

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

The New Things John 13:31-35

Judas in **John 13:30** had just left the upper room and had gone out into the night. His departure put the actual machinery of the arrest, trial and execution of Christ into motion.

The sun had literally set for the last time on Jesus' earthly life and ministry. His 'hour' had come and very soon He would be dead. But as we will see in our study of Christ's farewell discourse in **John 13:31** to **John 17:26**, Jesus made very good use of these last few hours of His earthly life. He made very good use of these last few hours by passing along to His disciples the truths that they needed to hear prior to His earthly departure.

So, how did Christ begin His farewell discourse? How did Christ begin to share the truths that His disciples needed to hear? Christ began by sharing with them three fundamental factors that would be important in shaping the course of their immediate future. So, what were these three fundamental factors?

The first factor that would be fundamental in shaping the course of their immediate future was a new glory (John 13:31-32). Let me read for you **John 13:31-32**. **"When therefore he had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; (32) if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately.'"**

Certainly the disciples of Christ had been exposed to the glory of Christ during His earthly ministry but they were now going to be exposed to the glory of Christ in a new and different way. So, what is this new expression of glory that the disciples will now have the privilege of witnessing? In order to answer this question let us carefully look at the verses we have just read.

Let us begin by looking at **verse 31**. How did **verse 31** begin? **"When therefore he had gone out."**

The word **"therefore"** gives us the sense that the departure of Judas was in fact the catalyst for Jesus to launch into what He was about to share with His disciples about this new glory.

Before Judas had left the upper room he had dominated the attention of Christ. Before Judas had left the upper room he was totally in the cross hairs of Christ and was being very systematically exposed by Jesus as the betrayer.

But things changed after Judas left. In other words, after Judas left the room, Jesus was able to turn His attention to His remaining disciples and speak to them about this new glory that they would now be witnessing.

So, what did He say to them? Let us continue to read the verse. **"When therefore he [Judas] had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of Man glorified.'"**

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When Jesus spoke of Himself as now being glorified, He was speaking about His *death*, which would be taking place in a matter of hours.

The disciples throughout Christ's public ministry had seen Christ's glory displayed through His miracles, but now they would be seeing the glory of Christ displayed in a new way, or in other words, they would be seeing the glory of Christ displayed, not through His miracles, but through His suffering.

In all heaven and earth there is no act so worthy of *praise* than when Christ willingly gave Himself up to death as an offering for sin (Revelation 5:9-12). If there is any doubt about the glorious nature of this particular act as compared to any other act performed by Christ, all we have to do is to consider the words of the heavenly host in **Revelation 5:9-12**.

Let me read these verses for you. **"And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy art thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. (10) And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.' (11) And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, (12) saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.'"**

So, what caused the heavenly host to praise Jesus and to give Him glory? Was it the feeding of the 5000, or Jesus turning to water into the wine, or Jesus walking on water? No, it was none of these things.

The miracles of Christ displayed the glory of Christ in a certain way, but in all heaven and earth there is no act so completely displaying the glory of Christ than His death, and therefore there is no act so worthy of praise than His death.

This is why I would encourage you to continually keep the cross of Christ ever before you when you get up in the morning, when you go about your life during the day and when you finally prepare yourself to go to sleep at night.

Does the magnificence and the glory of the death of Christ make Jesus more worthy of praise than His own Father since it was Christ that died on the cross and not His Father? And of course the answer would have to be no!

Let us continue to read **John 13:31**. **"Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him."** Since Christ is in the Father and the Father is in Christ, when Christ was glorified in the cross, His Father was also glorified and is worthy of the *same* praise as His Son (Rev. 5:13-14). Certainly the heavenly hosts understood this. This is why in **Revelation 5**, after directing praise to the Son of God in light of His work on the cross, they also directed their praise to His Father.

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So, let me once again read for you from **Revelation 5**, but this time I will not read for you **Revelation 5:9-12** but this time I will read for you **Revelation 5:13-14**. **"And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, 'To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.' (14) And four living creatures kept saying, 'Amen.' And the elders fell down and worshipped."**

Why can the heavenly hosts, in light of Christ suffering and death, direct equal praise to both the Father and the Son? They can do this because of what we learned in **John 13:31**. They can do this because the Father is glorified in the Son. But this is not the only reason why the heavenly host can direct equal praise to both the Father and the Son in **Revelation 5**. Let us continue to read but this time let us read **John 13:32**.

"If God is glorified in Him [which we know is a fact based on what we just read in **John 13:31], God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately."** As God is glorified in Jesus, so also is Jesus glorified in God (John 13:32).

This is more than mutual or reciprocal glorification, as when I sing your praise and you sing my praise. It is also not two separate glorifications. The two constitute a unit. The Son cannot glorify the Father without the Father glorifying the Son, and the Father cannot glorify the Son without the Son glorifying the Father, for the simple reason that the Father and the Son are one, which is exactly what Jesus told His disciples in **John 10:30**.

Had the disciples of Christ seen the glory of Christ throughout His public ministry? Yes! But they had not seen anything yet. In the next few hours as they witnessed the suffering and the death of Christ they would be witnessing the greatest display of glory that this world or even this universe had ever known. Jesus wants His disciples to know this. Or in other words, He wants His disciples to know that whatever happens in the near future, they can be assured that it means glory for Himself and also glory for His Father. So, what may on the surface appear to be a defeat is really truly a victory.

