

Thru the Bible Commentary

John 13:18-30

CHAPTER 13

I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me [John 13:18].

Jesus is very careful to tell them that He does not speak of all of them. He has just told them they are happy if they do these things, but there is one man among them who cannot do them. Do you know why? He has not believed. Jesus has already told them that all of them are not clean. Jesus had said, "Ye call me Master and Lord." A master is a teacher and he is to be believed. A lord is to be obeyed. Faith and obedience must go together. Saving, living faith leads to obedience. Judas did not have this faith.

Jesus quotes Psalm 41:9: "... which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." He is referring to Judas. It is not a question of this man losing his spiritual life. It is rather a revelation that he never had a spiritual life! He is not a sheep who has become unclean; he is a pig that has returned to its wallowing again, or a dog that has returned to its vomit. That is the picture of Judas Iscariot. Yet, he was there in the Upper Room and this man got his feet washed. He received the washing by the Word of God, and he rejected it totally.

Let us go over this again so it is very clear. The blood of Jesus Christ is the Godward side of His sacrifice. The blood is for the expiation of our sin. The blood has cancelled all my guilt and has washed out that awful, black account which was against me. It has given me a standing before God because it has blotted out all my transgressions. The blood is for penal expiation. The cleansing by the water is the manward aspect of it. This is for our moral purification. After we have our standing before God on the ground of the blood of Jesus Christ, the water of the Word gives us our moral purification in our daily walk.

Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he [John 13:19].

Jesus tells them that one of them will “lift up his heel” against Him so that when it happens, they will not be shocked. Then they cannot say it was a pity Jesus didn’t know about it. Have you ever noticed that the Lord Jesus is betrayed from the inside? This is still true today. People complain about the sin outside the church, but that doesn’t hurt the church. In fact, some of those sinners get saved. The hurt comes when Jesus Christ is betrayed on the inside.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me [John 13:20].

Jesus adds this because Judas had been sent on missions with the rest of the disciples. He had preached and he had healed. “He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.” No one is saved by the faith of the messenger or preacher. We are saved by hearing the Word of God and receiving Christ. If a Western Union boy brings you a telegram that a rich uncle has died and left you a fortune, the fact that the Western Union boy may be a thief doesn’t invalidate the message of the telegram, does it?

I knew a preacher who had become an unbeliever. A man who drove me to the train said to me, “Dr. McGee, I am puzzled. I was saved under the ministry of that man. I know I am saved and I know I am a child of God but I am puzzled. How can you explain it?” I showed this man this very text and told him that even Judas had gone out preaching and had won converts, not because he was Judas, but because he had given the message. God will bless His Word. We are saved by hearing the Word.

When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

He then lying on Jesus’ breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? [John 13:21–25].

If you think that Jesus was unmoved because Judas was going to betray Him, you are wrong. He was *troubled* in spirit. The disciples were stupefied. You can imagine the shock

wave that went over that room. Judas had been so clever that not a person there believed he was the traitor. Each one thought it might be the other, and each one thought it might be himself. Each disciple knew that he was capable of doing the same thing.

I doubt that the little by-play between John and Peter was noticed by the others. There must have been confusion in the room. Peter was probably farther away from Jesus, and since John was next to Him, Peter signaled to John to ask.

Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the Son of Simon [John 13:26].

It was the custom for the host at a banquet to take a piece of bread, dip it in the sauce, and present it to the guest of honor. The Lord makes Judas His guest of honor by this gesture. He is extending to him the token of friendship. Judas is at the crossroads. Christ keeps the door open to Judas up to the very last. Even in the garden Jesus will say, "... Friend, wherefore art thou come? ..." (Matt. 26:50)—still keeping the door open for Judas. Jesus knew what Judas would do. As another has stated it, "foreknowledge is not causation." That is, although the Lord knew what Judas would do, the Lord did not force him to do it. In fact, He offered His friendship to Judas to the very last.

And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly [John 13:27].

Satan took over this man Judas gradually. I don't think that Satan ever takes a man suddenly. There are many little falls that permit Satan to move in gradually. Then finally he takes over. The Lord gave Judas an opportunity to accept Him, but Judas turned his back on the Lord. Then Satan moved in and took him over completely.

Judas makes his own decision. God never sends a man to hell unless that man first of all sends himself there. You see, God ratifies human decision; God seconds the motion. When a man says that he accepts Christ, God says, "I second it; I receive you." When a man says that he rejects Christ, as Judas did here, God says, "I second the motion."

Now Jesus asks him to leave quickly. Having made his decision, he is not beyond the control of God. In fact, having made his decision, he is compelled to cooperate with God.

You see, the religious rulers didn't want to arrest Jesus and crucify Him while the crowds were there during the feast. They wanted to wait until the feast was over. But our Lord tells him to go now and do it quickly. So Judas must go out and tell the leaders that he has been found out, and they must move quickly.

Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him [John 13:28].

No one at the table even suspected that Judas was the betrayer.

For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor [John 13:29].

Notice that our Lord did not beg for support. They had a treasury, and they carried on their business in a businesslike way. It also tells us that the Lord did not feed them miraculously. They had to go and buy food. They were not some "far out" group. Judas was the treasurer. There is always a temptation in the handling of money—which is equally true today. At the Passover season donations were given to the poor; so the disciples thought this may have been what the Lord asked him to do with the money.

He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night [John 13:30].

