sin, suicide, and hell; and Jesus is left to address the true disciples. And the first thing He does is have a conversation with them, an interaction with them that hits at the reality of their salvation. This is His farewell.

But to those who are genuinely His, He makes personal, private, promises to all of them that night, and all of us who have come after them. Promises for all that we could ever need, all that we could ever desire. He literally draws down all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, as Paul calls them in Ephesians 1, and dispenses them to His own.

Now, all of this flows out of a statement in chapter 13 verse 1, which is where we began this, where it says at the end of verse 1 that He loved His own who were in the world, and He loved them *eis telos*, to the limit, to the fullness of divine capacity. Both in terms of the quality of His love, and the endlessness of His love, He loved them to the end of the ends, to eternity. So it is a love that knows no qualitative limit and it knows no quantitative limit. He loved His own who were in the world as much as it was possible for the eternal God to love. And to the degree that He is eternal, and we are eternal, His love is eternal. It is the most magnanimous, limitless statement about His love in Scripture.

Now, all of the promises and pledges that our Lord dispenses here to us are essentially the glories that flow from heaven to us out of His love. What characterizes our Lord with His disciples on that final night is His love.

We all know from experience and from what we've read that the last words of dying people are usually a pretty good indication of what's in their hearts. Final philosophies, final expressions of affection, final requests, final warnings, et cetera, et cetera. There are no words that can come even close to the promises that our Lord gives. The purest mind, the purest heart, the grandest capacity to love, divine love pours out its affections in a series of promises to every believer. There are no words that could match these. They are at once sweet and powerful. They are calm and yet urgent. They are supercharged with divine passion and yet tender with concern, and everything is bathed in this massive expression of divine love.

Everything that He promises flows from love. And, He expects in return, love back. John summed it up in his epistle. We love Him because He first loved us. Or, you can reverse it. He first loved us so we love Him.

Now, we all know **verse 36**. By this, by our love, all men will know that you are My disciples if you have love for one another. We are to be known by our love. We are to be marked by our love. And I think that's true of genuine Christians. Throughout history, there have been some people who profess to be Christians, some religious institutions and organizations who profess to be Christians who are loveless and in some cases even brutal. But true believers are to be known by their love. We can be known for our doctrine. We can be known for our theology. That is what we believe. But what we believe is supposed to transform our lives so that the final test is who we are, how we live.

The world is not so much convinced of our religion, of our faith, of our gospel by its content, as they are by its power. I even think true Christians do manifest this love. I was doing an interview this week, and made the point – they asked the question about: why are Christians being treated the way they are around the world? Why are Christians constantly persecuted? Why is Christianity constantly despised, demeaned, depreciated? Why is there such an all-out assault on Christianity? And I said, well, you can make a simple comparison. People don't want to say anything against Islam because they're afraid. People will say anything against Christianity because they're not

afraid. What they get back from us is love. What they get back from us is forgiveness. We love because we were first loved. What marks Christianity is our love, and that makes us vulnerable to all the animosity and the hate because there's no fear of retaliation. It's a good thing, in a sense, when the world doesn't fear reprisals from Christians. But when we love, not only one another, but even our enemies, as Matthew 5 lays out.

So we all understand: we are to be known by our love. This is the manifest evidence of a transformed life. Now, I get it. Non-believing people have certain levels of affection in marriage and in families, and certain levels of romantic love, and filial love, and all of those kinds of things. But there is a kind of love that belongs only to those with transformed lives. The Bible even uses a unique word for that, *agap*, or *agapa* in the verb form. It is a transcendent love of the will that is affected in a soul by the power of God. And apart from the power of God, it doesn't exist. We are to be known by that love as a transforming evidence of what the Lord has done in our hearts.

But I want you to look in the passage I read, verses 31 to 38, this morning, and also next Sunday morning. At the directions this love takes, it really takes three directions that are sort of laid out here explicitly or implicitly. First of all, we who have been so loved, so eternally loved to the max, to the end, limitlessly, as 13:1 says – we who are the objects of that love are therefore marked by love, and that love goes in three directions.

