

John Chapter 13

We now come to what has become known as "the upper room ministry" of the Lord. It is the last time that He will speak with them before the cross, which is now only a few hours away. He is going to make the best use of the time available to him. The miracles and the healings are now behind Him, the multitudes are excluded. It is a special time exclusively for His own.

At the beginning of the chapter, John tells us three things that were in the Lord's mind as He sat down with His disciples. Firstly, in verse 1, He "knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father". This hour has been mentioned earlier in John's gospel. In chapter 7:30, some would have taken hold of Him, "but no man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come". In chapter 12:27, He says, "But for this cause came I unto this hour". So, what did "the hour" mean to the Lord in chapter 13? He was going to leave this world behind Him, the world that hated Him and that had rejected Him. John 1:10 says, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not". He was leaving this kind of world behind and going to be with One who would welcome Him and give Him a place of honour at His own right hand. He was going back to the Father. What a precious thought in the mind of the Saviour.

But if there is a precious thought in the mind of Christ, there is a wicked thought in the mind of Judas. The devil had already put it into his heart to betray the Lord.

John continues with the Lord's thoughts in verse 3. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands". The expression "all things" surely speaks of universal power. The world does not yet see the evidence of this, but they will see it in reality when He returns to earth. But the One in the upper room held such power in His hands – the Father had given it to Him. He might have used it to confound all His enemies, but we see how He uses it in John 17. There He says of Himself, "Thou hast given Him power over all flesh". He continues, "That He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him." The power is used only for His own.

So, here in John 13, the hands that held the reins of government now take a basin and a towel and wash the disciples' feet. Why did He do this? Because as verse 1 says, "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end. Love was now the motivating force. Who can measure the love of Christ? When Paul in Eph 3 speaks of this love, he immediately adds, "which passeth knowledge". It is infinite in its extent, and also as to its duration. It is "to the end".

But yet another thought brought the Saviour to His knees. Verse 3 says that He knew "that He was come from God and went to God". If the word "Father" speaks of love and affection, the title "God" would speak of the holiness and righteousness of God. He was going back to join a holy and righteous God. But what about these disciples whom He was going to leave behind in this world? Here were men who were sometimes weak and failing, who would be defiled by their contact with the filth of this world. How could such men continue to have dealings with such a holy God? The answer lies in what is to follow ie the feet washing by the Lord Jesus. The question is sometimes asked whether the feet washing took place before, during, or after the supper. Those who think it was before the supper therefore quote verse 2 as, "And supper being come" ie that the time for supper had arrived. But verse 4 suggests that He rose from supper. The supper was either in progress or had been completed. If this is true then the action of the Lord in washing their feet is not the action of a slave as is often assumed. The time for feet washing in the literal sense was before the supper,

not during or after it. This comes out in Luke 7 when the Lord went into the house of Simon the Pharisee. In verse 44, the Lord says, "I entered into thine house: thou gavest me no water for My feet".

While it is certainly true, that He does show His humility here, it is not the primary lesson to be learned. We can gather this by the reactions of Peter and the replies of the Lord. The first reaction of Peter is in verse 6. Peter asks, "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?". The words "Thou" and "my" are both emphatic. Peter is asking, "Are you, my Lord, going to wash the feet of one who is your servant". Peter is saying, in effect, "This is too humble a task for you Lord. I should be washing your feet". Now if the feet washing were only an example of humility, then the Lord would have said so here. Instead the Lord says, in effect, "This is not what you think it is, Peter. There is another lesson to be learned which you will appreciate more at a later date." So how does Peter respond to these words? It is as if he has ignored them completely. His question now turns to an outright refusal. "Thou shalt never wash my feet". Peter is refusing in the strongest way possible. He uses the same word for "never" that the Lord used in John 10:28. "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish". Never is a triple negative meaning "no, by no means, not unto the ages." To paraphrase Peter's words, he is saying, "You will not wash my feet, there is no way that you will wash my feet, I will never ever let you wash my feet". Just as surely as we shall never perish, so Peter refuses in equally strong terms to let the Lord wash his feet.

