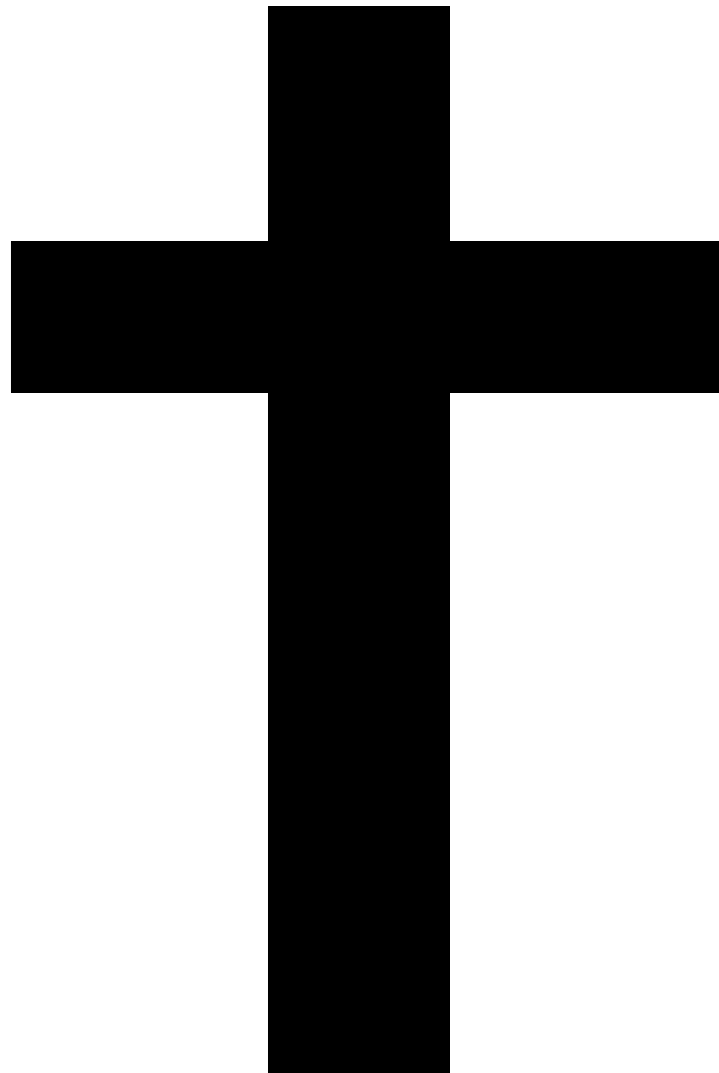


John 13 – 17

*The full extent
of his love*



John

INTEGRATED BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

John 13-17, *The full extent of his love*

How to get best value out of these studies...

Welcome to a new series of Bible studies that look at the Gospel of John.

If you're using these Guides in a Small Group, it is vital that you have done preparatory work **before** you get to your meeting. This will be of great benefit not only to you, but to the other members of your group.

If you're doing these studies individually, make sure you let someone know you are doing so, and arrange a time to meet with them when you've finished (or even before) to let them know how your life is being changed by God's Word.

Always surround your time looking into God's Word with **prayer**, asking God to change your heart and life so that you – with God's people – might become more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ.

Introduction

The full extent of his love ...

Of all the four gospels, none is so simple, nor yet as deep as is John's gospel. Of all the events that John narrates, none gets so much attention as the night that Jesus spends with his disciples before his arrest. John alone gives this extensive report. Jesus knows what is about to happen, and in the course of the meal, he orchestrates the events leading up to his death, before speaking in earnest to his disciples. Much can be learned from what Jesus says, but why John's focus?

The answer is given by John himself in his introductory remarks:

'It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.'

As we shall see, these remarks refer not simply to Jesus' washing of his disciples' feet, but to all that he does and says that fateful night. Here, in these chapters leading up to Jesus' death, we are shown the full extent of his love.

