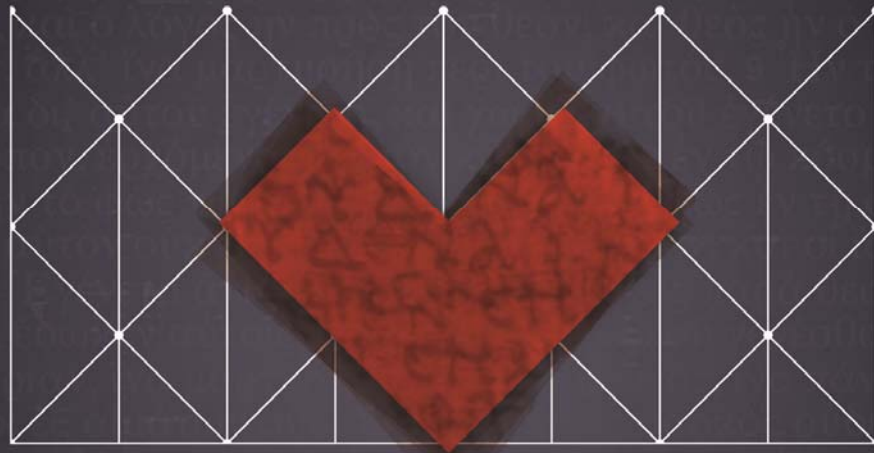


# THE GOSPEL OF JOHN



# BELIEVE

Studies in the book of John  
**PART EIGHT—John 13**  
Group Applications  
Personal Study



**FOUR OAKS CHURCH**

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# John 13:1-11

*See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.*

**1 John 3:1**

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

**1 John 4:7-8**

## The Sacrificial Love of God

When we think of the word 'serve' our minds flip to the image of a waiter attending to a table of guests. Our modern concept of service centers around a mutual exchange. A waiter serves a customer and in return the customer pays the waiter. However, Christ presents us with an alternative vision of service. He came not to be served, but to serve (Matthew 20:28). He did not expect a mutual exchange.

How did Christ serve us? He humbled Himself and became one of us. He not only gave up the high position He had, but He took on Himself the weakness of our humanity. Christ as God enjoyed perfect communion with the Father from eternity past, but when He became man, He left his position of glory to endure a life of suffering and hardship for our sake. Jesus was a man of sorrows, well acquainted with our grief. He endured hunger, pain, fatigue, and a humiliating death on the cross. Why did He endure so much? He loved us without any expectation that we could provide Him anything in return.

As a result, Christ instructs us to serve others as He served—without expectation of payment or reciprocation. Jesus even tells us, "No servant is greater than his master" (John 15:20). We must lower ourselves for others and expect nothing in return

because Christ first loved us. How can you serve others? In what ways can you lower yourself to express the love of Christ to your community? As we treasure what Christ has done for us, we must imitate His servanthood into the world.

[illegible]

## Treasure

1. Read through the passage two or three times.
2. Write down 10 observations about the text. Start by asking who/what/where/when/why/how?

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## Grow

1. In your life, how has God shown you love?

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2. How is the love of God different than the love we tend to give?

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## Go

1. In what ways can we now “wash each other’s feet?”

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2. Knowing that you can only truly serve when you humble yourself, in what ways can you humble yourself this week?

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## Discussion Questions

1. Share about a person/event that demonstrated humble service.

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2. The apostle John states that Jesus “knew” before He served (see verses 1 & 3). What did Jesus know? How do you think Jesus’ knowledge impacted his service?

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3. What was the significance of Jesus washing His disciples’ feet?

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4. Jesus told Peter, “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me . . . but the one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean.” What did Jesus mean by this statement? How might this truth apply to you?

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5. In what ways are you refusing Jesus’ service today? How might you receive more from Jesus today?