First of all, we are marked by love for our Lord's glory. Love for our Lord that seeks His glory. Secondly, we are marked by love for our brothers' wellbeing. We are marked by love for one another. And thirdly, we are marked by loving loyalty, personal loyalty. So that the genuine disciple, the true believer, has a consuming desire to demonstrate his love toward his Lord, his love toward his brother, and to prove his love personally by being loyal and faithful. This is developed in these few verses.

And I think this is foundational for us. I know these are things that you know, but how often do these things in Scripture? Through the years, we have continually confronted the reality that you need to know that you're a true disciple. You need to know that you're a true believer. It is all over the New Testament. We don't turn very many pages until we're back at this point again. Examining ourselves: how do I know I'm a genuine believer? How do I know I'm really converted. And again, you've got to get past the externals, it's not about activities that you might do. It's about love and where your love goes, where your love is directed, where your love is focused, and how consistent and faithful your love is.

So there are three marks of this love, or three directions this love takes. Let's look at the first one. Number one, we're going to find out right away from our Lord that a true disciple has love in the direction of his Lord's glory. In other words, he loves the Lord. That's the most foundational, basic reality of what it means to be a Christian. You love because He first loved you. You love back. If any man loved not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be damned, Paul said. So, if you're saved, you love the Lord. The first commitment, then, of a Christian is to be consumed with the Lord's glory. That's what love pursues. That's what love desires. That's what love wants. This is what it's all about. This, of course, is the foundational reality of all realities. Whatever you do, 1 Corinthians 10:31, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God. All the way through Scripture, we are told to glorify God. That is a major theme. Our Lord is even called the Lord of Glory because glory is so consistent with who He is. You can't speak of glory without speaking of Him; you can't speak of Him without referring to His glory. He is the Lord of Glory.

Now, the New Testament lays this out for us in so many places. Let me just make a few suggestions because it's important to have this in your mind. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians 1:11. This is his prayer for them. "To this end also we pray for you, always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you."

What is the believer's primary preoccupation? That the Lord be exalted. Lift it up. Glorified, honored, worshiped. This is why we were saved. This is what the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ determined to produce.

In 1 Peter chapter 4 and verse 11, Peter writes, "Whoever speaks in terms of ministry is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God. Whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies so that in all things, God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Peter isn't done with his epistle, but he just waxes eloquent into a doxology when he thinks about glorifying His Lord. In Ephesians chapter 3, and I know you're familiar with this, the chapter closes: "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all we can ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus, to all generations forever and ever. Amen." And Jude shuts down his little epistle with these words: "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ, our Lord be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time. And now, and forever. Amen."

These doxologies, these outbursts from the writers of the new testament are demonstrating what is in their heart. It is about the glory of the Lord. They are consumed with the Lord's glory. This is the driving affection of their transformed hearts. Paul says in 1 Timothy 1, "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

As they're writing their epistles and thinking about their salvation at what appears to be just kind of random points, they burst into these doxologies. It's a kind of doxological lifestyle. But it also is more than just lip service. It's more than the praise of their lips or the praise of their pen. It is how their heart cries that their Lord be glorified.

It's simple enough. If you ask the question: how can you tell when someone's a believer? And the first answer is, "Because that believer is consumed with loving the glory of his Lord. His love is all in the direction of the redeemer, the Savior, the Lord, and whatever will bring Him glory." Well, this is new to the disciples, I have to confess. Yes, they had all affirmed: You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Yes, You are the Righteous One, and the Holy One, and we believe, John chapter 6, they had affirmed that.

But in all honesty, their lives were not focused directly on the glory of their Lord. Three of them had been to the Mount of Transfiguration and seen His glory, literally coming through His human flesh. But still, they were preoccupied with themselves. They were having that long argument, still, about which of them would be the greatest in the kingdom. Who sits on the right? Who sits on the left? And that argument had gone on for months, if not years, and it was still going on even at this very

time during passion week as the Lord stood in the shadow of His own cross.

