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## Having Loved His Own John 13:1

**Intro:** We wrapped up the 3<sup>rd</sup> major section of John's Gospel last time and are now poised to dive into this next section. The Apostle Paul tells us in **II Tim 3:16-17** that, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." While we readily acknowledge that all Scripture is God's gift to us, and is of incalculable value; we also recognize that some sections of the Bible are particularly valuable and are especially loved by God's people. This is true of the section of John's Gospel that we have arrived at today. Since this is a special section of Scripture, I'm going to take some time today to elaborate a little on the overall theme of this section as well as some of the major topics that will be brought up in our study of these next few chapters.

The first thing that can be said of this lengthy section (**13:1 - 17:26**) is not just that it contains the best-known and most-loved words of spiritual instruction ever spoken by a religious teacher. More than the words themselves, which are truly awe-inspiring; is the context in which they were spoken. Keep in mind that Jesus communicated these wonderful truths to His disciples, mere hours before His own horrible suffering and death by crucifixion. It's here, in the shadow of the cross, that this man, who claimed to be God, speaks with compassion and confidence out of the peace He possessed to tell His disciples how to experience peace in the midst of tribulation.

Now, it's not that Jesus was unaware of what lay before Him or that He was unfazed by it. We know neither of those is true. He had repeatedly commented on His upcoming arrest, abuse and execution to His disciples, even more so than is recorded in the Gospels. How else did Mary know to anoint Him for His burial? We also know from Luke's Gospel that as Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, He experienced such emotional and physical stress that the capillary vessels in His skin began to burst and as Luke tells us, "His sweat became like great drops of blood..." (**22:44**). It's not that Jesus didn't know what was coming or didn't care about it. It's just that Jesus knew

the secret of peace in the storm. In fact, He *is* that peace! A peace in whose shelter those who believe in Him find refuge from the storm. Do you want to find peace? The secret to real, lasting peace is revealed in the next 4 chapters of John. Of course, the more difficult question is – are you willing to receive that peace at the point where Jesus says it can be found?

John's Gospel is held by many to be the most intense and spiritual of the 4 Gospel and as such, it is considered to be the "holy place" of Scripture. If that is the case then these next 4 chapters would be the "holy of holies." They contain the final discourses of Jesus to His disciples and ends with His high-priestly on their behalf in ch17 – the real Lord's Prayer. In this section we will hear the voice of Jesus leading us into a greater understanding of our new status before the Father as well as our new position in the world. It is here that our great and faithful Bridegroom speaks directly to His Bride (the church) and assures her (us) of His special and enduring love for us. as such, we can think of these chapters as love letters from the Lord to His Bride, the church.

There is one particular characteristic on this section that is in direct contrast to the previous sections of this book. The truths contained in it are not for everyone. They are for the Lord's people only. We know this first and foremost because they were only spoken to the 12 in the upper room and not to the general population of Israel. This fact rubs some people the wrong way because it conjures up thoughts of partiality on God's part which, in their mind is unjust and dishonorable. But, these people fail to recognize that the kind of partiality that's exhibited here is totally justified.

How can partiality be right? Let's consider it from the perspective of these being love letters from the Lord. What would you think of a married man that writes intimate letters to other women he knows? You'd call that man a cad! It would be normal and right for him to have friendly contacts with other people, including women, but the most intimate communications, those that belong in a marriage, should only be spoken between husband and wife. Marriage is a private relationship. Thus, it must be partial. So it is here: Jesus has called a special people unto Himself, the church. This is His bride. It is fitting and proper that He should have special, loving, and tender words for her only. Is this partiality? Not at all! It is grace.

**1**- It's not surprising that this particular characteristic is seen right in the very

first verse that opens this section. 13:1 immediately makes the contrast between those who are His own and those who **are not**. Who are Christ's own? The answer's already been given many times in John'. They are those who have been given to Christ by the Father (6:37,44). They are those for whom Christ was about to die (10:11,15). They are those who were born, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (1:13). They are those to whom Christ gives eternal life, those who will never perish, and those who will never be plucked from his hand (10:28-29).