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## Additional Reading

From The Depth of Christ's Love: Its Cost by John Piper<sup>1</sup>

As I have pondered the love of Christ for us, and the different ways that the Bible presents it to us, I have seen four ways that the depth of Christ's love is revealed.

First, we know the depth of someone's love for us by what it costs him: if he sacrifices his life for us, it assures us of deeper love than if he only sacrifices a few bruises. So we will see the depth of Christ's love by the greatness of what it cost him.

Second, we know the depth of someone's love for us by how little we deserve it. If we have treated him well all our life, and have done all that he expects of us, then when he loves us, it will not prove as much love as it would if he loved us when we had offended him, and shunned him, and disdained him. The more undeserving we are, the more amazing and deep is his love for us. So we will see the depth of Christ's love in relation to how undeserving are the objects of his love (Romans 5:5-8).

Third, we know the depth of someone's love for us by the greatness of the benefits we receive in being loved. If we are helped to pass an exam, we will feel loved in one way. If we are helped to get a job, we will feel loved another way. If we are helped to escape from an oppressive captivity and given freedom for the rest of our life, we will feel loved another way. And if we are rescued from eternal torment and given a place in the presence of God with fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore, we will know a depth of love that surpasses all others (1 John 3:1-3). So we will see the depth of Christ's love by the greatness of the benefits we receive in being loved by him.

Fourth, we know the depth of someone's love for us by the freedom with which they love us. If a person does good things for us because someone is making him, when he doesn't really want to, then we don't think the love is very deep. Love is deep in proportion to its liberty. So if an insurance company pays you \$40,000 because you lose your spouse, you don't usually marvel at how much this company loves you. There were legal constraints. But if your Sunday School class makes all your meals for a month after your spouse dies, and someone calls you every day, and visits you every

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<sup>1</sup>Piper, John. "The Depth of Christ's Love: Its Cost." Desiring God, 26 Mar. 1995, [www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-depth-of-christs-love-its-cost](http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-depth-of-christs-love-its-cost).



week, then you call it love, because they don't have to do this. It is free and willing. So we will see the depth of Christ's love for us in his freedom: "No one takes my life from me; I lay it down of my own accord" (John 10:18).

That's what I see in the New Testament. There are specific texts that stress each of those four ways of seeing the depth of Christ's love for us.

# John 13:12-20

*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

**Philippians 2:3-8**

## Exemplary Servanthood

It is a rare occurrence when Jesus gives such an explicit explanation for something He has done. Jesus tells us that the foot-washing was done for the purpose of example. Jesus follows His counter-cultural servanthood with instructions to imitate His action (John 13:14-15). The reason why is twofold: humility and obedience (John 13:16-17).

### Humility

Jesus's role as "Teacher and Lord" (John 13:13-14) made His foot-washing both surprising and counter-cultural. As their superior, Jesus had every reason to expect His disciples to wash His feet. In the first century, people walked long miles on dusty roads. As a result, foot-washing was a necessary and common task done either by oneself or a servant. Non-Hebrew slaves were considered the lowest of all servants and were required to perform this routine chore. Jesus took on the role as the lowliest of slaves in complete submission to the Father in order to serve His disciples. He then commands His disciples to do the same because "a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him" (John 13:16).

**Obedience**

Obedience is knowledge which leads to action. We are not called to be knowers of the word but doers. Jesus restates Old Testament obedience blessings found in Deuteronomy, "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them" (John 13:17). Jesus' call for obedience is a call to all believers. We cannot just hear the word of God, but we must also obey from a submissive heart. Jesus Christ demonstrated for us humility and obedience in His crucifixion. He would not only lay down His outer garments to wash our feet, but His own life to forgive our sins!

We live in a different cultural context, but Jesus' example remains relevant. Foot-washing may be specific to the ancient world, but the call to imitate the servanthood of Christ remains timeless. Jesus's death on the cross demonstrates His ultimate act of service in giving Himself for our sake. May we as the church do the same for others.