So Christ opens this discussion now that Judas is gone by essentially focusing on His own glory, His own glory. As if to call them away from preoccupation with themselves. So verse 31: "Therefore when he had gone out," Judas, "Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. Since God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately.'" Magnificent language, incredible language. It comes out of the Lord like some kind of cry of relief that escapes His heart now that Judas is gone. Now that Judas is gone, everything is in motion, the betrayal will be consummated, the arrest will occur, and the execution the next day.

And then He can turn to the eleven and pour out His heart to the true believers. And the first thing He wants them to know is that this is all about His glory. Why is that so important? Because they are consumed with their own. They were having such a hard time dealing with this. Every time our Lord said, "I'm going to die. I'm going to die. I'm going away." They would say, "No, no Lord. It can't be." In fact, you'll remember that Jesus once said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan. You're after the things of Satan, not God." And the disciples did not want our Lord to go. In fact, later, down at the end of the passage, Peter says, "Lord, well, why can't I follow You right now? I'll lay down my life for You." I don't want to be without You. I don't want You to go.

And later in chapter 14, Thomas says, "Where are you going? Where are you going? We don't know where you're going. How are we going to get there?" The whole notion of Jesus being gone was more than they could stand. And even after the cross and after the resurrection, they were still stunned by this so that, in Acts chapter 1, two angels appear, and Jesus starts to ascend, and the angel said: "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky?" Literally, the verb there is gazing intently with a fixed view of Jesus leaving. Why are you doing that? The same Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will come in just the same way as you've watched Him go into heaven. You can't hold onto Him. They had just said, "Will you bring the kingdom now? Will you bring the kingdom now?" And instead, He leaves. They were having a very difficult time with this. To put it mildly, they had all their spiritual eggs in that one basket: the presence of Christ. Later on in this section, He will say to them: look, it's better for you if I go away. It's better if I go away because I'll send the Holy Spirit who will be with you inside of you at all times. That's better.

For a brief 33 years, He had humiliated Himself, condescended to become incarnate in human flesh, lived as an infant, as a child, as a young boy, as a man. He had humbled Himself, restricted the full manifestation of His glory, and He had taken a terrible amount of abuse. That brief blink of time in the midst of eternity is now over and He knows it. And so, He says now, now finally, I'm here. Finally, I'm here. He affirms that same statement in His prayer in chapter 17 verse 4. "I glorified You on earth," He says to the Father, "having accomplished the work which You've given Me to do. Now Father glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with you before the world was." He knows on this last night, He is on the brink of glory. He is on the brink of being glorified.

There are three distinct statements pertaining to His glory in the first couple of verses, 31 and 32. I want you to see them. Number one: "Now is the Son of Man glorified." What's He talking about? What do you mean now? Now it has arrived. After 33 years of waiting, it is finally here. This statement has to do with, listen, the cross. It has to do with His death. His death. And all those subsequent events, like His resurrection, ascension, exaltation, coronation. But it's all triggered by His death, and the action of Judas, the traitor, being sent out to pull the trigger, as it were, on all the subsequent events, sets this in His mind. The decisive act is done. Judas left redemptive work at

the cross, has been ushered in. The die is cast. No turning back, and our Lord is referring to His death, the death by which He would be glorified.

When Peter was preaching in Acts chapter 3, listen to what he said. Acts chapter 3 verse 13. "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers has glorified His servant, Jesus. The one whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate when he had decided to release Him. But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and put to death the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead." Now listen to that. God has glorified His Son, His servant, Jesus, through His death.

It would've been wonderful, honestly, to think back and have Jesus stand on the banks of the Jordan River when He was baptized by John the Baptist, and the dove descended on Him, symbolic of the Holy Spirit, and words of the Father come out of heaven. This is My beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased. It would have been wonderful if at that moment, there at the Jordan, Jesus had said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified." But He didn't. He didn't. It would've been wonderful on the Mount of Transfiguration if when Moses and Elijah showed up and the Lord was transfigured before them, and His supernatural nature was manifest in light, it would've been wonderful then when the Father also spoke out of glory. This is My beloved Son; listen to Him. If Jesus had said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified."