So how does the Lord respond to Peter?. The Lord shows just how vital the feet washing was by saying, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me". The idea of this is no association or no companionship with Me. Without the feet washing, Peter could have no fellowship with the Lord. Now Peter loved the Lord. Indeed sometimes he allowed his heart to rule his head, and often when he spoke out of turn, it was because of his love for the Saviour. That is why Paul prays for the Philippians in Phil 1, "that your love may abound in knowledge and in all discernment". The head and the heart must go together. So, to Peter now, the thought of losing fellowship with the Lord was too much. He therefore swings to the opposite extreme. "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head." He is saying, "Lord I don't understand what this is about, but if it is so important to You, then wash my hands and my head as well. I don't want to lose fellowship with You". We note that the Lord did not say to Peter, "No part in Me". For then we could have no settled peace, no security of salvation. But once we are in Him, our salvation is secure for we become part of the family of God.

The Lord responds again, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit". There are two Greek words used for wash in verse 10. The first in "he that is washed" means "bathed" ie washed all over. The second word means simply to wash. A comparison can be made with John 13 and the laver before the Tabernacle. Exodus 40:31 and 32 says, "And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat, when they went into the tent of the congregation". This was done on every occasion when they approached the tabernacle. The hands and feet that were clean enough for the camp were not clean enough for the work of God. In Leviticus chapter 8, however, on the day of the consecration of the priests, an initial once-for-all act demanded that their bodies be washed or bathed all over. Lev 8:6 says, "And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water". "Washed" in this verse is "bathed".

The disciples were bathed all over because of the faith they had put in the Lord Jesus. Twice over in this section, Peter calls Him "Lord" (verses 6 and 9). We likewise have been cleansed in the blood of the Lamb. It is a one-off, never to be repeated experience. Once saved, we are always saved, but there may be times when we need

to be washed. So how is it that we are cleansed practically in our lives. The Lord brings to bear upon us the word of God. In John 15, the Lord says to the disciples, "ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you". Paul writes to Titus about the "washing of water by the word". The Psalmist asks the question, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his ways?. Then he supplies the answer to his own question when he adds, "By taking heed thereto according to Thy word". It is by reading the word of God that we can prevent a fall or rise from a fall should it occur.

All the disciples were "clean every whit", but with one exception, Judas. The Lord could have washed his feet a thousand times and it would have made no difference. He had never been "bathed" so feet washing was of no value to him.

Apart from Peter's natural impulsiveness which led him to protest, it is most significant that he is singled out here. He of all the disciples would need this ministry in the hours and days ahead, for he was going to fail the Lord badly. What are we getting at here? If not humility, what is the principal lesson of the feet washing? To put it into doctrinal language, John says in I John 2:1, "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one". The preposition "with" here is PROS which is usually translated "towards". If we sin, we are moving away from the Father. We need an advocate to bring us back towards Him.

We must make a comment on John 13. Have you noticed the constant repetition of the little conjunction "and"? No less than 5 occurrences in the space of a couple of verses. It emphasises the details that are mentioned about the feet washing. Every detail is not only recorded, but each detail is of equal importance. The laying aside of His garment was just as important as taking the basin and as taking the towel. The washing was just as important as the drying of the feet. Each detail was as important and as necessary as the one before or the one after. This illustrates how our advocate works. He may bring into our lives a series of events to bring us back into fellowship with the Father. This is perfectly illustrated by the various steps taken by the Lord in the recovery of Peter.

Peter was to fail miserably that night. Had you been with Peter by the fire, you would have thought that Peter was not saved at all, or that he was beyond recovery. In Matthew 26, we read of Peter's three denials.

He denied

He denied with an oath

Peter began to curse and to swear.

Peter stood with the rough coarse soldiers and soon he began to speak like them as well.

In John's gospel, we see Peter really backed up against the wall. Only John tells us that it was Peter who wielded the sword. Only John tells us the name of the injured servant ie Malchus. We see the reasons for this in the High Priest's palace. A kinsman of Malchus is standing by the fire. Not only a kinsman, but an eye witness of what took place in Gethsemane. This man would have taken careful note of Peter, the man who attacked his kinsman. So the question is put, "Did not I see thee in the garden with Him". The "I" is emphatic. There was no getting out of this one, but Peter denied again. He told a bare-faced lie.

