

Waterloo Road
Sunday, 4th March, 2018
Jesus Farewell Discourse
from John's Gospel
John 13:18-38

Jesus Predictions of His Betrayal and of Peter's Denial

Jesus Predictions of His Betrayal

¹⁸ *"I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfil this passage of Scripture: 'He who shared my bread has turned against me.'*

¹⁹ *"I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am. ²⁰ Very truly I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me."*

²¹ *After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me."*

²² *His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. ²³ One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. ²⁴ Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means."*

²⁵ *Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?"*

²⁶ *Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then,*

dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷ As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.

So Jesus told him, “What you are about to do, do quickly.”

²⁸ But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. ²⁹ Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor. ³⁰ As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

Jesus Predicts Peter’s Denial

³¹ When he was gone, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. ³² If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

³³ “My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

³⁴ “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

³⁶ Simon Peter asked him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus replied, “Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.”

³⁷ Peter asked, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”

³⁸ *Then Jesus answered, “Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!”*

1. heading

The sober fact that we need to start with is that Jesus did not like what was about to happen to him.

The Son of God who had spent eternity in intimate fellowship with his Father and the Holy Spirit came willing to earth to be born as a human baby, grow up in a difficult world. He probably lost his stepfather in his teenage years. At 30 years of age he set out to proclaim the Good News that God was establishing a new type of kingdom - The Kingdom of God - based on grace and forgiveness not obedience and sacrifice.

But to achieve that he was going to submit to intense suffering and crucifixion on a cross and die. He did know he would rise again but the prospect of suffering and death appalled him.

In spite of that, Jesus concentrates on caring for his disciples. He has a lot to say and John records it in ch 13 – 17 .

2. outline, It might be good if we step back a bit and look at the big picture of John. Unlike the other three gospels, this one is not so concerned with the chronology as in Luke or the Journey to Jerusalem as in Mark or the fulfilment of the Old Testament Scriptures as in Matthew.

John actually tells us the purpose of his selection of the stories and teaching of Jesus. In ch 21: 30 John says:

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

So his has a prologue which describes Jesus in those terms. Then **he reveals himself to the world** in chapters 1-12. He chooses 7 signs only rather than the many miracles described elsewhere. And they are connected to a series of “I am” statements where Jesus spells out who he is. Much of the later debate with the Pharisees is about who he is and by what authority he teaches and acts. And his claims are intricately connected with life itself. Not just the life and death cycle but breaking out of that into eternal life. Jesus does not offer a better life, he offers new life. Not 70-80 years but eternal. Not a repeat of the struggle for survival as in this world but a place of rest, health, wealth and great joy. And all this comes by believing in his name.

3. revelation to his disciples, From chapter 13 to 17 **he reveals himself to his disciples.** And that is where we are this evening. The final discourse culminates with Jesus prayer of consecration for his new church – his disciples.

In chapter 18 we read:

When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it.

What follows is ‘*the Son of Man glorified*’ an eyewitness report of the arrest, death and resurrection of Jesus.

4. Jesus alone with his disciples. In this evenings passage his care for his people is shown by making sure they would understand what happens once they recovered from the shock of the events that follow. And some key pointers on how to react.

5.The upper room seating When Jesus raises the issue of betrayal, you can feel the change of atmosphere. A Passover meal was a celebratory meal. 4 cups of wine at least were drunk and meal based round the sacrificed lamb and a lot of telling the story of salvation from slavery.

Now Jesus has dropped a bombshell. He makes an accusation and everybody’s doing the self-analysis. “Have I said anything that would suggest I am disloyal?” Who has been and what are the consequences?

Normally the way to deal with betrayal is assassination. Herod the Great executed most of his own family. That’s

what you did to any threat to your power. So his challenge carried the threat of death.

But Jesus does the opposite to Herod. He offers Judas a symbolic act of hospitality, It may seem odd to us offering another something from the dishes on the table was a polite way of honouring them. Then sends him off to gather his militia together. I can sense the shudder as he says “*What you are about to do, do quickly.*”

Is this Jesus engineering his own death? Is this submission to the will of God? Is this accepting the inevitable, the only solution to all of the circumstances that surround him? Jesus is a human and he is God. He was able to understand what Judas was about to do. He was willing to go to the cross. But Judas could have accepted the honour and repented. Instead he let Satan enter his heart and, for whatever reason, he chose to go over to the dark side.

The remaining 11 disciples had no idea. Most of them may not have heard all of what Jesus said to Judas. John would have heard. The disciples apparently suspected Judas was stealing from the communal purse but while Jesus accepted him as part of the team, that was not a big issue. We often believe what we want to believe and the idea that Judas was off on an aid expedition fitted with their idea of a good thing.

It does mean if you don't understand what Jesus is doing in your life, you are in good company! Trust in God means just that. It is not that we understand the world about us but that we understand that God has a plan for our good and he is able to bring it to completion.

It might be good to pause and think about this collection of disciples. There were the 5 we know from Capernaum Peter, Andrew, James and John and Matthew who was a collaborator with the Roman authorities. There was another Simon, a Zealot who probably had terrorist connections and certainly had thought the likes of Matthew were detestable. Thomas who seemed slow in understanding faith in Jesus. Then there were others we know little about. We know the bunch from Capernaum upset the rest because they had ambitions of power in the New Kingdom. They were arguing about this as they arrived at the Upper Room for the Passover.

6.outline of passage To this bunch Jesus we read says three things.

- I am about to be glorified.
- You cannot follow me in the next step.
- You must Love one another as I have loved you.

The disciples' response was all about heroic loyalty. Peter here shows his loyalty with protests of never leaving Jesus,

as did the rest. They were all going to run away at the critical point but Jesus actually wanted that. Their heroics would come later as each one of them, we think, aside from John, who wrote this gospel, were executed from being followers of Jesus.