## Sermon Notes

[illegible]

## Treasure

1. Read through the passage two or three times.
2. Write down 10 observations about the text. Start by asking who/what/where/when/why/how?

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## Grow

1. What does unexpected, counter-cultural servanthood communicate to the unbelievers around us?

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2. After reading verse 20, how could you respond to someone who claimed belief in God, but not Jesus or the Holy Spirit?

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## Go

1. If foot-washing is irrelevant in our modern culture, what is the heart/purpose behind Jesus' instructions to follow His example?

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2. What are some modern day examples equivalent to washing one another's feet that accomplish the purpose of Jesus' instruction and example?

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## Discussion Questions

1. How do you think the world sees Jesus, since He came to serve rather than be served?

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2. Jesus (and His disciples) calls Himself Teacher and Lord. What are the meaning and importance of these titles?

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3. Jesus tells His disciples and us to follow His example. To what extent are you following Jesus' example of service?

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4. Jesus also says that a servant is not greater than his master or a messenger greater than the one who sends him. In what ways might you be making yourself greater than Jesus? How does that impact your ability to serve?

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5. Jesus knows everything that will take place, including the one who would betray him. How hard do you think this was for Jesus to wash Judas' feet? What might we learn from Jesus' example?

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6. Jesus provides us with a high calling to represent him by serving others. How might you grow in fulfilling this calling to serve today? Be specific about who and how you will serve.

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## Additional Reading

From New Morning Mercies by Paul Tripp<sup>1</sup>

Love is more than being nice to people. It's loving God above all else so that you love people as he commands you to.

I am more persuaded every day, as I examine my own relationships and as I observe others in theirs, that relationships are first fixed vertically before they are ever fixed horizontally. Paul captures this dynamic in surprising words in Galatians 5: "For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (v.14). Now, think this through with me. If you had just written, "The entire law of God is summarized by one command," what would you have written next? Well, I would have written, "Love God above all else." That seems right. Is it not the greatest of all of God's commands (Mark 12:28-30)? Is it not the command that must always be first and foremost in our hearts? It seems that good theology would require that this is the "one word" of which Paul is speaking. But that's not what Paul writes. He says the entire law is fulfilled by one word, and then he says, "Love your neighbor as yourself." What? How does that fulfill all that God has called us to as his children?

Paul is on to something very important here. He knows two things. First he knows that only people who love God above all else will ever love their neighbor as themselves. It is only when God is in his rightful place in my heart that you will be in the appropriate place in my life. This is because, if God is not in his rightful place, guess who I insert in that place? The answer is easy: myself. In my marriage, I have had to make this confession—my problem isn't first that I have failed to love Luella in the way that I should. No, my deeper problem is that I have not loved God as I should, and because I haven't, I put myself in his position. I make it all about me and therefore do not love Luella in the way that I should.

Paul knows a second thing: that one of the ways our lack of love for God is revealed is by the lack of active love that exists in our relationships. John says it this way: "If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen" (1 John 4:20). Love

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<sup>1</sup>Tripp, Paul David. "New Morning Mercies: A Daily Gospel Devotional." Wheaton: Crossway, 2014. Devotional from August 9.

for others really begins, continues, and is daily motivated by love for God. When his purposes are more important than your desires, when his glory is more valuable to you than your temporary moments of glory, and when his agenda activates you more than your plan for you, you will be freed from your bondage to self-love and be freed to love others. It really is true. Our relationships need more than horizontal fixing. They need vertical rescue, and for that there is ever-sufficient grace of a willing and patient Savior.

## References

Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2003, p 592-593.

Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament IVb John 11-21 Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2006, p 94-98.



# John 13:21-30

*For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.*      **1 Timothy 6:10**

## The Heart of Judas versus the Heart of Jesus

### Judas Should Unnerve Us

Judas is a warning to us. Sin is a slippery slope and a constant threat to our lives. When we treasure the wrong things, our hearts grow hard to the truth and lead to devastation. Judas lived with Jesus and His disciples for almost three years. During most of Jesus' ministry, Judas had a reputation as a student and friend to Jesus. He was a witness to Jesus' remarkable miracles and had his needs provided for by the Father. Judas heard more of what Jesus had to say than almost anybody.

