

John 13:31–14:6

Introduction

Last week we saw the mystery of the absolute *sovereignty* and the infinite *love* of Jesus. In verse twenty-one of John 13 “[Jesus] became troubled [distressed] in spirit [His spirit was in turmoil and upheaval], and [He] testified and said, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me.’” Jesus was suffering not only under the weight of what He knew was coming in the crucifixion, but even under the pain of this betrayal by Judas – by one whom He had treated to the end as among His closest and most intimate companions. Jesus said to Judas: “What you do, do quickly.” Jesus says this while His spirit is distressed and in turmoil. But He also says this to Judas as the one who *chose* Judas with this very end in view and as the one who—knowing that His hour has now come—*Himself* releases Judas to do what he has purposed and even exhorts Judas, in light of the lateness of the evening, to do what he does quickly. This is the mystery of absolute sovereignty and infinite love.

I. John 13:31a — Therefore when [Judas] had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified...”

We remember that at the wedding in Cana Jesus could say to His mother:

➤ John 2:4 — “My hour has not yet come.”

In chapter seven, John can say:

➤ John 7:30 — So they were seeking to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.

And then again in chapter eight:

➤ John 8:20 — These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.

In chapter twelve, when the “Greeks” came to Philip asking for an interview with “Jesus,” Jesus saw in this a sign that His hour had come because it’s only when the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies that it bears much fruit (12:24); it’s only when Jesus is “lifted up” from the earth that He will draw “all men” to Himself (12:32).

➤ John 12:23 — “The hour has come,” Jesus said, “for the Son of Man to be glorified.”

But now that Judas has “gone out” and now that Jesus has told Judas, “What you do, do quickly,” the “end” itself has actually been set in motion. And so Jesus can say not just that “*the hour has come*” for the Son of Man to be *glorified*,” but even, “**Now** is the Son of Man *glorified*...”

Twelve times in John's Gospel, Jesus has referred to Himself as "the Son of Man" (1:51; 3:13-14; 5:27; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28; 9:35; 12:23, 34), and now He refers to Himself as "the Son of Man" for the *last* time – because "*now* is the Son of Man glorified." "Son of Man" is a title that encompasses both Christ's humanity and His deity; both His humiliation and His exaltation. We see the emphasis on His humanity and humiliation in a verse like this:

- John 6:53 — "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of **the Son of Man** and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves."

We see the emphasis on Christ's deity and exaltation in verses like these:

- John 5:26–27 (cf. Dan. 7:13-14) — "Just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is **the Son of Man.**"

We see an equal emphasis on both Christ's humanity and His deity, His humiliation and His exaltation, in a verse like this:

- John 3:14 — "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must **the Son of Man** be *lifted up.*"

"Lifted up" on the cross (humiliation) *and* "lifted up" at the Father's right hand (exaltation). And so also here in chapter thirteen, where Jesus refers to Himself as the Son of Man for the last time: "*Now* is **the Son of Man glorified.**" We've seen throughout John's Gospel that the true glory of Jesus is to be revealed not only in His exaltation as "the Son of Man"; the true glory of Jesus is to be revealed even *in* His humiliation as "the Son of Man."

"*Now,*" Jesus says, "*Now* is **the Son of Man glorified...**"

II. John 13:31b — "...and God is glorified in Him;"

I can pray that God would be glorified in me. We can pray that God would be glorified in us. But this isn't the same thing as Jesus saying: "Now God is glorified in Him [the Son of Man]." Can you see why it's not the same? The **glory** of **God** is revealed *in and through* the revelation of the **glory** of the **Son of Man**. Furthermore, the glory of God is "**now**" to be *fully* and *climactically* revealed in and through the *full* and *climactic* revelation of the glory of the Son of Man. There's a sense in which God was always being glorified in Jesus because Jesus was always and only doing the works that He saw the Father doing (5:19) and because Jesus was always and only speaking the words that the Father had taught Him to speak (8:28; 12:49; 14:10). But there's another sense in which Jesus can say uniquely here in John 13: "*Now* is the Son of Man glorified, and [*now*] God is glorified in Him."

What we're about to witness in and through the revelation of the glory of the Son of Man—in and through His humiliation *and* His exaltation—is the full and climactic revelation to us of the glory of God. "*Now,*" in this *hour*, "God is glorified in Him [in the Son of Man]..."

III. John 13:32 — ...if *God* is glorified in *Him*, God will also glorify *Him* in *Himself*, and will glorify Him immediately.”

Think about it like this: If the glory of God Himself is being supremely and climactically revealed “*now*” in the Son of Man, then how can God not *also* glorify the crucified one, who was dead and who now lives (cf. Rev. 1:13, 17-18), in Himself?—And how can He not do so “immediately”? The climactic revelation of the glory of God in the Son of Man and the climactic revelation of the glory of the Son of Man in God are inextricably linked one to the other. How can God be fully glorified in the Son of Man if the Son of Man is not fully glorified in Him? And how can the Son of Man be fully glorified in God if God is not fully glorified in Him?

