

As Jesus loved...

John 13:31-38

How can you tell how **strong** someone is (or is not)?

Or smart, patient, kind, loving, ...

How can you tell how loving Jesus is?

John 13

1-20: Jesus washes the apostles' feet

"It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." 13:1

Jesus washed their feet: a shocking display of humility and service, especially by their leader in that culture

Including Judas, who was about to betray Jesus!

"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." 14-15

21-30: Jesus says 1 of the apostles is a betrayer

"Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, 'Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me.'" 13:21

Jesus knew who it was, yet He didn't tell them who or stop it

None of the rest of the apostles had any idea

Having a betrayer in your inner circle is great shame

for the leader as well as the people!

It could suggest to the apostles that Jesus was not as wise as they thought, and that maybe He was wrong in other things too

It could make them suspicious of others in their group

John 13:31-38

31-33: Jesus' time had finally come to be "glorified"

Judas's departure to betray Jesus for money put in motion Jesus' final hours ("at once")

Glory of the Father and of the Son are tied together

Son's obedience even to an unjust death shows the Father's greatness (total submission by Son of God)

Glory of God seen in radical self-giving

Father glorifies the Son for His obedience by giving Him the name above every name

No more delay!

"You cannot come": they lack the moral courage to stay with Jesus (even though they claim to have it)

34-35: Love is the "new" command that is their key trait

What is "new" in the ancient command to love?

As Jesus loves:

"without reservation and without limit"

Sacrificed His life for the undeserving

Even for His enemies

Much more urgent now because Jesus is leaving

Imagine disciples gathering after Jesus' death...

Distinctive quality: the fingerprint or DNA of Jesus

Like looking at a crime scene: were Christians here?

36-38: Apostles were not very loving and not very lovable

"You cannot follow me now"

No one was stopping them

They did not love Jesus enough

"You will disown me"

They were all scattered, abandoning Jesus

They are not worthy of Jesus' love and Jesus' life given for them!

Yet Jesus “loved them to the end”

In Jesus’ own time of greatest trial and knowing that the apostles would soon face their greatest trial so far, Jesus gave this great and lasting command...

Love one another, as I have loved you

The Big Idea

**The distinctive mark of Jesus’ disciples
is self-sacrificing love
for God’s people
even when they don’t deserve it**

This is the evidence that Jesus is present: Love!

Love is NOT unquestioning and unending tolerance of wrong words, attitudes, and actions!

Our focus today: the people we personally encounter

What do people know about Jesus from people like us who claim to be His disciples?

Jesus’ said it should be...

We love each other like Jesus loved us

Sadly it is so often many other things instead

Love is most visible when it is across differences and challenges, especially when there is great stress

“Ethnic and other forms of reconciliation within the Christian community are essential to its identity as a Christian community; without such evidences the world cannot see the character of Jesus.”

I so often (very wrongly) think...

My lack of love is okay (maybe even good) because these people don’t actually deserve love, and because I am in great stress

In reality: “unlovable people” and stressful times reveal the weakness of my love and the glory of His

Jesus’ love was most obvious in His greatest stress and for the people who were failing Him

Our identity in Christ is clearest to us and to the world when we love like Jesus loved

Jesus treated Judas so well, no one (except Jesus) knew that Judas would betray Jesus for money!

“As I have loved you”

Jesus washed their feet as the lowest servant

Even Judas’s!

Jesus laid down His life for the disciples

Peter denied even knowing Jesus three times!

The others also abandoned Jesus

Application

Be determined in Christ to love each other like Jesus

And all the more when it gets stressful

So what is love like?

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

Romans 12:9

Speak the truth in love *Ephesians 4:15*

Love as Jesus loved

Self-sacrificially

Including when others don’t deserve it

Hate evil, and speak the truth, yet always with a deep desire for the genuine good of the other, clinging to what is good

Some specific steps

Memorize 1 Corinthians 13 (or parts of it)

Pray this passage daily and more (confessing...)

Pick 2 people to love as Jesus loved



An existing relationship, maybe strained

A new or deepened relationship across a difference (race, ethnicity, nationality, education level, personality, ...)

Pray for them

Find an opportunity to listen to them, with humility & empathy

Emphasis on relationship: looking for ways to love them

How will people know that we truly are Jesus' people?

When Jesus is really among us and shaping us

The evidence: we love like Jesus loved

Reflection Questions

1. In practical terms, where does the strength come from to love as Jesus loved?
2. When are you tempted to think that this is not the time for love? In what sense is love all the more important?
3. What does it look like for "love to be sincere", both hating what is evil and clinging to what is good?
4. What does it look like to "speak the truth in love"?