So, what was the very first factor that Christ shared with His disciples that would be fundamental in shaping the course of their immediate future? The first factor that would be fundamental in shaping the course of their immediate future was a new glory. So, what was the second factor?

The second factor that would be fundamental in shaping the course of their immediate future was a new situation (John 13:33). Let me read for you **John 13:33**. **"Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You shall seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, I now say to you also, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.'"**

The events that were even now in the process of unfolding and would ultimately culminate in His death would not only have an impact upon Jesus and His Father but it would also have an obvious impact upon His disciples.

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Notice how the verse begins, "**little children.**" The expression "little children" (TEKNIA) communicates the most affectionate *endearment* yet it also connotes the immaturity of those that are so dear.

And what does He tell those who are so dear to Him? "**I am with you a little while longer.**" Why is Jesus telling them this? Jesus is telling His disciples that He will only be with them a little while longer because He wants them to pay close attention to the things He is now choosing to *share with them.* He wants them to take the things He is sharing with them to heart and not to forget them.

And how will they respond when He is taken from them in death? The verse goes on to tell us that they will seek Him. Let me once again read the verse for you. "**Little children, I am with you a little while longer.**" And then it says, "**You shall seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, I now say to you also, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'**" What does this mean? Does this mean that after He is crucified that they will go out to His tomb and attempt to re-establish some kind of fellowship with His corpse? No, this obviously is not what it means and certainly this is not what happened. Rather I believe it is talking about a future time when the disciples would find themselves, in their service to Christ in this world, longing to be with Christ in the glory of heaven. But just because they were longing to be with Christ would not make it happen until their work for Christ in this world had been completed.

We see Christ alluding to this very thing later to the apostle in **John 13:36**. Let me read for you **John 13:36**. "**Simon Peter said to Him, 'Lord, where are you going?' Jesus answered, 'Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you shall follow later.'**" When Jesus told His disciples that they would not be able to come to Him, He only meant that they would not be able to come to Him at that *present* time (John 13:36).

The world, as the disciples had known it during the three years of Christ's public ministry, was going to be fundamentally changed in a number of different ways, and these changes certainly would have a significant impact on His disciples' immediate future.

So, what was the very first factor that Christ shared with His disciples that would be fundamental in shaping the course of their immediate future? The first factor that would be fundamental in shaping the course of their immediate future was a new glory. And what was the second fundamental factor? The second factor that would be fundamental in shaping the course of their immediate future was a new situation. And now we are ready to consider the third fundamental factor.

The third factor that would be fundamental in shaping the course of their immediate future was a new *commandment* (John 13:34-35). Let me read for you **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. (35) By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**"

Having announced His departure, and having insisted that His disciples cannot, at least at that present time, come with Him in **John 13:33**, Jesus makes it very clear to them what He expects from them in terms of each other. He describes this expectation in **John 13:34** as "**a new commandment.**"

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And what was this new commandment? The new commandment that Christ gave His disciples was that they would love one another as He had *loved* them (John 13:34). So, in what sense was this commandment new?

Though the Jews in Leviticus 19:18 had been commanded to love their neighbor as they loved themselves, Christ is commanding His disciples to love one another as *He* had loved them.

In other words, He is calling His disciples to a higher standard of love for each other than He had called the Jews to have toward their *neighbors*. The reason for this is simple. The Jews had no concept of the standard of love that Christ was going to display at His cross when He, the incarnate Son of God, would willingly give Himself up to death as the propitiation for our sin. But though Israel may not have understood it, certainly His eleven disciples who were with Him that night in the upper room would in time come to understand it just as we by the grace of God have come to understand it.

And because we have come to understand it, and by the grace of God can actually live it out, we and we alone of all the people of this world can and should be loving one another in this way. And what would happen if we actually did this?

Let me read for you **John 13:35.** "**By this will all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**" If we, as followers of Christ, would love another in the same way as Christ loved us then world could not help but notice and conclude that we are in fact *disciples* of Christ (John 13:35).

Certainly loving our brethren in the same way as Christ loved us does not preclude us from expressing love for the world. But even though we might love them, they will not be able to love us back in the same way. Why? They do not understand the love of Christ nor do they have the capacity to express the love of Christ. So invariably the relationship is quite one sided. But this is not the case with the church, and when the church is doing what God is calling them to do, it will capture the attention of the world. How do we know this? Christ told us that it would.

How is the church of Christ doing? Is it capturing the attention of the world? Is the church in general identifying itself as disciples of Christ and creating a buzz that would make it impossible for the world not to at least consider our message?

I would think that we would all have to agree that the church unfortunately is falling miserably short of the high standard that has been set for us in **John 13:34** when Christ gave His disciples this "**New commandment.**"

Unfortunately the relationships that exist in most churches between professing followers of Christ do not seem to be much different than the relationships that exist in the local YMCA or among the Shriner's. This needs to change!

Christ, in the very beginning of what we commonly refer to as His "farewell discourse," introduced to His disciples three very basic three fundamental factors that would be important in shaping the course of their immediate future. What were those three fundamental factors?

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The first factor that would be fundamental in shaping the course of their immediate future was a new glory (John 13:31-32).

The second factor that would be fundamental in shaping the course of their immediate future was a new situation (John 13:33).

The third factor that would be fundamental in shaping the course of their immediate future was a new commandment (John 13:34-35).

May we by the grace of God better understand how to *apply* Christ's standard of love in our relationships with one another.