John's comment should make us pause. Traditionally, Christians have always gone to the cross to see there the extent of God's love for us. Doesn't Jesus himself say that is in Jesus' death itself that God the Father shows us the extent of his love for the world (3:16). But now John alerts us to something different. Here in the words and actions of Jesus, we see the full love of God *the Son* for his disciples, shown as never before. And because we, the readers, know what is about to happen, John allows us to view these events from a vantage point out of reach to the twelve disciples. We see what Jesus is doing, can imagine the pathos in the room, and can therefore appreciate with hindsight the import of Jesus' words. John records this night for us - that we too, may know and grasp the full extent of Jesus' love for us.

Take the time not to rush through these studies. John's writes for us to read slowly, to savour Jesus' words. Approaching this too quickly will rob you of the time needed to absorb the impact of what Jesus shows us.

May Jesus speak to your hearts and minds as you realise afresh the full extent of his love.

Chris Jolliffe,
February, 2007.

Study 1 **Unless I wash you ...**

John 13

Pray for God to open your eyes.

1. When has anyone demonstrated how much they care for you? What did they do? What in particular motivated them to do this at that time?

2. Jesus and his disciples had journeyed to Jerusalem on foot to celebrate the Passover. The Passover was usually a meal of great celebration for the Jews, as they remembered God's salvation of their ancestors long ago when he redeemed them with a mighty hand from Egypt, triumphing over Pharaoh and Egypt's gods. This Passover meal, however, was marked with foreboding. John 13 narrates three moments of acute embarrassment for the disciples.

The first moment of embarrassment: **Jesus' washing their feet**. Read verses 1-17.

- It would have been normal to expect a servant to wash the feet of travelers when arriving at their destination. The disciples had not organised this. This would have been embarrassing for them. But things became acutely embarrassing when Jesus, their host and honoured Lord performed the lowly task that none of them was prepared to do. What might have prompted him to do this? (Verse 4 begins with the word 'so'. What has happened in verses 1-3 as the cause of Jesus' action?)

- Why did Peter do an ‘about-face’ in his response to Jesus’ demonstration of love? (v6-9).

- What is behind Jesus’ statement that ‘Unless I wash you, you have no part with me’? (see Revelation 22:19, where the same Greek word is used)

- What does Jesus mean when he tells the disciples that they must ‘wash one another’s feet’ (v14)? Why must they do this? (v15-16)

- How does this impact you:
 - ò in your ‘formal roles’ of serving at church?

 - ò informally at church?

- Who is in charge here? (v18, 27)

 - How does Jesus' passing of the bread to Judas show us the extent of his love?
3. The third moment of embarrassment: **Jesus dropping the clanger.**
Read verses 31-38.
- From v31, Judas' leaving has now set into place a chain of events that will result in God glorifying the Son of Man at once. How does this change our perspective? In what sense could Jesus' suffering on the cross be glorious? Is this where Jesus is going?

 - What makes Jesus' command new? (v33-35) How would people have known these men as Jesus disciples up until now?

- How often we have promised great things to God, only to have gone back on our word. What two revelations does Jesus now make about Peter? (v36, 21:18-19; v38, 18:15-27). What effect did this have on the disciples? (14:1)

- How has Jesus revealed the full extent of his love here?

- What has Jesus shown you about how to love others? ... about why to love others?

PRAY

3. Often the image that springs to mind is of Jesus going and decorating our heavenly bedroom just the way we'd like. But is that really the place where he is going in his preparation of a place for us? (v28)

- How does this give perspective on the events of the cross?

- What is the greatest comfort about heaven? (v3)

Thank God that our true home is with Jesus, in the presence of the Father.

3. In verse 1, Jesus calls his disciples to 'Trust in God, *trust also in me.*' This instruction is key to Jesus' comfort of them in their grief.

- What is the main concern of the disciples? (13:37; 14:5)

- How does Jesus answer this? (14:4, 6-7)

- What is the significance of the three-fold use of 'the' (the way, the truth, the life) instead of 'a' (a way, a truth, a life) for Jesus' call for the disciples to trust in him?

4. Undoubtedly for the disciples, who were steeped in the Jewish belief of only one God, Jesus' call to trust in himself as well as the Father was difficult to swallow - as Philip shows: "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." In answer, Jesus must explain his relationship to the Father. Read again verses 8-14.

