



## TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

### John 13:31-38: The Lord Gives His Disciples a New Commandment

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*"So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. <sup>32</sup> If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately. <sup>33</sup> Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you. <sup>34</sup> A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

<sup>36</sup> *Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?"*

*Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward."*

<sup>37</sup> *Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake."*

<sup>38</sup> *Jesus answered him, "Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times."*

#### Background Notes

The events and conversations in John 13 all took place in the Upper Room, right before Jesus and His disciples left for the Garden of Gethsemane, where the Lord was arrested. These conversations with His own disciples are known as the "Upper Room Discourses," and they continue on to the "High Priestly Prayer" of our Lord in John 17. After the foot washing and the designation of Judas as the betrayer, Judas left the Upper Room to continue his plans for the betrayal. Then the Lord began to talk to His disciples more intimately -- the tension was gone. For example, "little children" is a term of endearment: "*Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer*"(v33).

Somewhere in the time period covered by these verses before us, the Lord's Supper was instituted. Remember, we mentioned that John didn't include the institution of the Lord's Supper in his Gospel. Recently I looked at two "harmonies of the gospels" to see where it would place the institution of the Lord's Supper in John's Gospel. By the way, do you know what I'm talking about when I say "harmony of the gospels"? These books have four columns -- Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John -- and then they give you a section of text from the respective gospels in a chronological way so that all the accounts harmonize. When I checked the harmonies, it was interesting that one harmony put the institution of the Lord's Supper between verse 32 and 33 of John 13. The other harmony put the Lord's Supper between chapters 13 and 14. In any case, the Lord's Supper was instituted after Judas left the room when the Lord was only with His true disciples.

In verse 36, when the Lord said to Peter, "*Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward*" -- this is a prophecy of Peter's martyrdom. The reliable tradition, as you know, tells us that when Peter died as a martyr he crucified upside down. We have another prediction of Peter's martyrdom in John 21:18-19: "*Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird*

*you and carry you where you do not wish.”<sup>19</sup> This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, “Follow Me.”*

In verse 38, the Lord said to Peter, *“Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.”* The “Cockcrow” was one of the four night watch periods for Roman soldiers – it was the third watch, from midnight until 3AM. It was called the “Cockcrow” because it ended with the first streaks of dawn in the sky, which is when the roosters would start crowing. Indeed, Peter did hear the rooster crowing after he denied the Lord three times, and it reminded him of this prediction.

## **Doctrinal / Teaching Points**

### **1. God was glorified in the cross of Christ.**

The verb “glorified” is used five times in verses 31 and 32: *“So, when he had gone out (Judas), Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him.<sup>32</sup> If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately.”* Included in these verses are the coming death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus.

We can understand how the resurrection and ascension would glorify God, but what about the cross? The crucifixion certainly didn’t look like an event in which God was being glorified! The cross looked like a miscarriage of justice -- an innocent man was being crucified on a Roman cross. It certainly didn’t look like God was being glorified -- but God was glorified in the cross of Christ.

The death of Jesus Christ was not just another Roman crucifixion. When the perfect Man, Jesus of Nazareth, was crucified, every righteous claim of God against sin was settled. The holiness of God’s nature was upheld at the cross. The love of God to the greatest degree was seen at the cross. At the cross, Jesus Christ took the judgment of God against the sin of the world upon Himself -- because He loved us. As the Son of God, Christ’s sacrifice was of infinite value. The cross of Christ maintained the holiness and righteousness of God.

Now you know as well as I do that it requires faith to believe all this -- but it is true! God was glorified in the cross of Christ. The death of Christ was not a defeat; it was a victory! It was a defeat for Satan, but a victory for God. God was glorified in the cross of Christ.

### **2. The mark of a Christian is love.**

*“Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come,’ so now I say to you”(v33).* He was telling His disciples that where He was going, they could not come **now**. Compare that with what the Lord said to the unbelieving Jews back in John 8:21: *“I am going away, and you will seek Me, **and will die in your sin**. Where I go you cannot come”[emphasis added].* So Jesus was telling His disciples, although you can’t come with Me now, certainly you will follow Me later.

*“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another”(v34).* This is sometimes called the “Eleventh Commandment.” This doesn’t mean that love was not commanded in the Old Testament! “Love your neighbor as yourself,” is an Old Testament commandment (Leviticus 19:18). But the new commandment Jesus gave here is that we are to love one another **as Christ has loved us**. That is the point!

This command is given again in John 15:12: "*This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.*" Quite a command, isn't it? Only with the enabling power of the Holy Spirit can we even **begin** to meet this commandment!

"Love" is the mark of the Christian. "*By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*"(v35). In the 1st century, the pagan Romans said of the early Christians, "See how they love one another!" Quite a testimony, wasn't it? Quite an "apologetic" for the Christian faith! What about us today? Can that be said of us, as it was of the early Christians, "See how they love one another"? The mark of the Christian is **love!**

## **Practical Applications**

### **1. Let's love the fellow believers that we don't naturally like!**

Now I know that I don't have to give that practical application here in this church, because I'm sure **everyone** here **loves** one another -- and you even **like** one another! Seriously speaking, there is a lot of love here, and it's great to see! But somewhere along the line there are bound to be a few believers who are difficult to love -- would you agree? Maybe their personalities just rub us the wrong way. Maybe they're controlling or manipulative people. Maybe they're lazy and selfish. Or maybe they sing off-key, or they have bad breath, or they don't know how to dress! Sometimes there are people we're just not drawn to, or we just don't naturally like for one reason or another. Well -- we must love them too! We must try to help these people whenever we can, and we must do it in **love -- as Christ loved us!**

The word "love" here, by the way, is "agape" love. Do you know the definition of "agape" love? It's the **voluntary denial of self in the interest of others**. It is not romantic love and emotional love. It's a **volitional** love -- it's an act of the will! The voluntary denial of self in the interest of others; that's the kind of love we are to have for each other - even when we don't naturally like a particular fellow believer. Why? Because Jesus loved us and gave His life for us while we were still sinners - while we were not naturally lovely or likeable!

I know of a group of Christians who recently had a meeting to determine how they could best love a fellow-believer, because this person was becoming very obnoxious in the way that he was relating to some of them. This group of believers knew that the mark of Christian is love, and so they were determined that they were going to try, to the best of their ability, to maintain that "mark" and love this believer. Praise the Lord!

Let's love the fellow believers that we don't naturally like!

### **2. Let's realize the deceitfulness of our own hearts.**

In verse 37 Peter said, "*Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake.*" Peter meant well, and he was sincere. He really thought he would be willing to lay down his life for the Lord Jesus. But where was Peter when the Lord was crucified? Peter didn't realize the deceitfulness of his own heart! He denied the Lord three times within a few hours of his promise to lay down his life for the Lord!

Jeremiah 17:9 says, "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?*" We might say, "How could Peter have denied the Lord – how could he have done this?" Well -- what about **us**? What would we do if we were facing crucifixion? Would we deny the Lord? Let's not be too quick to condemn Peter! Let's realize the deceitfulness of our own hearts.