Was there any way back for Peter from here? The amazing thing is that the Lord had already begun the process of recovery even before Peter fell, and He did it by a series of little steps, just like the "ands" of John chapter 12. There are no less than eight steps in Peter's recovery :-

1. The Lord's prayer

In Luke 22, the Lord says to Peter, "But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not".

One might argue, if the Lord knew that Peter would fail Him, why did He not prevent it happening? It proves for one thing that we are not robots, but that in the Christian life, we have a free will which we can exercise. We can choose to do good or to do evil. The Lord at least gave Peter plenty of prior warning before the event. And was the whole experience not for Peter's eventual good, to teach him the lesson of pride, and reliance on self and the flesh.

2. The feet washing

3. A sign given

When the Lord speaks of the disciples being offended that night, Peter says in Matthew 26:33, "Though all shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended". The "I" is again emphatic. Peter is boasting, "These men may let you down Lord, but you can rely on me. I'll never let you down. I am ready to die for you". The sign which the Lord gave was the crowing of the cock. Before the cock crowed twice, three times Peter would deny that he knew the Lord.

4. The sign fulfilled

Mark in chapter 14 particularly emphasises the crowing of the cock. Peter denied the first time, and the cock crew. The warning bells should have been sounding in Peter's ears. "Peter, do you know where this taking you. Don't you remember the Lord's words?" But Peter continued on his pathway of denial. It is easy for us to criticise Peter, but often we embark on a venture which we know to be wrong, but despite the voice of conscience, we persist to the end.

5. The Lord's look

In chapter 22, Luke tells us that when the cock crowed the second time, the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. The Lord's look melted the heart of Peter to repentance. He went out and wept bitterly.

The Lord's look is all the more remarkable given His own particular circumstances. He is surrounded by men shouting at Him, spitting Him in the face, striking Him on the cheek. Yet His ear was open to the conversation taking place at the door. He heard Peter's third denial and the crowing of the cock. It shows the extent of His care for us. This world of ours is in a state of turmoil yet His ear is ever open towards us. I don't think it was a look of anger - I think it was a look of sadness. It is as though the Lord was saying, "Peter, I did try to warn you before it happened".

6. The word from the angel at the tomb

In Mark 16:7, the angel says to the women at the tomb, "Tell His disciples and Peter, that He goeth before you into Galilee". The women would relay this message back to the disciples, and they would say to Peter, "your name was mentioned specifically". Peter would still be feeling wretched after his failure. Could the Lord ever forgive him? Would he ever see the Lord again? Well the women were telling him, "He is going into Galilee and there you will see Him".

I reckon Peter was still showing the effects of his failure in John 20. Both he and John ran together to the tomb "but the other disciple did outrun Peter". Could it not be the case that Peter was holding back somewhat? What if he met the Lord? How would the Lord treat him? Would He ever speak to him again?

7. The Lord's private meeting with Peter

In Luke 24, the two return from Emmaus with the news of their encounter with the risen Lord. The disciples have their own news to tell. "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared unto Simon". The Bible draws a veil over this experience - this must have been a painful experience for Peter personally. But the Lord takes Peter aside to

help bring about the restoration of his disciple.

8. The Lord's public meeting with Peter

Finally, in John 21, the Lord speaks to Peter in the company of all the disciples. Three times over the Lord asks the question, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" What are the "these" in this expression. Is it, "More than these disciples" ie do you love me more than you love these disciples. Or does it refer to the fish, for at the beginning of this chapter, Peter had said, "I go a fishing". Rather, I believe that the missing word is "do" ie do you love Me more than these do? That was Peter's proud boast in the upper room. He was put to the test and failed. But now the Lord has recovered him and Peter is told, "Feed my sheep". "Feed my lambs".

Seven weeks later, on the day of Pentecost, Peter stands up in Jerusalem before thousands and says, "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just". Were the other apostles embarrassed by Peter? Were they saying, "Peter, don't you remember that you did the very same? Shouldn't you be keeping quiet?" But do you remember back in John 13 that the Lord not only used the basin, He also used the towel. After their feet had been washed and then dried, no-one would have known that the feet had been defiled in the first place.

