

Gospel of John: Chapters 13–15

Study Guide

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Chapter 13

John 13:1–17 — The Foot Washing

Verses 1–5

“Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

² And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s *son*, to betray Him, ³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, ⁴ rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. ⁵ After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded.

- Jesus knows his hour has come. Another example of his communication with the Father.
- The foot washing is the enacted parable of the cross: both demonstrate a love that goes all the way, that empties itself completely, that holds nothing in reserve.

Verses 6–11

⁶ Then He came to Simon Peter. And *Peter* said to Him, “Lord, are You washing my feet?”

⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.”

⁸ Peter said to Him, “You shall never wash my feet!”

Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.”

⁹ Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head!”

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, “He who is bathed needs only to wash *his* feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.” ¹¹ For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, “You are not all clean.”

- Peter’s refusal is not disobedience but a kind of misplaced reverence.
- The Greek phrase “*ou meros*” translated here “no part” is in other versions translated as “no share”. It signifies participation, inheritance, belonging. To refuse the washing is to exclude oneself from relationship with the one who washes.
- Q – The revered rabbi takes on the task of a servant who washes their feet. How would you have felt?

Verses 12–17

¹²When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. ¹³“You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

- Jesus explains the purpose of this demonstration was that the disciples should see themselves on an equal basis with one another and be servants to each other.
- Q – Is this the perception that Christians have towards one another today?

John 13:18–30 — The Betrayer Identified

Verses 18–30

¹⁸“I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, ‘He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.’ ¹⁹Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am *He*. ²⁰Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.”

²¹When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.” ²²Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.

²³Now there was ^l_dleaning on Jesus’ bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. ²⁴Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

²⁵Then, leaning ^l_eback on Jesus’ breast, he said to Him, “Lord, who is it?”

²⁶Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped *it*.” And having dipped the bread, He gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon. ²⁷Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, “What you do, do quickly.” ²⁸But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. ²⁹For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, “Buy *those things* we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor.

³⁰Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.

- Psalm 41:9 — a psalm of David describing the pain of betrayal by a close associate who shared his table. The sharing of a meal in the ancient world was an act of covenant loyalty; to betray one’s host after eating at his table was the deepest form of treachery.
- The phrase “troubled in his spirit” (*etarachthē tō pneumati*) is identical in form to the disturbance at the tomb of Lazarus (11:33) and at the approach of the cross (12:27). John consistently portrays Jesus as genuinely affected by what he encounters: grief, betrayal, the weight of death.
- Q – What do you make of the words “Satan entered into him.”

John 13:31–38 — The New Commandment

Verses 31–35

³¹So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. ³²If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately. ³³Little 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. ³⁴A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have

loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- The departure of Judas allows Jesus to speak more intimately than before it seems.
- The address “little children” (teknia) is unique in the Gospel of John; in the John’s epistles it becomes characteristic.
- Q - How is the world to know we are the disciples of Jesus?
- Q – What do you make of the fact that to love one another is a “new commandment”?

Verses 36–38

³⁶ 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.”

³⁷ Peter said to Him, “Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake.”

³⁸ 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.

- Peter is impetuous. He wants to follow Jesus now!
- Q – Is it possible that we overestimate our devotion and loyalty to Jesus?

Chapter 14

John 14:1–18 — I Go to Prepare a Place and Will Send You a Comforter

Verses 1–11

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father’s house are many ^[a]mansions; if *it were* not so, ^[b]I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And 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. ⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know.”

⁵ Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?”

⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

⁷ “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.”

⁸ Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.”

⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. ¹¹ Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

- The word for troubled (tarassomai, appearing again) is the same word used of Jesus himself at 11:33, 12:27, and 13:21. He addresses in his disciples the disturbance he has himself experienced. (Tempted in all ways as us... Hebrews 4:15)

- I am going away. I will prepare a place. I will come for you to bring you there.
- Show us this Father you have been talking about so much.
- Q – “I am the way, the truth and the life” is the sixth “I AM” statement and is often quoted. What does it mean to you?

Verses 12–18

¹² “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. ¹³ And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

¹⁵ “If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

- Ask anything in my name!! (That the Father may be glorified in the Son)
- “Another helper”. The word *paraklētos* means literally “one called alongside”. It is a big deal as it is also mentioned five other times (14:15–17, 14:26, 15:26, 16:7-11, 16:12–15).
- The Spirit is described as “the Spirit of truth” — a title that appears three times in the Farewell Discourse (14:17, 15:26, 16:13).
- Q – What does it mean that the disciples will perform greater works than Jesus?

John 14:19–30 — I’m Leaving. Time for the Holy Spirit to Come.

Verses 19–24

¹⁹ “A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. ²⁰ At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. ²¹ He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?”

²³ Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. ²⁴ He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.

- Love requires obedience (v 21)
- Q – What does it mean “You will see me, but the world will not.”

Verses 25–30

²⁵ “These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. ²⁸ You have heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away and coming *back* to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, ‘I am going to the Father,’ for My Father is greater than I.

²⁹ “And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. ³⁰ I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. ³¹ But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.

- The Holy Spirit is our teacher.
- How are the Gospels the inspired word of God? The Holy Spirit brought all things to remembrance that Jesus had told them.
- Q - We have a peace that is not of this world. What is the peace that the world gives?
- Q – What do you think is mean by... “The ruler of this world is coming and has nothing in me.”

Chapter 15

John 15:1–17 — I Am the True Vine. Keep my Commandments.

Verses 1–8

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He ^[a] takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

⁵ “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you ^[b] will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

- The seventh and final “I AM” statement. The vine is one of the most pervasive images of Israel in the Hebrew Scriptures: Psalm 80:8–16 pictures Israel as a vine brought from Egypt and planted by God; Isaiah 5:1–7 is the song of the vineyard whose vines produced wild grapes.
- The Father as vinedresser is a detail of profound theological significance. The pruning is not punishment but cultivation: fruitful branches are pruned so that they bear more fruit.
- The warning about branches that do not abide and are thrown into the fire is sobering. The image is not merely about loss of rewards or reduced fruitfulness; the branch apart from the vine withers and is burned.

Verses 9-17

⁹ “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.

¹¹ “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full. ¹² This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, than

to lay down one's life for his friends.¹⁴ You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. ¹⁷ These things I command you, that you love one another.

- Jesus remained in his Father's love by keeping his commandments.
- Love for one another is further defined as being willing to lay down one's life for his/her friends.
- Q – Is doing what is commanded as a condition of friendship typical do you think?

John 15:18-27 – You Are Not of This World

Verses 12–15

¹⁸ "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. ²¹ But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. ²² If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ He who hates Me hates My Father also. ²⁴ If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. ²⁵ But *this happened* that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause.'

²⁶ "But when the ^{Re}Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. ²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

- You are not of this world. Expect persecution from the world.
- Reinforcement of the role of the Holy Spirit.
- Q – What are the subtle ways that you are persecuted as a Christian?