Do you feel in your soul why these things matter to us? When Jesus says, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately,” do we hear something that sounds irrelevant to us? Do we hear Jesus talking about some hidden “intra-trinitarian” mutual “glorifying” that’s irrelevant to us? Or do we see and hear in these very words the good news of our salvation? The point here is not the hidden glory of God or the glory of a God who is hidden from us. The point is the full and climactic *revelation to us* of the glory of God and therefore the glory of a God who has *Himself*—in the fullness of time—been fully and climactically *revealed* to us. And wonder of all wonders, this revelation of the glory of the thrice holy God is itself the revelation of our salvation. This climactic revelation of the glory of God is not to be the cause of our final undoing but is itself to be seen in our supreme and final blessedness (cf. Isa. 6:1-7).

We can never fully understand our salvation unless we see our salvation in the context of the revelation of the glory of God. We can’t turn that around. The glory of God is not dependent upon our salvation (God is no more glorious after our salvation than He was before), but our salvation *is* dependent upon the revelation to us of God’s glory. Can we, then, *glory* now in these words that Jesus speaks?—“Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately.” Here, in these words, is the fountainhead and the wellspring of our salvation – of our own eternal blessedness. It’s because of this very reality that Jesus continues on, now, and says in verse thirty-three:

IV. John 13:33 — “Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’”

It’s only a matter of hours, now, until the cross; and after the resurrection it will only be forty days until Jesus leaves His disciples and ascends to heaven. “I am with you,” Jesus says, only “a little while longer.” And then, as if to emphasize the reality of this *separation*, Jesus says, “You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’” When Jesus said this to “the Jews” there was a clear note of judgment in His words:

➤ John 7:34 — “You will seek Me, **and will not find Me**; and where I am, you cannot come.”

There wasn’t any hint of “good news” in these words for the Jews. Jesus’ return to the Father was the signal of their final condemnation. Jesus said in chapter eight:

- John 8:21 (cf. 12:35) — “I go away, and you will seek Me, **and will die in your sin**; where I am going, you cannot come.”

But when Jesus says to His “*little children*” (His “*dear ones*”), “Where I am going, you cannot come,” there isn’t any hint of judgment here. In fact, for the disciples, in the midst of the grief of this separation there’s also good news, because for them, Jesus’ return to the Father—to be glorified in God—is to be the signal of their final salvation. When Jesus says, “where I am going, you cannot come,” His emphasis is not *just* on the fact that they cannot come but also on the nature of the *place* where He is going – which is *such* that they can’t possibly follow Him there of their own accord.

Where was Jesus going? We have to be careful not to answer this question too “trite.” Jesus said to Nicodemus in chapter three:

- John 3:13 — “No one has ascended into heaven, *but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man.*”

See how it’s Jesus’ descent from heaven that prepares the way for, and even makes possible, His triumphant ascent now *as the Son of Man* to where He was before. So Jesus says to the Jews in chapter six:

- John 6:62 — “What then if you see **the Son of Man** ascending to *where He was before*?”

And in chapter seven:

- John 7:33 — “For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him *who sent Me.*”

Remember John’s words at the beginning of this chapter:

- John 13:3 — Jesus, knowing... that He had *come forth from God* and was going *back to God*...

Why did Jesus descend from heaven? Jesus descended from heaven *in order that* He might ascend **back** into heaven now as the crucified and triumphant *Son of Man*. Why did Jesus come forth from God? Jesus came forth from God *in order that* He might go **back** to God now as the crucified and triumphant *Son of Man*. And so it’s not until Jesus ascends back to God now as the Son of Man that there can be any place for us where He is going or that the way can be opened for us to follow Him there. In other words, the coming separation, as difficult as it may be, will only be the necessary prelude to the final reunion.

“Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, ‘**Where I am going, you cannot come.**’” Until now, you’ve followed Me wherever I have gone, but now You cannot come where I am going *because now I am going to the Father* (cf. 14:12, 28; 16:5, 10, 17; 20:17) and no one, of his own accord, can follow Me to the Father. You cannot come where I am going because as yet there isn’t any place for you where I am going. You cannot come where I am going because the way has not yet been opened

for you to follow. But this is precisely why Jesus *must leave them* now. The coming separation is only the necessary prelude to their final reunion. This is what explains how even as He looks ahead to this period of separation Jesus can go on to say in verses 34-35:

V. John 13:34-35 — “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Why should we bother with being Jesus’ disciples if we’re never to come, ourselves, where He has gone – if we’re never to be, ourselves, in the place where He is? Why should we bother with loving one another as He has loved us if His love for us is the kind that leaves us separated from Him forever? But as it is, immediately after announcing His departure to a place where His disciples cannot follow, Jesus gives them a new commandment — that they love one another, even as He has loved them, that they also love one another. Our love for one another is to be the visible sign, during this period of separation, that we are, indeed, His disciples – that we are indeed the ones that He has loved. Our love for one another is to be the visible sign, during this period of separation, that we are the ones looking forward to our final reunion with Him. And therefore our love for one another is even the visible sign in the present that this period of separation is only the necessary prelude to our final reunion.