But, Judas' treasure was not in heaven.

It must have been a shock to the other disciples when Judas sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. He said and did all the right things. He cloaked the sin that festered in his heart with the outward appearance of righteousness. Judas was so convincing that when Jesus sent him off to carry out his betrayal none of the other disciples suspected anything (John 13:28-29). We should be angry, sad, and confused at Judas' betrayal but never self-righteous. Be wary before you point your finger at Judas and say, not I. Satan has power where there are sinful passions. Randy Alcorn writes, "Satan works on the assumption that every person has a price. Often, unfortunately, he is right. Many people are willing to surrender themselves and their principles to whatever god will bring them the greatest short-term profit."<sup>1</sup>

### Jesus Reassures Us

After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in His spirit, and testified,

*Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.*      **John 13:21**

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<sup>1</sup>Alcorn, Randy. "Money Possessions and Eternity." Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 2003. Print.

Judas and Jesus had broken bread together, prayed together, shared triumphs and trials together. This man, one of His closest followers and friends, a man who had lived his life intimately with Jesus, was going to betray Him. Jesus' sorrow must have been great.

And yet Jesus used this bitter betrayal as another testament to the truth of His identity as God.

*He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me. I am telling  
you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place  
you may believe that I am he.* **John 13:18-19**

Jesus wants us to remember this. The knowledge and authority over His own betrayal by Judas is evidence of His deity.<sup>2</sup> Jesus foretold of His death before this night. He knew exactly how it was going to play out. Yet, the disciples still could not comprehend His words. So he reassured them of who he was once more. They would certainly remember this night and His words. And a night that seemed to be one of the darkest in human history had glorious light poured into it. That night was not a tragedy, it was a triumph. It was the salvation of the world; a salvation God had designed before its very creation.

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<sup>2</sup>Piper, John. "You Cannot Follow Me Now." [DesiringGod.org](http://DesiringGod.org). 10 March 2012. Web.

[illegible]

## Treasure

1. Read through the passage two or three times.
2. Write down 10 observations about the text. Start by asking who/what/where/when/why/how?

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## Grow

1. In what ways do you find it difficult to place your treasure in heaven?

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2. In what ways did this passage encourage you in your trials?

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## Go

1. What does the story of Judas teach us about human nature?

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2. How does that contrast with the secular understanding of human nature?

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## Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever been betrayed? If so, share what happened and how you were impacted.

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2. In our passage, Jesus experienced the worst betrayal in history. Talk about the significance of this event and why it troubled Jesus so much.

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3. Satan was clearly at work in this story, yet God was sovereign over all and used this awful act of betrayal for good. How might this truth impact the way you see the evil done to you or around you?

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4. Jesus is a high priest who understands our weaknesses (Hebrews 4:15-16). How might Jesus relate to you in the difficult things you've had to endure? What would it look like to bring these things to Jesus?

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5. Not only have we been betrayed, but we also have betrayed like Judas. This is why Jesus came to die. What sin do you need to confess today and receive Jesus' forgiveness?

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## Additional Reading

From Sex & Money by Paul David Tripp<sup>1</sup>

Godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs (1 Timothy 6:6-10).

If you read those words carefully, you begin to get a clue that the love of money is connected to things that are significantly bigger than money. Consider the profound connections Paul makes in this provocative little passage. The love of money is fundamentally not an overspending problem; it is a contentment problem (“Godliness with contentment is great gain”). The love of money is also an identity problem (“... for we brought nothing into this world”). The love of money is a fallen world problem (“... fall into temptation”). The love of money is a worship problem (“But those who desire to be rich . . .”). The root system of the love of money runs deeper and wider through the soil of the human heart than we tend to think.

