

The Loving King

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[0 : 0 0] I'm going to read the Bible.

If you don't have a Bible, you can grab one from the doorway. I'm going to read from John chapter 13, verses 18 to 38.

John 13, starting from verse 18. I'm not speaking to all of you.

I know whom I have chosen. But the scripture will be fulfilled. He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me. I'm telling you this now, before it takes place.

That when it does take place, you might believe that I am he. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me.

[1 : 1 6] And whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit and testified. Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.

The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. One of the disciples whom Jesus loved was reclining at table at Jesus' side.

So Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, Lord, who is it?

And Jesus answered, It's he to whom I'll give this morsel of bread when I've dipped it. So when he dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

Then, after he'd taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. And Jesus said to him, What you're going to do, do quickly. Now, no one at the table knew why he'd said this to him.

[2 : 2 6] Some thought that because Judas had the money bag, Jesus was telling him, Buy what we need for the feast. Or that he should give something to the poor. So after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out.

And it was night. When he'd gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.

If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. Little children, yet a little while I'm with you.

You'll seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, Where I'm going, you cannot come. A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another.

Just as I've loved you, you also are to love one another. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

[3 : 4 1] Simon Peter said to him, Lord, where are you going? And Jesus answered him, Where I'm going, you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward.

And Peter said to him, Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you. Jesus answered, Will you lay down your life for me?

Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times. This is the word of God. Good morning, everyone.

Well, my name's Dave. I'm one of the pastors here. Welcome. If you're a visitor, it's lovely that you can be with us. Please stick around for a cuppa. We'd love to get to know you. And how good is the rain?

It's just so refreshing, isn't it? It's beautiful. Let's pray as we come to God's word. Father, we do thank you for your mercy in giving us this rain.

[4 : 55] Lord, it refreshes our body and our land. We ask for more. Father, this morning, we ask for even more mercy that your word, that you would send your word and that you would give each of us ears to hear your word, that it might soak deeply in us so that it might renew us, comfort us and grow us.

Lord, I pray that you would show how great your love is this morning. Help us to see it. Help us to believe it. In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen. If someone is doing you harm, when are you no longer required to love that person?

I'm not asking you to think about an ideal answer, but what do you actually do? What advice do you give those you love when they feel someone is mistreating them?

What limits do you have in place to protect yourself? Now, limits for stopping someone continuing to harm you is important.

[6 : 25] I'm not talking about that. I'm asking a different question. When can you stop loving that person? Is it when a person is being rude and just unreasonable?

When they don't give you what you want? When a person won't listen to you? When they speak badly about you behind your back? When they ignore you?

When they try and manipulate you? When they've hurt someone you love? To intentionally try and meet that person's needs goes against the grain, doesn't it?

It feels like you're becoming a doormat to be walked all over. You feel like you're handing over all your power to them. You're letting them win.

It even feels wrong. It feels like you're letting evil triumph. But as we come to the story of the greatest evil ever done in the murder of the Son of God, did Jesus hand over his power?

[7 : 53] Was he defeated? Was he a victim? Did Judas and the religious leaders get the better of him?

This is really important because if Judas did get the better of Jesus, it raises serious doubts. How could the Son of God be betrayed by someone he knew so well?

This morning, we're just going to soak in the story.

We're going to immerse ourselves in what happened that night and then we're going to hear how Jesus wants us to understand it and what that means for us today. So let's get into what happened.

We're told it's almost Passover. that great feast remembering the decisive moment that God saved his people. The Jewish crowds have lost interest in Jesus.

[9 : 04] The religious leaders are scheming how to kill him. But we're told in verses 1 to 3 of chapter 13 that Jesus knows his hour to depart and go to the Father has come.

He knows that the Father had given all things into his hands. All things. What does he do with that power?

He knows the goal for which the Father has sent him. And we have these lovely words. Jesus loved his own to the end. How does Jesus love his own to the end?

how is Jesus going to prepare his people for when he's gone? How is this love displayed?

Well, the situation in which Jesus' love is displayed is surprising. It's also comforting and it's also confronting.

[10 : 12] so let's picture the scene. Picture an upstairs lounge room with cushions all around on the floor with a little table in the middle with food on it.

Here they are, Jesus and his 12 followers. They're in Jerusalem. They're relaxing and eating in friendship with the most important person in the world, the Christ who will soon take up his throne.

what privilege they would feel being one of the inner circle of the king. What anticipation that the king is about to be crowned.

what joy that their king knows them personally. What sense of belonging and unity they must have shared with one another.

There would have been an atmosphere of joyful intimacy in the room. Jesus, their lord and teacher, had just got up, dressed as a servant, and washed each of their feet.

[11 : 17] then Jesus drops a bombshell, which just overshadows the room with dread and anxiety.

Being deeply troubled in his spirit, Jesus says, truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.

they look around at each other, uncertain who he's talking about. You could imagine their thoughts. We've all been with Jesus since the beginning.

We've all seen his signs. We've all demonstrated that we believe he really is the Christ. We're risking our lives following this guy. No one is suspicious.

Either this betrayer doesn't know what they're about to do, or they're hiding it very well. Verse 2 tells us that the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray him.

[12 : 32] He knows he's about to be exposed. He's confronted with a final choice. Does he continue with his plan to hand Jesus over to be killed, or does he confess and ask for forgiveness from the king?

Imagine what would happen to the disciples' faith if they had no warning of one of their own betraying Jesus to his death.

Imagine if we reading today had no warning that the king would be betrayed by a friend. It would raise serious doubts, wouldn't it?

Was his life taken from him? But Jesus has a very different perspective on what's going on.