- How does Jesus' describe his identity with the Father:
 - ò as identical in person (Jesus IS the Father)?

ò as intimately inseparable in who they are and in what they do?

ò as mutually indwelling each other?

ò as subordinate to the Father?

- Does this contradict Jewish monotheism (the belief that there is only one God)?

 - How does Jesus answer reinforce his command in 14:1 ‘Trust in God, trust also in me’?

 - In what sense might the works of Jesus’ disciples be greater than those of Jesus himself? (17:20, 21:25)
5. Jesus’ news of his return following his departure would undoubtedly have comforted his disciples. But what of the intervening period? Jesus now loves his disciples by teaching them of what will happen in the interim. Read verses 15-31.
- **At Jesus’ request, the Father will send a Counselor, the Spirit of truth.** The word translated as ‘Counselor’ is the Greek title Paraclete, meaning ‘Comforter’, ‘Counselor’ (as in ‘Guide’, not ‘psychiatrist’), ‘Advocate’ and ‘Helper’.

- ò Who exactly, dwells with Jesus disciples through the Holy Spirit? (v10, v18, v20, v23)

- ò Is it right to talk about having a ‘relationship with God’, or a ‘relationship with Jesus’?

- ò What is the specific role of the Holy Spirit for these 11 disciples? (v25-26). What is the implication for the authority of the New Testament scriptures?

- **In the interim, Jesus commands his disciples to love him by obeying his commands.**
 - ò Read verses 15, 21, 23-24, 31, noting carefully their contexts. What point is being made by tying together love and obedience in the context of the Spirit coming?

ò Are you loving Jesus? How?

ò Can you grow in your relationship with Jesus merely by study and reflection?

6. Stop and consider what you have learnt about the Father, Son and Spirit. What comfort does this give you? Take the time to praise God.

- Does any believer really enjoy the extravagant prayer promises in vv7-8?

- How can someone in him be unfruitful?

- How are these branches cut off and destroyed?

- 3. The answers to many of these questions hinge on the more important issue of Jesus' relationship with his disciples, and how that reflects Jesus' own relationship with God the Father. Read vv8-16.
 - How has the Father loved Jesus? (17:24) How has Jesus loved his disciples? (v9) How has Jesus therefore loved YOU?

 - What example does Jesus set us about how to remain in the Father's love? (v10). What is the implication for us? (v9)

¹ Please note - this is not a description of how someone becomes one of Jesus' disciples, but rather stresses the responsibilities that being a disciple carries.

- What is the joy that Jesus has and wants us to have? (v11)

 - How is our relationship with Jesus to be expressed? (v12-13)

 - How is our friendship with Jesus different from our friendship with others? (15:14, 16)

 - What, then, is the 'fruit' that Jesus' disciples are to bear?
4. Having described the disciples' relationship with Jesus as reflecting Jesus' own relationship with the Father, and being fully aware of what he himself is about to suffer, now Jesus loves his disciples by preparing them for their own persecution that they will endure as his disciples.

Read John 15:17-16:4

- What ought Jesus' followers to expect from the world, and why?

- ò Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6
 - ò Romans 8:27, Ephesians 6:18
 - ò I Corinthians 2:12
 - ò I Corinthians 12:1-13
 - ò Romans 7:6, 8:9, 2 Corinthians 3:18, I Thessalonians 5:23
 - ò Ephesians 1:17
 - ò Hebrews 3:7
 - ò I John 3:24
- Jesus has just spoken about the world hating the disciples. What encouragement does he now give? (v8-11)
 - What extra role will the Spirit have for the 11 remaining disciples, soon to become apostles? (v12-15)
 - How has Jesus showed them the full extent of his love?

2. Read vv17-33.

Jesus has been reassuring his disciples that, despite his imminent departure, every contingency has been planned for. The disciples will not be left alone, without help.