What is the world? The world is the human race out of which Christ called them. Actually, the word has 3 different uses in Scripture. The 1<sup>st</sup> use is to describe the earth, the physical globe we live on. The 2<sup>nd</sup> use denotes the world of the human beings – the human race. The 3<sup>rd</sup> use is similar but goes further. It denotes the world of human beings that stand in rebellion against God – the world system, which includes the world's values, pleasures and pastimes.

It is this use of "world" that is always held in stark contrast with those who are Christ's own. They should be different from those who are part of this world's system. They should be easily distinguished from those still in the world.

God's relationship to the world is obviously different from His relationship with His own people and that difference is explained in 2 simple phrases. 1) God has done some things for all men – everyone in the world. He's created them, sustained them, kept them from the worst that is possible, even tolerated them and kept them from hell for a time. 2) God has done all things for some men – His own. They do not lack and will never lack any good thing.

What's God done for His own? The answer will only be known as we study through this section. But, as we stand at the doorstep, it won't hurt to give a little preview to build up our expectations. The 1<sup>st</sup> great teaching in these chapters

is on the special, saving love Jesus has for those who are His own. God loves the world, there's no denying that. But, there is a special love that Jesus has for His own that will be displayed and defined in this section. This love certainly provides some special privileges for those who are His own but they also give equally special obligations. Those who are greatly loved should also love greatly. This will be the basis for the new commandment

Jesus gives.

2<sup>nd</sup>) Jesus has gone to prepare a place for His people. We're not told much about heaven or what awaits us there. We are told that there is a place in it for those who believe in Jesus, and we are also promised that He'll return one day to guarantee that we get there. Even if heaven didn't exist, the love of Jesus that we have come to know here on earth would be wonderful in itself. But, on top of this, there is heaven. This tells us that His love for us is eternal!

3<sup>rd</sup>) Jesus will send the Holy Spirit as a replacement for Himself. He would be a Comforter to the disciples, leading them into all truth concerning Jesus as well as convicting the world of sin, righteousness and judgment.

4<sup>th</sup>) Jesus will commission the disciples to a special work. Each of His disciples have a spiritually fruitful work to perform. The Lord's promise to us is that everything we accomplish for Him will remain.

5<sup>th</sup>) Jesus prays for us and He invites us to pray as He does. These are just a few of the topics we will discuss in this section. God certainly has given us all things – everything we need that pertains to life and godliness. To whom much has been given, much is required. May God use our study of John 13-17 to help us become His increasingly obedient and exceedingly joyful children! Having said all of this by way of introduction, let read verse 1 again...

**1**- The first thing John gives us is a time note, indicating when all of this was taking place. It is John's intention that we should understand that everything Jesus says and does was spoken and performed in the shadow of the cross. It colors every word and every action with greater spiritual meaning and thus, greater significance for His followers.

knew- Jesus lived in anticipation of this hour. He was always conscious of it, knowing He enjoyed a unique protection while it had not come but, now that it had arrived, it marked the end of His earthly ministry. Since it's the beginning of the end, Jesus used these last precious hours to prepare His disciples for life without His physical presence. Why did He do this? Our text gives the answer – He did this because they were His own and He loved them.

Love is the explanation. Jesus loves His own. He loves us. This is the entire explanation of why God has done all things for those who are His spiritual people. Having said this, we must also acknowledge that God's love itself is unexplainable. There's no good answer to why God loves us. Clearly, we're not loved because we are lovable, we're not. From God's perspective there's nothing in us to make us even remotely desirable. He's holy; we're unholy. He's just; we're unjust. He's loving; we're filled with hatred and all kinds of sin. We are sinful and in willful rebellion against Him and yet, He loves us ([Rom 5:6-8](#)).

Paul is describing the greatness of God's love. It is love given to the undeserving, to those without strength, to the ungodly, to sinners. This emphasizes the fact that the reasons for god's love are found in Him, not in us. God doesn't love us because we first loved Him; he's not just returning our love. The truth is: we only love God because He first loved us. God doesn't love us because of anything we can do for Him. Let's face it, we have nothing to offer! He doesn't need our praise – the angels do that! He doesn't even need spiritual children because Jesus said He was able to raise up children to Abraham from the very stones. No, the reason God loves us is that He loves us. Other than that; His love is unexplainable. It has no reason; at least, none known to us.