But no. Neither of those incidents did He say this. But it is here, before the deepest shame, the bottom, the pit of His humiliation, as He stands on the brink of false accusations, lying witnesses, relentless insults, infamy, mockery, shame, nakedness, surrounded by wretched evil men, in the midst of an agonizing death, now is the Son of Man glorified. His glory came in His death. He knew that.

And He is, in a sense, saying to the disciples: this is for My glory. This is for My glory. How can the death of Christ on the cross glorify Christ? He is glorified for a number of reasons on the cross. He is glorified because God has chosen Him to be the sacrificial lamb who takes away the sins of the world. He is God's chosen one. He is the perfect one, the only one God could ever ask to do that work. He is most righteous, most holy, most blameless, most spotless, most pure, and that's to His glory.

He will provide on the cross salvation for all who have ever believed through all of human history. He will basically vindicate all of the promises of God, validate the covenant of God, and He will provide salvation for otherwise damned sinners. And that deserves glory. He will destroy the power of sin. He will destroy the power of death, and that deserves glory. He will destroy him who had the power of death, the devil, and He will ultimately consign him to a lake of fire forever and ever, and that deserves glory. He will satisfy God, propitiating God by paying the price that God has deemed necessary. He will bear in His body all the sins of all the elect of God through all of human history, and He will offer Himself as a sweet smelling savor to God, fairer than any sacrifice ever offered. He will satisfy offended divine justice and the broken law of God. He will fully satisfy what God requires. He will say, "It is finished," and that deserves glory.

So there is, in all heaven and earth, no act so worthy of praise and honor and full glory as this act of Jesus Christ. Indeed, now is the Son of Man glorified.

And there's a second aspect in verse 31. "And God is glorified in Him." At the same time that the cross glorifies Christ, it glorifies the Father. It glorifies the Father. God is glorified when His attributes are on display. Go back to Exodus 33 and 34. Moses says, "Show me Your glory." God says, "I'll let My mercy, compassion, loving-kindness, truth, righteousness pass before you." God's glory is simply the consummate realities of His nature. God has intrinsic glory. It is His attributes that are His glory, and it is appropriate for us to give Him honor and praise and worship for all of His attributes, of love, and grace, and mercy, and kindness, and patience, and omniscience, and omnipotence, immutability, and eternity, and aseity, and all of the attributes of God for which we give Him glory.

But, there is nowhere in all of history where the glories of God, the attributes of God come together in more clear, bold relief than at the cross. Just samples. At the cross, you see the power of God displayed. And we've just recited some of the realities of it. It was there at the cross, wasn't it – Isaiah 53 – that the kings of the earth and the rulers took council together against God and against His anointed? And it was there that God shattered them and defeated them? It was there that all of the terrible hatred, enmity, depravity of wretched human hearts did the worst that the human heart is capable of, and God overruled the worst that they could do and accomplish the best that could ever be done out of it. It was there that Satan and the forces of hell came and unyieldingly unleashed the darkness against Him in a fiendish hatred outburst, and Jesus handled it all. He overpowered the powers that be. He overpowered the evil of men's hearts. He overpowered Satan. He overpowered demons. He overpowered the strength of sin. Jesus was able to survive it all, come out the other side triumphant. He broke every shackle, every power, shattered it to bits.

The power of God is on display at the cross. Man loses, nations lose, demons lose, Satan loses, Christ wins. Triumphant, and that gives God glory. God triumphs at the cross in an unleashing of His power.

Secondly, His justice is demonstrated at the cross. It is God who said the soul that sends it must die. It is God who says the wages of sin is death, and death there will be. Death there must be. And justice prevails at the cross. God is so just, so just, that He will even take the life of His own beloved Son. If the sins of the world are to be laid on His Son, then His Son must take the death that they deserve. You will never see a greater illustration of the justice of God. You can look in the past. You can look in the Old Testament. You can see most of the miracles in the Old Testament killed people. If you're looking for miracles in the Old Testament, most of the miraculous events in the Old Testament killed people, drowned entire armies, drowned the entire world, burned up people, holes opened in the ground and swallowed them up. People were literally killed by angelic beings. Most of the Old Testament miracles were miracles of divine judgment.