We’ll come back to these verses next week. For right now the disciples are still troubled by Jesus’ words about being with them only a little while longer and going someplace where they cannot come. They don’t understand. And so they cannot yet appreciate this “new commandment” that Jesus has given them.

VI. John 13:36-38 — Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, where are You going?” Jesus answered, “Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later.” Peter said to Him, “Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You.” Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for Me? [No, I will lay down my life for you.] Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times.”

Peter is thinking of a “following” that he can accomplish in his own strength and determination. In just a few hours now he’ll draw his sword and strike the slave of the high priest (18:10-11). Peter is willing to lay down his life for Jesus *in battle*, just as the righteous and courageous men of old were willing to lay down their lives in battle for the kings of Israel. And why is Peter willing to do this? Because he doesn’t want to be parted from Jesus. But what Peter doesn’t yet understand is that it’s not he that must lay down his life for Jesus but Jesus who must lay down His life for Peter – *so that* one day Peter can follow Him to where He is going and be with Him there forever. Peter is willing to lay down his life for Jesus in battle because he doesn’t want to be parted from Jesus. He wants to follow Jesus right now, wherever He goes. But what Peter doesn’t yet understand is that *Jesus* will lay down His life *for him* not in battle but as a willing sacrifice so that by returning to the Father *in this way* Peter can one day follow Him in the same path of sacrifice (cf. Jn. 21:18-19; Rom. 8:17; Phil. 3:10) and be with Him where He is forever. In short, Peter has not yet fully comprehended *where* Jesus is going and so he can’t yet understand the glorious implications of *why* Jesus is going there and *why* he cannot come now himself. Peter doesn’t want to be separated from Jesus. But the coming separation is only the

necessary prelude to the final reunion. Because Peter doesn't yet understand, and because his faith is weak, instead of laying down his life for Jesus, he will deny Jesus three times before a rooster crows.

If Peter and the rest of the disciples were already troubled by Jesus' words, can we imagine how much more troubled they must be now? So Jesus goes on, now, to say to His little children, to His "dear ones":

VII. John 14:1 — "Do not let your heart be troubled [distressed; in turmoil and upheaval]; believe in God, believe also in Me."

What's the difference between the distress of Jesus' soul (12:27; 13:21) and the distress in the hearts of the disciples? The distress of Jesus was grounded in His perfect understanding of the situation – in His perfect comprehension of the Father's will. This distress of the disciples is the result of their inability to understand. The distress of the disciples is the result of their inability to comprehend where Jesus is going and therefore why He must go and leave them behind. Jesus cannot make them understand now (because of the redemptive-historical date on the calendar), but He can call them to believe. "Do not let your heart be troubled [do not be distressed]; *believe* in God, *believe* also in Me." *Believe*, then, in these words that I now speak to you:

VIII. John 14:2-4 — "In My Father's house are many dwelling places [rooms]; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way where I am going."

The disciples don't want to be separated from Jesus. What Jesus wants them to see and to believe—even if they don't yet understand—is that the coming separation is only the necessary prelude to the final reunion. The *reason* Jesus came from God was so that He might go back to God now *as* "the Son of Man," *in order to* prepare for us a place and then come *again* and receive us to Himself, *so that where He is there we may be also*. The *reason* Jesus descended from heaven was so that He might ascend back into heaven now *as* "the Son of Man," *in order to* prepare for us a place and then come *again* and receive us to Himself, *so that where He is there we may be also*.

If the problem for the disciples was their distress at the coming separation, maybe our problem is how "content" we can be with the separation. While these verses are often quoted at funerals, their main point is not to be a comfort and a hope in the face of death; their main point is to be a comfort and a hope in the face of life – of life that is not yet lived *with Him, where He is*. It's true that we need not be distressed at the present separation, but this is only true and this should only be possible because we believe in God and we believe also in Jesus whose words still fill us to overflowing with comfort and with joy:

"In My Father's house [think the heavenly Jerusalem whether that Jerusalem is above or whether it has come down to earth; cf. Rev. 21:1-2, 9-27; 22:1-5] are many dwelling places [rooms]; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for

you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way where I am going.”

We hear those last words of Jesus (“and you know the way where I am going”) and we rejoice because we understand. If the place where Jesus has gone is the one place above every other place that we want to be, then how can we not rejoice that we know the way? But the disciples don’t yet understand; and their faith is weak:

IX. John 14:5-6 — Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father [no one comes to the Father’s house, to the place where I am going] but through Me.”

Jesus is not only the one we long to be with, He is even the way for us to come where He is because He *is* the truth and He *is* the life. And so here is another wonder: Even as we find ourselves not yet living life with Him where He is, we *can* still enjoy sweet communion and fellowship with Him because He is, *Himself*, “*the way*” to where He is.

In the face of this life not yet lived with Him where He is, our chief comfort and joy must be His word of promise to us – that He has gone to prepare a place for us and that He will come again and receive us to Himself so that where He is there we may be also.

➤ 1 John 3:3 — Everyone who *thus* hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

In the face of this life not yet lived with Him where He is, is our chief comfort and joy the communion that we have even now with Him who is *Himself* “*the way*” to where He is?

➤ Philippians 3:7-12 — Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me *his own* [cf. Jn. 13:1].