Paul begins his discussion with contentment because the roots of our problem with money are to be found there. Discontentment is the soil in which the love of money grows. I don’t think that we value-rate discontentment properly. Discontentment seems like an inconsequential sin...[But] what the discontented person lacks is something more fundamental and life-shaping than happiness; the discontented person lacks humility. He really does think of himself more highly than he ought to think. He really is convinced that he deserves what he doesn’t actually deserve...and his discontentment will ultimately bring him to question the goodness of God. Discontentment is a very significant thing.

... Since I am the thing of greatest danger to me, since my deepest problems reside not outside of me but literally in my heart, I cannot help myself. I cannot solve my

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<sup>1</sup>Tripp, Paul David. “Sex & Money.” Crossway, 2013. Print.

problem. I need to be rescued, restored, and empowered. I need to be liberated from my slavery to me. I need my desires to be refocused and redirected. I need to live with contentment in my heart. I need eyes to see the lavish blessings that greet me every day. I need to love God more fully and people more actively. I need grace!

. . . Because of what Jesus has done for you, because his righteousness covers you, in your darkest moment of failure you don't have to run from him.... Only grace can turn an entitled person into a thankful one. Only grace can transform a demanding and envious heart into one that is truly content.... But the battle goes on. We will once again lose our way.... There will be times when the glory of what we want will be more important to us than the glory that is God's due.

. . . But grace won't leave us to ourselves. It won't give up and give us over to our own devices. Grace will expose us once again. It will convict us once again. It will forgive us once again. It will empower us once again. It will wrap arms of divine love around us once again, and we will remember who we are and what we have been given. And by grace we will take one more step toward becoming the thankful and contented people that grace promises one day we will be.

## John 13:31-35

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 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. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

**1 John 4:7-11**

### Who Am I, Who Are You?

From the moment of conception, an array of factors begins to shape who we will be when we're born. Genetics determine our sex, hair and eye color, as well as our likelihood for enjoying cilantro. Race and ethnicity will shape our cultural experiences within the family. When we are born, the community we live in shapes our understanding of the world and how we see ourselves. Yet despite the many factors that shape our identities, I submit that Descartes was wrong when he said, "I think, therefore I am" and the truth in a post-Christian, fallen world may be closer to, "You think, therefore I am." That is, in our process of forming our concept of who we are, we frequently define ourselves based on our interpretation of how others see us. In this passage, we see three identities emerge about who God is and who God says we are that can encourage us in our walk with Jesus.

#### **Son of Man**

Think of all the titles in the gospel that are used about Jesus or by Him: Son of David, Bread of Life, Son of God, The Good Shepherd, and I AM characterize just a few of the titles that belong to our Messiah. Jesus just told Judas to initiate the betrayal (verse 27) and immediately after Jesus brings to Himself the title of Son of Man. This was a bold



identity claim that evokes imagery of the exalted deity described in Daniel 7. We know from Luke 22:42 and Matthew 26:39 that Jesus wrestled with impending horrors of what was about to occur with the crucifixion. Even in the midst of the suffering that Jesus foreknew when instructing Judas to go, He did not see His value or identity merely as one who was being betrayed by a close friend, nor as the God-man who was about to be humiliated by the desertion of His closest friends and the sufferings of the cross. Instead, He held to His identity the way that the Father saw Him: the glorified Son of Man who comes with great power and glory (Luke 21:27), who will sit at the right hand of Power (Mark 14:62). We too can clothe ourselves with the identity that we are image-bearers of God so that regardless of race, sex, marital status, or experience, we are created with a purpose to pursue Him and a promise of being redeemed by Him.