They were just. God is just. God looked in Genesis and saw that there was only evil continually, that that was all there was in the world. And as a just God, He determined to drown the entire human race with the exception of eight people who had been established as true believers in Him, and therefore to whom who had been imputed righteousness. Justice was on display. But the strength of God's justice, and the necessity of God's justice takes on another dimension at the cross because God is not dumping the just punishment on a deserving sinner. His justice goes so far that if need be, He will crush the life out of a sinless one to do justice.

Isaiah says, "God laid on Him the iniquity of us all." The penalty of the law had to be enforced. The sentence of the law had to be executed, even though it meant slaying His own beloved Son, God

could not desist from His justice. So the Justice of God is more illustriously glorified by the death of Christ than if every member of the human race were to suffer in hell forever, never satisfying justice. Justice can't be satisfied in hell. It can only be satiated.

But it was satisfied in the sacrifice of Christ. God is just. That kind of justice gives God glory. You also can see His holiness. At the cross, God is of purer eyes than to behold evil. Can't look on iniquity, says Habakkuk, the prophet. And when Christ was made a curse, God turns His back. We hear Jesus say, "My God, My God, where are You? Why have You forsaken Me?" Never did God so manifest His hatred for sin – never – as when He caused His Son to suffer. And all the honor due to the holiness of God by all the heavenly angels, holy angels, and all the cheerful obedience of all the holy men of the ages, are nothing in comparison with the offering of Christ Himself as a necessary requirement of God's holiness. How holy is God? So holy that He would pour out fury on His own Son if sin was imputed to Him. That kind of holiness manifests God's glory. At the cross, for example, we see God's faithfulness. His faithfulness. He promised a Savior. He promised a seed to the woman who had bruised the serpent's head, crushed his head. He promised a substitute who would take the place of a sacrifice, a ram caught in the thicket of Genesis 22. He promised in Isaiah 53 in detail, a sacrifice. Every animal sacrifice in the whole Old Testament economy pointed toward one final lamb who would take away sin. And when Christ the sinless one came, He offered His life in the full final sacrifice for sin. God showed to all heavenly beings, all earthly beings, and all the occupants of hell that He would rather the blood of His Son be spilt than one jot or one tittle of His promise not be fulfilled. He is a faithful God. And seeing His faithfulness is seeing His glory.

But really, we have to add: His love is seen at the cross, isn't it? 'Cause He did all of that for us. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. This is love. Not that we loved God, says John, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the satisfaction for our sins. He loved us. When we were enemies, He loved us. When we hated Him, He loved us.

We could go on. We could say His grace is displayed there, His mercy is displayed there. His compassion is displayed there, His wisdom is displayed there. He is on display. So, Jesus says, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." At the cross, at the cross, Father and Son glorify each other. Paul makes that great declaration in Romans 15:7. "Therefore accept one another just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God." Christ accepted us to the glory of God. Paul, to the Corinthians, 2 Corinthians chapter 4, really a remarkable statement. "It is God who has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." It is God putting Himself on display, Christ putting Himself on display, the Son glorifying the Father by His obedient suffering, the Father glorifying the Son by choosing Him to be the sacrifice, the Father glorifying Himself in the display of all His attributes.

And then there's a third statement. After repeating in verse 32 the first two, since God is glorified in Him, in Christ, God will also glorify Him in Himself. This again, God is glorified, Christ is glorified. Then another statement: and will glorify Him immediately. That adds a dimension that we haven't seen. God will glorify Him immediately. Well, what does that mean? Something in the future, something past what is initially going to glorify Him. He's going to be glorified in the cross.