Notice also that when Judas went out, it was night. Friend, it was eternal night for Judas. It was the Devil's day, and the Devil's day is always like the darkness that descended on Egypt. This man walked out into eternal night.

What God does, He does slowly. What the Devil does, he does quickly. The Devil must move fast because his days are limited. God has all eternity to accomplish His purposes. Often we fail to understand that.

There is now a change in the room. Judas is gone, and our Lord begins to talk to these men. They are frightened. The shadow of the Cross is over that little group in the Upper Room.

Now our Lord attempts to lift these men from the low plane to the high plane; from the here-and-now to the hereafter; from the material to the eternal; from that which is secular

to that which is spiritual. Although Simon Peter interrupts Him, I think Jesus' discourse begins right here and goes on into chapter 14.

Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.

If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him [John 13:31–32].

The Lord Jesus is now moving into the spiritual realm. The Son of Man is going to be glorified, and this will be accomplished through His death and resurrection. From the human side the Cross looks like shame and defeat, but God is glorified in Him because the salvation of the world will be wrought through the Cross.

Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you [John 13:33].

Judas is gone now so He can address them as His little children. He is going to the Cross, and no one can go to the Cross as He did. He suffered alone, and there is a suffering of Christ which you and I cannot fully comprehend.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another [John 13:34–35].

Now He gives to them a new commandment. Some folk would seem to think that He said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you are *fundamental* in the faith." Now friend, I believe in being fundamental in the faith, I believe in the inerrancy of the Word of God, in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe that He died on the Cross for the expiation of sin; that He died a substitutionary, vicarious death for the sins of the world. I believe He was raised bodily and ascended back into heaven and that He is coming personally to take His church out of the world. But I want to say this, and I want to say it very carefully: believing those things does not convince the unsaved world outside. The world is dying for just a little love. Jesus says that His disciples are to be known for their love.

When I was a boy, my dad died and I went to work to support my mother and sister; so I stayed with two aunts and a bachelor uncle. One aunt was a Baptist and the other a Presbyterian. My uncle was an unbeliever and a beer drinker. Every Sunday he would get up just in time for the noon meal. For dinner every Sunday we heard all the Baptist dirt and the Presbyterian dirt. Years later, when my uncle was in the hospital, one of my aunts wept and asked me, "Vernon, why doesn't he come to Christ?" I almost told her. Friend, may I say, we do not win the lost by being Christian cannibals. "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Gal. 5:15). This is the type of thing that is turning the unsaved away from the church today. This is the reason they don't come in to hear the gospel. They hear the gossip before they can hear the gospel! Do you realize that the most important commandment for a Christian is not to witness, not to serve, but to *love* other believers?

Tertullian writes that the Roman government was disturbed about the early church. Christians were increasing in number by leaps and bounds. Because they wouldn't take even a pinch of incense and put it before the image of the emperor, the Romans felt they might be disloyal. Spies went into the Christian gathering and came back with a report something like this: "These Christians are very strange people. They meet together in an empty room to worship. They do not have an image. They speak of One by the name of Jesus, who is absent, but whom they seem to be expecting at any time. And my, how they love Him and how they love one another." Now if spies came from an atheistic government to see whether Christianity is genuine and they came to your church, what would be the verdict? Would they go back to report how these Christians love each other?

Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.

Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.

Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice [John 13:36–38].

Here is a man who is close to all of us. I believe that if you are a child of God, you would never sell out Jesus as Judas did. The Devil does not have control of you, because the Spirit of God dwells in you. But there isn't a one of us who would not do what Simon Peter did. His

problem was not that Satan was in his heart but that he had confidence in his own flesh. I believe that is the problem for all of us.

Peter really loved the Lord. Peter was ready to defend the Lord. Yet the Lord must treat Peter as a juvenile. He is always blundering—I don't believe this man reached mental and spiritual maturity until the Day of Pentecost. The only things he heard of all that Jesus had said was that Jesus was going away. He reacts like a child who says, "Where are you going, Daddy? I want to go, too." His first question is, "Lord, whither goest thou?" His second is, "Lord, why cannot I follow thee now?"

When Jesus answered him, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards," the only thing that Peter heard was the "now." He is like a child who asks for a cookie. When the mother says he cannot have the cookie now but must wait until after dinner, the child seizes on the "now." He wants the cookie now. He doesn't want to wait until after dinner.

Peter's love for and loyalty to Jesus was sincere. He wanted to follow the Lord wherever He was going. When he said, "I will lay down my life for thy sake," he meant every word of it. He attempted to fight for his Lord, and he cut off the servant's ear. (The reason he got his ear was because he was a fisherman and not a swordsman. He was aiming for his head.) When the Lord told Peter that he would deny Him three times before the cock would crow, it was already dark, and he just couldn't believe he would deny his Lord before the dawn.

What a lesson there is here for us. Peter was overconfident in himself. We should learn from this that we should have no confidence in the flesh. Paul says, "... when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:10). Do you recognize your weakness or do you think you are strong? Someone asked Dwight L. Moody, "Do you have grace enough to die for Jesus?" He answered, "No, He hasn't asked me to do that. But if He asks me to, I know He will give me the grace to do it." That is the answer. Our own flesh is weak, but God will supply our every need.¹

¹ J. Vernon McGee, [*Thru the Bible Commentary: The Gospels \(John 11-21\)*](#), electronic ed., vol. 39 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 63–71.