If that was all there was to say about God's love it would be enough but our text actually says more. Not only does God love without reason, but He loves without variation and without end ([1b](#)). His love is eternal. But, how do we know God's love is eternal? Should we take it on blind faith or does God provide some rational evidence to the veracity of this claim? We can't see into the future so the future doesn't provide ant rational evidence. The evidence we need is given right here in our text. It is the evidence of experience – observable data from the past and present. 1<sup>st</sup>, there is the past – having loved; then there is the present – He loved... To rationally believe that God's love is, in fact, eternal; all we need to do is look at the observable past and present love of Jesus Christ. Isn't love His nature? Would not He who loved in the past and loves in the present also love in the future? If He loved His disciples to the end, will He not love us in the same way? What do we know about the love of the Father and Son from the past?

First, we see God's love expressed in our own creation. Not just the fact of

our existence but that in creating us, God created us with a built-in spiritual emptiness that can only be filled by Himself. He didn't create us to a meaningless existence. He created us to the highest possible existence for any created object - communion with the One who created it. Augustine said, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." Only a loving God would do that. The fact that we can know God and are restless until we do know Him is proof of His love.

Second, God's love is seen in the fact that He calls us to Himself by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. This has been expressed several times in John's Gospel. We're told that no one can come to God unless God draws him. This inability reveals the true extent of man's depravity. But still, God does draw some to Himself and none of these can be lost. In this we see God's love, for apart from the sweet drawing of that love, no one would ever come to Him.

Third, we see God's love in the death of Jesus for His people. The cross is not the only evidence of God's love for us, but it is the greatest and most revealing. If the One that was nailed to the cross was truly Immanuel – God with us – then we desperately need to rethink what God is like. What kind of God is this who would bleed and die for us? It's ironic that Adam sought knowledge from the tree, and died; while Jesus died on a tree and won for us a knowledge altogether more wonderful: the knowledge of God! So, on the cross we're not just given the sweet salvation of God, we're also given a glorious revelation of God. It's there that we see how humble, how self-giving, how perfectly generous and compassionate the living God is.

This, then, reveals the love of the God-head, for in creation we see the love of the Father. In the effectual calling of God's people we see the love of the Holy Spirit. In the act of redemption we see the love of Jesus Christ, the Son. Jesus loved us so much that while we were weak, wretched, bankrupt sinners; He came to earth to pay for the great debt of sin that we owed. There was no possible way we could ever atone for all our sin. But Jesus came and paid that debt, He signed His name to our bankrupt account. We owed a debt we couldn't pay; He paid a debt He didn't owe! That is the great love of Jesus for us as seen in the past. That's what God is directing us to observe and learn from. If He loved us that much when we were in rebellion against Him; how could we, as His people, ever doubt that He will continue to love us to the end?



What does that mean – to the end? It means, in one sense, that He loved them to the end of His life. It also means He loved them to the end of their lives. But, the phrase also means “perfection” in the Greek. John is telling us that Jesus loved them perfectly. “Amazing love, how can it be, that Thou my God should die for me?”

What do we do with such truths? How do we apply them? In 2 ways. 1) For those who are believers – If this is how God loves us, should we not also fervently love others, and God, the same way? Of course, we’ll never love as God loves in this life but we can begin to try to love as He loves – unselfishly, without discrimination, without wavering. If we love God and God’s people fervently, we should also desire to fervently serve Him.

2) If you’re not a believer in Jesus Christ; meaning, if you have yet to surrender your heart and life to Him fully, let me ask you just one question. If this is how God truly loves, and it is, how can you afford to be without such a great love? There is not love on earth like it! Your spouse can’t love you like this. Your parents, siblings or children can’t love like this. Only Jesus can love you with a perfect and everlasting love. Without His love, you will be lost forever. But, the day of God’s grace is still present and the opportunity to accept the love of Jesus Christ is still here.

God’s love is amazing; it’s unreasonable and unfathomable. It’s is effectual in that it is the only thing that can truly change your life but the most incredible thing that can be said about the great love of God is that it is available. It won’t always be available but it is today. Don’t make the mistake of thinking that you can live without it because without God’s loving presence in your life; you’re not really living, you’re just going through the motions. Only God’s presence brings meaning and purpose to a life. It’s the only way to discover what real living truly is. 😊