So what's coming after the cross? What's coming immediately? Well, you know. Resurrection, ascension, exaltation, coronation. You know that. God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow. Philippians 2. Ephesians chapter 1 concludes with that magnificent statement that Christ was raised from the dead

and seated at the right hand in heavenly places far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named not only in this age but in the one to come. The exaltation, the coronation of Christ. It is a theme of the writer of the Book of Hebrews, and He is, chapter 1 verse 3, “the radiance of His glory, the exact representation of God’s nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.”

Our Lord knew. Judas is gone. The events are in place. By tomorrow, I will be glorified on the cross. By Sunday, I will be out of the grave. 40 days later, I will ascend into heaven. And that’s the immediately that brings His glory to its culmination.

Now, why all of this? Well, verse 33, “Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews,” back in chapter 7 and 8, He said this: “You’ll never come where I am.” As I said to the Jews, “Now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’” You cannot come.

A little later, down in verse 36, He says: you will follow after. But for now, you cannot come. There’s so much affection in this. Little children. Rare for Jesus to use that phrase talking to His disciples. There’s so much pathos in this. They don’t want Him to go. They’re trying to stand in the way. They’re trying to bar the events that He keeps talking about. They don’t like the idea. They don’t mind the fact that He said to the Jews in chapter 7:34 and 8:21 and 24, “You’re not going to be able to come where I go.” When they hear this for themselves, this pushes them over the edge.

By His death, He will leave. His time with them is over. They can’t stand that thought. They’ve got all their hope in Him, all their trust in Him. Everything is tied up with Him. They are sad. They are lonely. They are troubled. Peter even asks in verse 37, “Lord, why can’t I follow You right now?” Right now. If I have to, I’ll die.

The thought that He would leave them? Too much for them to bear. Over in chapter 16 verse 2, He says, “You too have grief now, but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice and no one will take your joy from you.”

What does He want them to know? You’ve got to be committed to My glory, no matter how it affects you. You’ve got to be committed to My glory. I’ve been telling you I have to go. It is My time to be glorified. Glorified at the cross, glorified through the open tomb, glorified by ascending into heaven, glorified by Him being seated at the right hand of the Father. It’s time for My glory. Time for My glory.

This was so hard for them, ‘cause they were all caught up in this kingdom concept that this was all leading to their glory, their elevation, their fulfillment of ambition. A true disciple, a true believer is completely consumed with the Lord’s glory, the Lord’s glory. Whatever happens to me, whether I live or whether I die, whatever happens to me, may Christ be glorified. The passionate, consuming love for His glory – just wasn’t in their thinking. Do they love Him? Sure. Did they believe in Him? Of course. But they were not consumed with His glory.

Henry Martin sailed for India to be a missionary back in 1805. And he said, wrote in his diary: “Let me burn out for God.” He found his way to a Hindu temple. And as he watched people prostrating

themselves before the Hindu gods, he wrote in his journal, "This excited more horror in me than I can express." He then wrote, "I cannot endure existence if Jesus is not glorified. It is hell to me." Wow. And somebody said, "Why do you feel that way?" And he said this: "If anyone plucks out your eyes, there's no asking why you feel pain? And it is because I am one with Christ that I am so deeply wounded." The motive for everything.

You know, it would be nice to have the Lord with us all the time, wouldn't it? But I don't – I wouldn't want Him in this world. The ancient world was bad enough. Can you imagine Christ in this world? With the degree and level of corruption that exists? The heart of those disciples should've been, Lord, You go. You be glorified. You be honored. That's the first and driving affection of any true disciple.

So grieved when He is not glorified that we are happy He is glorified. Let Him be there. And when He does come back, He'll come back in full glory. This is how you know a true believer. Their love is for the glory of the Lord.

There's a second, and I'm just going to introduce this – they are marked not only by love for the glory of the Lord, but love for others. Verse 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. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

This is really critical. Now, notice this new commandment. That's how it starts. A new commandment. You say, wait a minute. New? To love people? That's not new. Isn't that in the Old Testament? Yeah, Leviticus, the law of Moses. Leviticus 19:18. Love your neighbor as yourself. And lots of things about love in the Old Testament. God's love, love for people, love for strangers, love for family. Yeah, this isn't new. Deuteronomy 6. Love the Lord with your heart and your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And then, love your neighbor as yourself. That's the law and the prophet's first and second great commandment.

