

Subject: Christ's Special Love for His Own

Scripture: John 13:1-11

The first twelve chapters of John deal with Jesus' public ministry. The next five chapters tell us about His private ministry. Chapters 1-12 focus on those who rejected Christ. Chapters 13-17 focus on those who received and loved Him. These five chapters, beginning with John 13 through John 17, describe Jesus' ministry to His disciples in the upper room on the night before His crucifixion. This was the same time when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper.

We find several important themes in Chapters 13-17: Christ's love; His humility, and His teaching about God the Father, the Father's plan, His own departure to the Father, and the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit who would care for them when He was no longer with them. Verse 1 sets the tone for this entire section when it speaks of Christ's special love for His own disciples.

GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL PEOPLE

God loves the whole world, as **John 3:16** makes very clear. God is good to all men, believers and unbelievers alike. This is sometimes referred to as common grace, God's love and goodness to all men everywhere.

Matthew 5:44-45 ⁴⁴ *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*
⁴⁵ *That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

GOD'S SPECIAL LOVE FOR HIS OWN PEOPLE

God has a special love for His own people. This is a perfect, saving, eternal love.

1 John 3:1 *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*

1 John 4:19 *We love him, because he first loved us.*

Ephesians 5:25 *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.*

Galatians 2:20 *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

Verse 1 tells us that Christ loved His own. It is a marvel that He should have ever loved them at all. His love made them His own. What an honor to be one of His own. He loved them "unto the end" (to the uttermost, to perfection). This is His special love for all of His own.

3 PROOFS OF CHRIST'S SPECIAL LOVE

- His patience

He was so patient with Judas (vs. 2, vs. 18-19, 21). He was so patient with Peter (vs. 38). He is so patient with us all.

- His humility

Jesus knew the ultimate outcome of all things and this strengthened Him and kept Him faithful to the Father's plan. He knew where He came from and where He was going.

Hebrews 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

What is remarkable about his humility is that He knew who He was, where He came from, and where He was going and even knowing that, He stooped to wash the disciples' feet. Not one of the disciples offered to wash each other's feet. They didn't have an attitude of humility, but an attitude of superiority. See **Luke 22:24-27**.

The quality of humility was not understood as a virtue by the world. In fact the ancient Greeks and Romans had no word for humility because they despised that attitude. The word for humility appears to have been a new word that came into being through the church and the writing of the New Testament scriptures. It is a compound word. The first part of the word means "low" and the second part means "think" or "judge." The meaning is to think of yourself lowly or unimportant. This was the attitude that Christ had and modeled for us.

Philippians 2 speaks of how Christ humbled Himself by taking on human flesh and then humbled Himself even to the point of dying on the cross. Many years ago two missionaries from Germany heard about slaves in the West Indies. They were told that it was impossible to reach the slaves with the Gospel because they were separated from the ruling classes. In 1732 two missionaries offered to go and work as slaves on the plantation and teach other slaves about Christ. They worked with their fellow slaves and the slaves listened to what they had to say because the two missionaries humbled themselves. That is a picture of what Christ did for us. He humbled Himself by becoming a man and dying for us so we could be saved.

The only description Jesus ever gave of Himself is found in **Matthew 11:29** *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* Elisabeth Elliot: "Does God ask us to do what is beneath us? This question will never trouble us again if we consider the Lord of heaven taking a towel and washing feet"

- His forgiveness

At first Peter objected to Jesus washing his feet, but Jesus turned this into a teaching time for Peter and all of us. He speaks of two kinds of washing that symbolize two kinds of spiritual cleansing or forgiveness. There is the one-time bath of complete salvation and the daily washing of constant sanctification. The Bible speaks of salvation as a complete washing, cleansing of the soul:

Titus 3:5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 ⁹ *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, ¹⁰ Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

The Bible speaks of the ongoing cleansing of daily confession and sanctification:

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

It's so important that we understand and appreciate the Lord's special love for us. This is more than God's love for all people. This is the Lord's special love for His own people. Do you consider yourself one of His own? One of the most amazing things in this story is that Christ washed the feet of Judas, but at the same time He knew that Judas was not saved. He had clean feet, but his soul was still filthy. You can leave this service and feel good about yourself. You may feel a little bit cleaner, but what good is that if your soul needs a bath?