7.now is the son of man glorified So let's consider the first. What does 'glorify' mean? Well John when writing this gospel gives us a clear insight. In chapter 1, verse 14

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

His conclusion was that the glory was full of grace and truth. The queen has 5 palaces, a gold coach, a host of servants, the household cavalry and a brass band. Some world leaders flaunt their military might with grand parades of troops and weapons. Businesses express their glory in grand buildings in London or Canary Wharf or some other splendid setting. Jesus is known for his grace and his truth. That grace is best described by his death on the cross where he freely offered himself in your place, before you were born so that when you turned to him in repentance and faith you are given salvation as a gift. This is the centre piece of God's love to us humans. In fact it is the centre piece of creation.

So it is not surprising to find that the great anthem of heaven is “*Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!*” In Revelations 5:12

Verses 31-32 are quite complex.

“Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. ³² If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

I will try to unpick it but I might lose you! Keep in mind that Jesus says I and me father are one. There is total unity between Jesus and God.

There are 4 statements which are corollaries of each other. They repeat the main theme but are different facets of it.

“Now the Son of Man is glorified this is the death , resurrection and ascension of Jesus as we have just discussed. This is grace in action.

and God is glorified in him. Jesus says *God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son..* God is glorified because he is the willing Father, seeking and solving the sin problem.

³² *If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself,* the result of winning this great salvation for you is that God adds glory to Jesus. He is the centre piece of heaven, the advocate, the object of angelic worship and the key reason you want to be in heaven with him.

and will glorify him at once. This is a specific statement that NOW is the time. The universe revolves around this very moment. The final steps are falling into place. Judas has gone to collect his arrest party, Jesus is explaining about the next few hours. At some point which John does not mention Jesus has committed himself in offering them his body and blood. Next is Gethsemane, arrest, trial, death, burial and resurrection!

It was perhaps not surprising the disciples did not understand. Huddled in an upper room, rumours of Jesus being hunted down by an extremely angry religious establishment, Jesus apparently expecting to be crucified. Seems like they had taken a wrong turn and all that was about to happen was a nightmare. So they tried to make sense of it. Peter got as far as Jesus was going to leave them in verse 36. and you can sense the confusion because Jesus has just moved on to a key item of teaching.

8.outline of passage Jesus took some time explaining this ‘going away’ bit. You can read on in chapter 14:1-10.

9.a new command.. Then Jesus opens up an apparently new subject.

³⁴ “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

First why at this point? Because he is about to tell them about denial. And Peter will be identified particularly. Nothing destroys an group more than picking up on others failings. SO before he explains that Peter will deny him, he gives them a new command. To love one another as I have loved you. And he has loved them even though they went out of their way to not understand the Kingdom. It was critical to the early church. There was a great wave of persecution and many denied their Lord and made sacrifices to the Roman gods rather than be killed. And when it was all over there were recriminations. Those who were faithful wanted to exclude those who failed. Jesus has already told them to love one another. As the church grew it became increasingly infiltrated by power grabbers and this verse was quietly forgotten is the rush of burning heretics and establishing the Roman Church and, later, in the reformation, the Act of Uniformity and the plethora of denominationalism.

10. four loves Secondly. This is one of four loves that we are called to.

You are called to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind and with all your strength.

You are called to love your neighbour as you love yourself.

The new command is to love one another as I have loved you.

You are also called to love your enemies and do good to those who do you harm.

These are high callings.

11. a new command Jesus calls us to love one another as I have loved you. What is special about his love is that it is sacrificial and it is forgiving. It is more than loving as you love yourself, it is loving more than yourself. So we are called to forgive fellow Christians as Jesus forgave you. To give your time and energy and money to one another as Jesus gave.

This is so important to John that he repeats it in his letters
1 John 3:11

For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should **love one another**.

1 John 3:23

And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to **love one another** as he commanded us.

1 John 4:7

Dear friends, let us **love one another**, for **love** comes from God. Everyone who **loves** has been born of God and knows God.

1 John 4:11

Dear friends, since God so **loved** us, we also ought to **love one another**.

1 John 4:12

No **one** has ever seen God; but if we **love one another**, God lives in us and his **love** is made complete in us.

2 John 1:5

And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but **one** we have had from the beginning. I ask that we **love one another**.

12.outline of passage At this point Peter charges in. He has just caught the idea Jesus is leaving them. He will have nothing of that. He is willing to die for Jesus! Jesus is fully aware of his weaknesses

“Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!

Fact was Peter was the only one who tried to defend Jesus. All the disciples deserted Jesus and fled over the mount of Olives to Bethany. Only Peter and John turned back and trailed him into the High Priests house. Peter, out of his depth and totally exhausted, completely loses it and denies Jesus.

None of us know how we will react in similar circumstances. But here is grace. Knowing that these disciples are flawed people and at the crunch, will desert him, Jesus still loves them passionately.

13. a new command... You are loved by Jesus. If you trip up or go full charge in the wrong direction, Jesus still loves you. He says, Nothing can pluck you from my Father's hand. Jesus laid down his life for you. He is not going to give up on you. Enjoy the grace! That is the point of Communion. To remind you what his love was like. To remind you how you are saved. To call you to live the resurrection life. To love one another as he loved us. To forgive as we are forgiven. To accept grace and the forgiveness that God gives. To know that your failures are not final. That was Judas's mistake but to be humble and receive the forgiveness and trust in the Holy Spirit to enable you to live as God intended. Jesus knows you, your weakness and your strengths. He chose you to display the glory of his grace in you. You are a sinner saved by grace, grace procured by Jesus' death on the cross. You are called to love one another as Jesus loved.