Returning again to John 13, the Lord from verse 12 onwards now begins to apply the lesson of the feet washing to His disciples. "Know ye what I have done unto you?. Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye say well: for so I am. If I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet". The Lord is not telling them here to be humble. We have already dismissed that as the main lesson of this incident. But what we are saying is that we have to follow His example by recovering those who go astray. Notice the use of the titles "Master" and "Lord" in these two verses, 13 and 14. "Master" comes before "Lord" in verse 13. "Master" is the word for "teacher". As a result of knowing Him as their teacher, they had also come to know Him as their Lord. Given that He was now their Lord, He applies that authority to His new teaching in verse 14. "If I then your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet". We are to play our part in the work of recovery.

The doctrinal statement of this truth is found in Galatians 6:1. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted". Recovery has to be done in the spirit of meekness like the Lord on His knees in John 13. And it has to be done by those who are spiritual. It is often said that we are good at putting away, but not so good at recovering. The Corinthians were not good at either. They had to be rebuked by Paul in the first epistle in order to put away this man from amongst them. Equally in the second epistle, they had to be encouraged to take the man back.

So it is our duty to restore an erring one back to fellowship with the Lord and His people. It is significant in Matthew 18 that the burden of restoring the erring brother is placed upon the one who had been wronged. He is to go and discuss the matter first with his brother alone. If that fails, then he is to try again in the presence of two or three witnesses. Again if that does not recover him, he is to bring it before the whole church. If after all these entreaties, the man will not repent, he is to be treated as a heathen man. The main aim of this is not to rectify a loss of face or recover some pride, but to gain his brother.

This is the application of the Lord's ministry in John 13. The servant is not greater than his Lord and if He can get down on His knees, then so also must we. Like the disciples, we know these things. Happy we are if we do them.

Now, from verses 18 to 30, the Lord brings our attention to bear upon Judas. Again,

this ministry does not apply to him. "I speak not of you all". The Lord continues, "I know whom I have chosen". The Lord has spoken about this choice in John 6:70. "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil (diabolos)". The Lord chose this man, I believe, to show just how far profession could go. But the end of verse 18 shows that the Lord was not taken by surprise by the betrayal of Judas. We read, "But that the scripture might be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me". These are the words of David as recorded in Psalm 41:9. He wrote them about his friend and counsellor Ahithophel, who betrayed him by defecting to the cause of Absalom. David writes about this man at the beginning of the verse, "Mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted". The Lord omits these words, for Judas was never His familiar friend, nor did He ever trust in Him. He knew from the beginning what Judas would do. It is interesting that only John of the four gospel writers mentions the fact that when the Lord left Jerusalem, He crossed over the brook Kedron (John 18). Kedron was the brook that David crossed on the night that he had to flee the city because of Absalom and Ahithophel. David was taken unawares.

The Lord, however, was not deceived by Judas hence He adds in verse 19, "Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am He." The Lord is the great "I am", God in the midst now of His people. One of the attributes of deity is omniscience. The Lord is saying here, "I need to tell you now before it happens so that you will know that I was not deceived. The disciples were deceived. In Matt 26, they looked one upon another, doubting of whom He spake. In John 13, the Lord gives no less than three clues as to the identity of the betrayer, yet the disciples never suspected Judas. This was the last possible time that the Lord could speak of Judas in this way, but He had to do it this night to show that He knew.

In verse 20, there follows what seems to be a digression. "He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth Me". Judas was an apostle, a sent one. In Luke 22, the Lord sat down with the twelve apostles (verse 14). But can you imagine the feeling of some who, when they heard of the betrayal by Judas, might say, "But I believed on the Lord Jesus the day that Judas and his companion came to our village and preached the gospel". The Lord is re-assuring them, "You received him whom I sent, and therefore you received Me".