### **Little Children/My Disciples**

Read verse 33 again. Meditate on it. Even writing this is difficult because I'm gutted by the emotion Jesus clearly demonstrates when John records His Rabbi referring to the 11 disciples as "little children". The best way I can understand Jesus' tenderness for His disciples is from the movie "Guardians of the Galaxy." At the climax of the movie, the band of heroic misfits are seemingly headed to their certain demise in a spaceship crash when Groot, a giant tree (it's a Marvel movie, roll with it), wraps his friends in his branches and says, "WE are Groot" before perishing in the act of self-sacrifice. Jesus had such fondness for His disciples that the Greek phrase "little children" is only used once in the gospels, right here, to demonstrate His affections. The disciples were men who left everything to follow Jesus, but part of their identity was their history. Like us, the disciples were sinners who caved to temptation, had thought lives that needed redemption, and were discontent with their portions in life. But like He did with the disciples, Jesus sees past our history and loves us tenderly as little children. There is no sin too great that keeps us from His unconditional love. In verse 34, Jesus goes on to ascribe a new identity to His disciples, one that is marked by love: people will know they are His followers by how they love one another. Our mission as believers is to serve one another, our neighbors, and our community. Doing so will be the marker of our identity as followers of Jesus the Messiah.

## Sermon Notes

[illegible]

## Treasure

1. Read through the passage two or three times.
2. Write down 10 observations about the text. Start by asking who/what/where/when/why/how?

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## Grow

1. What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus?

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2. What are some practical applications of finding our identity in Christ?

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## Go

1. How does the secular world define identity?

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2. In what ways does Christianity inform our concept of identity?

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## Discussion Questions

1. Share a time when you were shown great love. What were the circumstances and how did it make you feel?

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2. Jesus is about to be glorified through His death and resurrection. Why was this act of love so glorious?

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3. Jesus gives a new commandment to His disciples to love one another. How is it new?

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4. Jesus calls His disciples "little children." Why? What is the significance? See 1 John 3:10, 16-18 for help.

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5. How would you assess your love for one another? Would others know that you are a disciple of Jesus by your love?

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6. In what ways can Jesus' love shine more brightly through you today? Ask your group to pray for you.

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## Additional Reading

From Who God Says You Are: A Christian Understanding of Identity by Klyne R. Snodgrass<sup>1</sup>

The Christian message asserts that our identity is different from what we think, and it sets aside false understandings and explains our true identity – the one God says is truly ours – calls us to that identity, plugs us into life with God, and gives us good work to do.

Most of us know we are not what we should be.... We prefer to ignore and stifle our thoughts, but all of us know something inside us is encouraging us to live better than we do. The pervasiveness of the question, “Who am I?” indicates that something is wrong, that we are adrift and need reorientation and coherence. Christianity insists that humans cannot be who they really are apart from God. As Robert Wilkin puts it, “Because human beings were made in the image of God our lives will be fully human only as our face is turned toward God and our actions formed by his love. . . . We know ourselves as we transcend ourselves, and we find ourselves as we find fellowship with God.”

One of the aches of my life has been watching the failure of Christians to understand their own message, their viewing Christianity as so superficial as to be irrelevant, and their failure to capture the depth of commitment and transformation that faith involves. Christianity is seen as a minor attachment to their well-guarded identities rather than the ground-shaking transformation of identity it really is. No wonder the American church is declining and has less and less influence in people’s lives, especially young people’s lives. Many “believe all the right things” but have a gnawing sense that there is no reality to their faith. But faith is not about believing stuff; I insist that biblical faith is about being attached to Christ, bound to him, and participating in life with Christ and having your identity transformed by that participation.

Christians today need to be aware of how the identity described by Scripture interacts with their own identity, confronting, changing, and shaping to bring about new life in

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<sup>1</sup>Snodgrass, K.R. (2018). Who God says you are: A Christian Understanding of identity (excerpts from pg. 29-31). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. Such an approach presupposes a willingness to find one's identity in Scripture. God calls us to know him, but that cannot happen unless we know ourselves. The most important spiritual journey and act of discipleship is in shaping our identity in response to the call of God to be who we are supposed to be, someone created in God's image. It is a call not to settle for what we are or to be thrown off course by what happens to us, but to shape life in response to God.

