

John 13:18-38

Betrayal!

This passage marks the final conversation between Jesus with His disciples before the crucifixion the following day.

Verses 18-30

Jesus is prophesying about a specific future event. What is going to happen? Jesus is prophesying the betrayal of Judas. This is the prophecy found in Psalm 41:9. “Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.” To the eastern idea of hospitality, for one who shares my bread to lift up his heel against me means he “has taken cruel advantage of me” and was a sign of great betrayal and treachery.

How could Judas betray Jesus? How do you explain that? It’s an issue of the heart. Judas has hardened his heart though Jesus has given him every chance. Judas is responsible for his actions. Judas has rejected Jesus as Messiah, Savior, and Lord.

What is the value of prophecy as seen in verses 18 and 19? Prophecy fulfilled the Scriptures. The Lord gives the reason for His prophecy. It is, He says, “so that when it does happen you will believe that I am He.” The prophecy is given so that the fulfillment, when it comes to pass, might be received as evidence that Jesus really is who He claims to be—the unique Son of God, Jehovah.

Prophecy is not given to us for our benefit so that we can know exactly what will happen in the future. What we are meant to know is that God has a plan, that He has a goal toward which all of human history is headed. Prophecy reminds us that God is in control even in very volatile and uncertain times, such as today.

Application: What’s your favorite prophecy that is yet to be fulfilled?

Why is Jesus troubled in spirit? He is anticipating the betrayal. He has loved Judas for three years. It’s as if He’s thinking, “I know you have to do it, but it still saddens me greatly.”

Who is the “disciple that Jesus loves?” We assume that this phrase applies to the apostle John because it is only used in the Gospel of John, and he never refers to himself in any other way. This phrase is used five times in this Gospel.

Why don’t the disciples understand that Judas is the betrayer? Judas has been a successful hypocrite. He has fooled all the other disciples. He has no lack of opportunity for repentance nor does he lack a good role model, and he doesn’t have an unfavorable environment. Judas simply shows man’s sinful nature and what he is capable of.

For every man and woman who hears the gospel, there is a point of no return before their death, a point in time after which it is forever too late to repent and be saved. There is a time when one will turn away from Christ for the last time. No man knows that time, but it is a deadline we do not want to ignore.

If that is the case, at what point could Judas have reversed everything? When is the point of no return for Judas? Verse 27 indicates this happened when Judas took the bread.

Verses 31-38

What is Jesus talking about that will glorify both the Father and the Son in verse 32? He is looking forward to His victory the cross where God and the Son are both glorified. God’s glory is revealed in the cross and in the Son. Jesus saw the cross as supreme glorification, not supreme humiliation.

How did Jesus glorify the Father? He explains later (See John 17:4.) that it was by finishing the work the Father gave Him to do. That is also how we glorify the Father. It’s an issue of obedience.

Application: What is the work that God has given us to do?

How can the crucifixion be glorification? The answer is in what the crucifixion means. It is the most significant point of world history! In the cross we see:

- The defeat of Satan for all time.
- Victory over sin. The sins of all of mankind were paid for.
- God’s justice is both revealed and satisfied.

- The faithfulness of God is revealed at the cross. Very early in the Old Testament period we find God promising a deliverer. Adam and Eve are in the garden. They have sinned. They have eaten of the fruit of the forbidden tree. When God comes to them in the garden they hide from His presence. They are sinful, God is holy, and they cannot stand the sight of His holiness. The Lord asks, “What have you done?” and the whole story comes out. Then, in promised blessing, God points to the future and says, “The day is coming when the seed of the woman will rise and crush the head of the serpent.” In Genesis 3:15 the redeemer is promised.
- God’s grace is revealed at the cross where He says in essence, “I’m going to provide a solution to your sin problem because you can’t.” There was no other way for men to be saved except through the perfect sacrifice which only God could provide.
- God’s love is revealed at Calvary. Nothing in all history reveals God’s love as does the cross of Jesus Christ. In fact, so great is this revelation of His love that God appeals to it as proof of His love. Romans 5:8 says, “But God demonstrates his love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

At the cross, Jesus reverses the consequences of the first Adam’s conduct and thus turns the history of our race around. (Christ is referred to as the second Adam.) Paul explains this in detail in Romans 5:18-19, “Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.”

What do you think was going through the disciples’ minds when Jesus says in verse 33: “I will be with you only a little longer...Where I am going, you cannot come?” This would have been like an earthquake to the disciples. They had literally left everything to follow Jesus, and expected to be high-ranking officials in His government when He took political control of Israel as Messiah. They have followed Him for three years, enduring a lot, and now He says, “I’m leaving you.” Jesus will explain this dramatic statement and comfort the disciples concerning this all the way through the end of John 14.

In verse 34, how is Jesus giving a new command? Here the second greatest commandment is upgraded.

- “love your neighbor” is changed to “love one another”
- “as yourself” is changed to “as I have loved you”

Why does Jesus give them a new command? Jesus establishes this type of love as an identifying mark of the individual Christian and the Christian community as a whole. When we behave this way, we glorify God and impress the world. Loving one another is designed to build up the church. If the world sees a bunch of people acting like them, they are not moved, and we don’t have much to offer. When they see us acting in a different manner than they are used to, they are inquisitive and attracted.

What mistakes does Peter make in verses 36-38 as he responds to Jesus’ statement in verse 33? He has walked with Jesus for three years and he has seen that Jesus has never mislead him or let him down. There is no reason to start thinking He will at this point. Peter is resting in his own strength and understanding, he is overconfident and he neglects to pray and ask for guidance/wisdom.

Application: Before we are too quick to be critical of Peter, there is probably a little bit of Peter in all of us.

With all of Peter’s flaws and failings, why doesn’t Jesus kick Peter off the team? He knows Peter’s heart. Peter loves Jesus. Peter wants to please Jesus at all costs. Not only does Jesus not kick Peter off the team, He put him in a position of privilege—the inner circle of three. Jesus sees the potential in Peter. He is able to see the man Peter will become. He has a plan to use Peter. He is going to transform Peter into His special instrument. It’s the same reason Jesus doesn’t kick us off the team—our position on the team is not based on our performance.

MEMORIZE: John 13:34-35