In verse 21, the Lord is more specific in this revelation, "He was troubled in spirit...and said... one of you shall betray Me". The Lord was troubled when He made this statement. Even though He knew what Judas was about to do, it troubled Him. Perhaps it affected Him to think that a man could keep company with Him and His disciples these 3 years and a half, yet still go out and do what he did. The disciples then looked, not at Judas in particular, but on one another, "doubting of whom He spake". The deception was total. Peter again comes to the fore. He is desperate to find out who it is, but this time he doesn't ask directly. He recognised that another was nearer to the Lord than he was and not just physically. John, the beloved John whom Jesus loved, was leaning on Jesus' bosom and Peter beckons to John that he should ask. It gives a simple application that those who are the nearest to the Lord in their affection are the best placed to know the mind of Christ. In John 21, a stranger stands on the shore. The disciples are in a boat some way off. Who is this stranger? It is John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, who says, "It is the Lord".

Peter did the same with Paul. The man who had rebuked Peter before the whole church at Antioch now receives the highest commendation. Peter knew that Paul had more ability in the scriptures than he had, and so he writes in his epistle about "our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given unto him". Thus Peter was gracious enough to know that someone had a nearer place of affection to the Lord, and that another had a fuller grasp of divine revelation.

John therefore puts the question, "Lord, who is it?" The Lord doesn't reply, "Judas", for had He done so, Judas would never have been allowed to leave that room by the others. Instead He gives them a sign, the sign of the sop. John's gospel is much more specific than the others. In Matthew and Mark, it is put in a general way, "He that dippeth with Me in the dish". This could have been any of the twelve but in John, it is he to whom the Lord will give the sop. The sop is said to be a tasty morsel which the host would give to a favoured guest. The Lord gives Judas the sop, and in verse 27, we read that Satan entered into him. Many were possessed of demons. Mary Magdalene had seven, Legion had a multitude, but Judas is unique in being possessed by the devil personally. The Lord then says to Judas, "That thou doest, do quickly". Judas knows that the Lord knows all about him. I wonder what were his thoughts as he left the room. Perhaps he was confused. If the Lord knows all about me, why did He let me go. But Judas never thought that they would ever take the Lord, far less crucify Him. In Matthew 27, we read about Judas, "When he saw that He was condemned... ". It was then that Judas went to the temple to meet with the chief priests. He never thought that it would go this far, for the Lord had escaped on so many previous occasions – at Nazareth, in the storm on the lake, in Jerusalem where they tried to stone Him.

Even with all these clues then, the disciples never suspected Judas. Because he had the bag, they thought that Judas had been sent out on some errand by the Lord. Verse 30 adds most poignantly, "And it was night". This might seem like an obvious statement for the Passover was eaten between the two evenings. But it was night also in the evil heart of Judas Iscariot. The Bible says, "If the light that be in thee is darkness, how great is that darkness".

This marks a turning point in the upper room experience. The Lord is now alone not with the twelve but with the eleven who were true to Him. Now, He can unburden His heart and speak to them of things that He would do for them and give to them. Verses 31 to 35 are addressed to all the disciples, verses 36 to 38 are addressed to Peter in particular.

Verse 31 notes the turning point. "Now when he was gone out..." Once Judas has left, it seems that a sequence of events have commenced from which there would be no turning back. Judas would soon be meeting up with the chief priests and the soldiers. Gethsemane with its agony of spirit was only a few hours away. Tomorrow there would be Golgotha with its shame and hatred and scorn. Yet the Lord says, "Now is the Son of man glorified and God is glorified in Him". These events would bring glory to the Lord Himself. He is the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father. He came, not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. He was obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. The Cross would bring glory to Him and to God. John is the gospel of the glory of the Son (John Ch 1), and John gives us an account of Calvary which is quite unique. Hence in John 19, there is no mention of Simon the Cyrenian to help bear the Cross, of the two thieves His companions at Calvary, or of the taunts of men. There is no darkness, and no orphan cry from the Saviour, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" All is under divine control and scriptures are fulfilled by the Roman soldiers and the work is "finished". God is glorified. How long was it going to take for God to glorify the Lord Jesus after Calvary. The answer in verse 32 is "straightway" ie immediately. We see this fulfilled in Phil 2, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow". We see Jesus, by the eye of faith, "crowned with glory and with honour (Heb 2)".