- When Jesus says, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me', is he referring to his impending crucifixion (and then resurrection), or to his death, resurrection & ascension to the Father (and then his return)? (v20-22, 27)

- The one topic which Jesus has not dealt with in his discussion with the disciples is the cross. In verses 17-18, the disciples are clearly confused. What blessings does Jesus promise the disciples after his resurrection?

ò v23a2

ò v23b-24

² (n.b. the verb means 'ask a question out of ignorance' rather than 'ask for something')

- Jesus speaks of a new relationship that the disciples will enter into with God the Father (v25-28). How is this different to what they currently experience, pre-cross and pre-Pentecost?

- The disciples are stunned that Jesus is able to answer their questions before they ask them, a declaration of faith (v30). How does Jesus' qualification reveal a gap in their understanding?

- 3. Jesus has outlined all of this information (from chapter 14-16) to his disciples. In one way we have come full circle (14:1, 16:33). Think back over the previous studies. How has what Jesus told them given them peace? In what ways has he overcome the world?

- Thank God for these things, and pray for a true perspective on the cross as one of Jesus' disciples.

Jesus prays for himself

1. Read 17:1-5

- How does Jesus think of the time of his death, now at last upon him?

- In a nutshell, what is the burden of Jesus' prayer for himself?

- What is Jesus' reason for praying this? (v2-3). How are these things connected? (John 3:16)

- How then, is Jesus' prayer for himself a prayer also for us?

Jesus Prays for his Disciples

2. Read 17:6-19

- In verses 6-10, Jesus 'reports back' to the Father about the success of his mission concerning the remaining 11 disciples (c.f. v12), soon to become apostles. What might the disciples have gleaned listening to this prayer?

- Is Jesus God's gift to them, or are they God's gift to Jesus? For what purpose?

- What does Jesus pray for the 11 disciples? (v11-12, 14-15)

- The 11 are to be 'sanctified' (v6 - NIV translation 'revealed', v17,19) - that is, set aside from the world, made holy, for a particular purpose. What relationship do they now have with the world? (v6, v11, v14, 15, 16, 18)

- What is the implication of all of this for us, who have received the testimony of the apostles in the pages of scripture? (Luke 1:1-4, 2 Peter 1:16-21; 1 John 1:1-4)

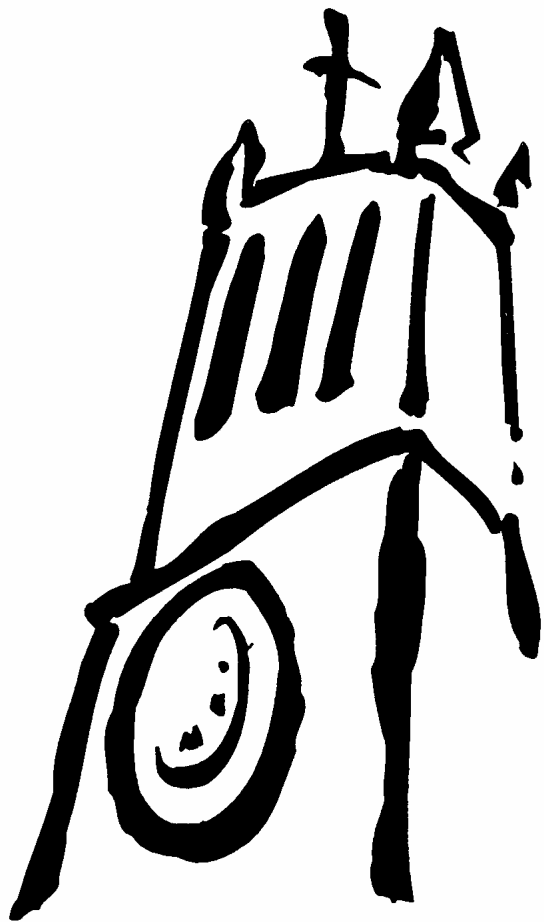
- What is Jesus' ministry today?

Stop and reflect.

5. How has God's Spirit impacted you as you've listened in on Jesus' prayers?

6. How has this prepared you for the events that follow, as Jesus heads to the cross?

7. Pray with joy, and give thanks that Jesus has showed you the 'full extent of his love' (13:1).



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