So why is it new? Well, let me tell you why it's new. It's new, first of all, because they haven't figured it out yet. It's got to be new to them because all they're doing is arguing with each other about who's going to sit in the primary place in the kingdom. So, I've got to teach you something new, something that as of now, you don't demonstrate that you know. It was new to them. They were always quibbling about their positions and prominence. That is exactly why none of them would wash the feet of the rest in the earlier passage.

Secondly, to the Jews, it was new, 'cause Judaism was filled with animosity, bitterness, strife, conflict, separations. There were all kinds of factions within factions. The Pharisees, who set the course for the dominant religion looked down on anybody who wasn't a Pharisee, wouldn't interact with anybody who wasn't a Pharisee, had nothing but scorn for anybody who was an outsider or an outcast or a sinner. But for the Jews, this is new. If you're Jewish, this is new. And even if you're a disciple, this is new.

Judaism was loveless. They loved only those that they chose to love because they saw them as equals. It was new also because they had seen an example of it that was new. Love had come to another level with Jesus. It was new because rabbis didn't wash feet. And the Son of God washing feet took love to another level. And now, He's on the brink of offering His life as sacrifice for sin, and

that's love at the pinnacle. Greater love has no one than this, than a man lay down His life for His friend. So it was new to them in their argumentative attitudes, self-promoting desires, it was new to the Jewish culture because they had no place for love, and it was new in the level that had been set and would be set by Christ. And it was also new because now, for the first time, they had a new capacity to love. Because the love of God is shed abroad in your hearts, Romans 5:5, right? Now you have a new capacity to love. Now you can love in a way that only you can love, and only believers can love. Walk in love, Ephesians 5:2. Be imitators of God, His beloved children. Walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, a sacrificial, selfless, self-giving love. That's how you love. That's how you walk in love.

First John 3:11. This is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. That's what marks us. And by this love, all men will know that you are My disciples. And I say it again: we're known by our love. The extent of this love, how far does it go? Love one another. The example of this love? Christ, as I have loved you, sacrificially, humbly. The effect of this love? All men will know that you're My disciples if you have love for one another. And in order to love, you have to humble yourself. Only humble people love. Only humble people love. The disciples weren't humble. This was all new to them.

But now, in Christ, there is a completely new capacity to love like this. In 1 Thessalonians 3, "Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you, and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another and for all people, just as we also do for you." Paul's prayer is that your love would increase, your love would abound. Next chapter, chapter 4, verse 9. As to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to right you. You yourselves are taught by God to love one another. You're taught by God to love one another. You're practicing it, but we urge you, brethren, to excel still more. Second Thessalonians 1:3. We ought always to give thanks to God and for you brethren, as is only fitting because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows even greater.

Peter says in 1 Peter 4:8 with an extended love. He uses *ektens*, which means stretching a muscle as far as it'll go. So you need to change your focus. If you're My true disciples, and you are, you need to love Me enough to concern yourselves with My glory above all things. And, you need to love each other. You need to love each other, and that love needs to grow and flourish and increase. There is this love connection for every true believer with Christ, and with every other believer.

Let's pray. We are reminded again of that familiar word from Paul. Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith. And it comes down to who we love. Loving You, Lord, loving You so that we are completely consumed with and committed to Your glory, Your honor, Your majesty, Your will. This is the mark of a true believer. This is a true Christian. And Father, we also know that true believers are marked by an undying, focused, faithful love for each other. May we be known by that love, that love toward You, so that You would be glorified in everything in our lives, and in this world, and in heaven, and forever. And may we be known by the love we have for one another. This is enough to demonstrate who we are. And as we see the evidence of that love in us, we can be assured of our salvation and what a great gift that is. Lord, I pray that You'll work in every life and every heart. Make it our desire that we love even more, excel even more to a greater and greater love for Your glory and for each other. These things we ask in the name of the Savior who loved us and gave Himself for us, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2019 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<https://www.gty.org/about#copyright>).