There is a little word to the disciples in verse 31 about His imminent departure. "Little children, yet a little while I am with you". At first sight, the Lord seems to be repeating what He has already said to the Jews in John Ch 1. The Lord was in

Jerusalem and He was speaking to those who had not believed in Him. Verse 33 of Ch 7 reads, "Yet a little while I am with you, and then I go unto Him that sent Me. Ye shall seek Me and shall not find Me, and where I am, thither ye cannot come". But there are both omissions and additions as we shall see. Firstly, in Ch 13, He says to the eleven, "Little children". He didn't use such a term of endearment in Ch 7, but He can thus address His own. "To as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to be called the children of God." They were His "little children", those who had a place of real affection in His heart. To both groups He says, "Ye shall seek Me". He was about to leave them via the Cross. For three days He would be out of sight of men. To the Jews He added, "And shall not find Me". Ungodly men never saw the Lord again. He could have appeared again to Pilate, and Herod, and Caiaphas and thus have vindicated Himself before His enemies. But this re-appearing before men has been postponed for almost 2,000 years. When He comes, every eye shall see Him, but then He will be coming in judgement.

But to His own, He did not say, "And shall not find Me", for after three days He rose and showed Himself alive to His disciples by many infallible proofs. He appeared first to Mary Magdalene in John 20. She is seeking the body of the Lord Jesus. She meets the Lord but at first does not recognise Him. The Lord asks the question, "Whom seekest Thou". Is she to go away still seeking? Will she not find the one whom her soul adores? The Lord makes Himself known to her by the use of just one word, "Mary". It was the first of many appearances to His own, but not once do we read of Him appearing to Pilate, to Herod, or to Caiaphas. We have found Him also, though He is out of sight as far as this world is concerned. To the Jews He said, "Where I am ye cannot come". To His own He said, "Whither I go ye cannot come". Why the difference ? "Where I am" refers to where He was personally at that moment in time, not just physically but in spirit. John chapter 1 refers to Him as the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father. The disciples were there already but unbelievers know nothing of this. But He was going to be separated from them not just for a few days but for 2,000 years. "Where I am going to ye cannot come". But this separation will not be for ever. Hence He adds the words, "So now I say to you". We only come down a few verses till we come to the Father's house of John 14 and the Lord is saying, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself".

Verses 34 and 35 tell us what atmosphere the Lord expected His own to continue in. Outside the upper room there was hatred and rejection but inside the circle of the disciples, the Lord expected that there should be love. He gives them a new commandment, "That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another". It was a new commandment in contrast with the old commandment that was contained in the law. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself". If only the world could keep the old commandment, how different a place it would have been. It would have prevented the wars, the racial hatreds, the feuds, the crime. Neighbours would live in harmony, tensions would disappear. That was the old commandment. But the Lord now gives them a new commandment. It is still to love one another, but a new standard of love is introduced. "As I have loved you". Immediately thoughts should arise in our minds. How did the Saviour love us? It is a love that cannot be measured. When Paul speaks about knowing the love of Christ, he immediately adds, "Which passeth knowledge".

1. His love was sacrificial

Paul says that Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. Thinking of himself and the Ephesians, he says, "he loved us and gave Himself for us". But speaking about Himself, he wrote about the "Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for Me". Do we love the brethren with a sacrificial love ? Are we prepared to devote time, energy, and money on their behalf.

2. His love was endless

"Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end. There is no end to the Saviour's love. The culmination of His love is to present the Church to Himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

3. His love is causeless

The love of God reached out to us, even when we were yet sinners. God loved us because He loved us, even when we still dead in sins.

We are to love one another in the same way that He loved us. If we have this love, how much more precious our fellowship will be, and what an impact it would have on the world outside. Verse 35 adds, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another". It should be the distinguishing mark of every company of believers.

In John 17, in the Lord's last prayer for His own, He prays about unity no less than five times. That is how important it was to the Lord. Again the standard of unity is divine. "That they may be one as We are one". There was no disunity between Father and Son. Neither went "in the huff" with the other. The Son moved to please the Father in every word and deed. We are to do likewise – we are to be one.

The chapter concludes with this brief dialogue between the Lord and Peter. Peter, as we have said, loved the Lord and any thought of separation grieved him. "Why cannot I follow Thee now?", he asks. He has been told, "Thou shalt follow Me afterwards". It is here that Peter boasts, "I will follow Thee.... I will lay down my life for Thy sake". How sad the denials that were to come.