## John 13:36-38

*Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 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.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." And the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."*      **Mark 12:29-33**

### Before the Rooster Crows

Peter spent countless hours with Christ and intellectually believed that He was the Messiah, but his heart was still focused on the things of the world. Peter did not hesitate to declare his absolute loyalty to Christ, but when put to the test he found his passions lacking. Peter was afraid of man. When the rooster crowed as Jesus predicted, Peter recognized what he had done. He had denied the Son of God three times. He was not the man he thought he was. He failed the test. Thankfully, Christ did not fail him.

Why did John include Peter's denial in his gospel? The Lord wanted us to see that our lives are completely dependent on the grace of God. We are not nearly as strong as we think we are. Our faith oscillates from day to day depending on our emotions, circumstances, and interactions. We are like Peter in that we readily declare our loyalty to Christ then deny it shortly after. We are tempted in many ways to deny Christ before

men because we fear for our reputations and our livelihoods, but Christ remains faithful to us. He stands ready to welcome us back with mercy and forgiveness. At the end of John's Gospel, Jesus reinstated Peter as a minister of the gospel. He did hold Peter's sin against him, but met his weakness with grace. As a result, Peter became the most prominent leader in the early church and carried out a faithful legacy until his martyrdom at the hands of Rome. May we rejoice in the patience of our Lord and continue in faithfulness to Him as He remains faithful to us.

# Sermon Notes

[illegible]



## Treasure

1. Read through the passage two or three times.
2. Write down 10 observations about the text. Start by asking who/what/where/when/why/how?

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## Grow

1. In what ways have you denied Jesus?

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2. When did you realize what you'd done?

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## Go

1. How would you explain to a non-believer what it means to love God?

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2. In what ways are you tempted to deny Christ before men?

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## Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever had a “mountain-top” experience with God only to turn away from Him shortly thereafter? Share what happened.

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2. In this passage, Peter claims he is ready to lay down his life for Jesus only to be told that in just a few short hours he will deny Jesus three times. How do you think that landed on Peter? On Jesus?

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3. In what ways have you denied Jesus by your words or your actions recently? Just as Peter later repents (John 21:15-19), how is God calling you to repent today?

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4. In Luke’s account of this story, Jesus tells Peter that He is praying for Peter’s faith not to fail and to strengthen his brothers after he turns back (Luke 22:31-32). How might knowing that Jesus is praying for you give you hope and strength to repent?

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5. Who is a person in your life who is currently denying Jesus? Spend some time as a group praying for yourselves and for others to turn to Jesus.

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## Additional Reading

From Idols of the Heart: Learning to Long for God Alone by Elyse M. Fitzpatrick

Peter bombed out when he denied Christ three times. But the Lord didn't turn on him. When Jesus returned, He confronted Peter. In Idols of the Heart: Learning to Long for God Alone, Fitzpatrick explains, In the Greek, Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me with an all-consuming devotion that rules out all other loves?" Twice Peter skirted the issues and declared that he had strong affection for the Lord. The third time Jesus changed the question and asked him, "Do you have a strong affection for me?" Peter in distress and sorrow was forced to admit, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You" (John 21:17). It was as if Peter was finally saying, "Lord, you know my heart. You know the loves that contend for my attention there. I do love You, but you know how I have failed to love You by loving other things, especially people and their opinion of me. Do I love you more than these? Is my love stronger than theirs? Lord, only you know." In essence the Lord's answer to him was, "Yes, Peter, I do know. And now, so do you. Now serve Me by caring for people, but in doing so remember whom you are serving. Remember whom you are to worship. Remember that I'm the only One strong enough to save. And remember that you aren't any better than those who serve" (p.45).

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<sup>1</sup>Fitzpatrick, Elyse. "Idols of the Heart: Learning to Long for God Alone." P&R Publishing, 2016.



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