He's just said in verse 19, the scripture will be fulfilled. He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.

[13 : 48] This comes from Psalm 41 by King David. Like David, suffered the plots of his enemies. He also suffered the betrayal of a close friend, even his own son.

But this was just a taste of what would happen to the greater son of David. And lifted his heel, it's like a horse lifting their foot to kick.

A close friend wants to cause God's king to fall. But God's word is ruling this situation.

Jesus tells us explicitly in verse 19, I am telling you this now before it takes place, that when it does take place, you may believe that I am he.

I am the son of David. And in John, these words take on even greater meaning. They are the same as the divine I am statements.

[14 : 51] I am the bread of life. I am the light of the world. I am the good shepherd who will lay down his life for his sheep. I am the resurrection and the life.

And now you need to know that when my close friend betrays me, I am. Jesus is not a helpless victim.

He anticipated it, he predicted it, he went ahead fully aware and fully in control. But the disciples, like usual, have no idea what Jesus' mission is all about.

It's only after the resurrection that they understand. we're introduced to the disciple whom Jesus loved, John who wrote this gospel and he was lying down next to Jesus.

This phrase is a great phrase and by using this name, the disciple whom Jesus loved, he's serving as a model of what discipleship really is.

[16 : 06] He understands that his core identity as a disciple is that he is loved by Jesus. And he doesn't want any of the spotlight, he wants it all on Jesus.

So do you see being a disciple of Jesus as fundamentally about what you do to follow him or that you have been loved by him?

well Peter must have been further away so he motions to this disciple to ask who it is and he leans back close to Jesus and asks, Lord who is it?

It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it. the host handing his food to someone is a public sign of friendship and honour in front of everyone else.

I think this is a genuine expression of Jesus' love for Judas. It is incredibly corrupt that Pilate would condemn an innocent man.

[17 : 22] It is arrogant and wicked for the religious leaders to acknowledge the miraculous signs on the one hand and then label Jesus as a blasphemer and condemn him.

But that all this was set in motion by the scheming of his close friend and apostle. That must have been pure agony for Jesus.

And after Judas had taken the morsel of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus had warned at the end of chapter 12, walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you, master you.

Instead of being broken by his sin, Judas is hardened in his resolve. This is the only time John mentions Satan by name.

It shows the magnitude of what is happening this night. It's not just Judas trying to bring Jesus down, but Satan.

[18 : 44] But here's the important point. Neither Judas nor Satan is taking Jesus' life from him.

God has done it. There's so much comfort for us in this. They could do nothing until the hour that God had chosen.

In handing Judas the bread, it is Jesus who decides the time. God has done it. And then Jesus commands Judas, what you're going to do, do quickly.

He'd already planned it, but Jesus says, get on with it. Go and do it right now. Which is why John emphasizes in verse 30, after receiving the morsel of bread, Judas immediately went out.

He could do nothing until Jesus gave the word. And when Jesus gave the word, he went and did it.

[19 : 57] No one takes his life from him. Jesus is choosing to lay it down. He is the good shepherd of his sheep.

But to highlight how evil this act was, and also to highlight that Jesus was alone in going to the cross, his other disciples were of no help to him.

We're told that no one at the table understood what was going on. So intimate was Judas as a friend of Jesus, they all assumed he was doing something that pleased God.

Either buying the supplies they needed for the feast, or maybe giving money to the poor, because it was customary at Passover to give money to the poor at the temple.

Perhaps even the act of giving bread, because it was a sign of honour, maybe the other disciples thought it can't be him then. Amazingly, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, didn't use his power to stop Judas.

[21 : 16] He didn't use it to expose him, to rally support from the other disciples, but he was obedient to the Father's mission to the very end.

He loved his own. Judas had chosen to cut himself off from the light of the world.

Jesus' own arrest, the world's public rejection of him and his crucifixion are now set in motion.

The time for Satan and the world to extinguish the light of the world has come. It was night.

it must have been really distressing for the disciples because Jesus then tells him, I'm about to leave you.

[22 : 28] Peter doesn't like this plan and he senses that Jesus is talking about his own death and so he objects. Lord, why can I not follow you now?

I will lay down my life for you. it sounds courageous, doesn't it? It sounds like he's full of faith. But these are the words Jesus used about the good shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep.

Peter is refusing to trust that Jesus is doing what the father sent him to do. He's not listening. Peter is arrogant to think that Jesus needs him in any way.

And he's ignorant of his sinfulness if he thinks he has the resources in himself to be faithful to his king. Listen to both the sting as well as the comfort in Jesus' ironic reply to Peter.

Will you lay down your life for me? Let me show you, Peter, why I need to go the way of the cross.

[23 : 55] Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times. This very night, you won't die for me.

You will betray me. If we were there that night, we would probably suspect that Peter is the one Jesus said would betray him.

And if Peter can't remain faithful to Jesus, can any of his disciples? Can you remain faithful?

But unlike Judas, who embraced the darkness, Peter has one reason for hope. And you and I have this same reason to have hope.

Jesus is fully aware of Peter's failure to follow him. He's fully aware. Jesus is fully aware of my failure and of your failure.

[25 : 13] But he is a good shepherd. He is determined to love his own to the end. I will lay my life down for you.

isn't that good news? No one takes my life from me. Neither Judas nor Satan.

No one takes it. And no one has ever offered anything that would mean that they deserve my love. But I choose to lay it down, to bring you to God, that you might fully and forever know the Father's love for you.

This was the darkest night. But like lightning on a pitch black night, the darkness shows the brightness of Jesus' love.

Verse 31, now is the Son of Man glorified. God is glorified in him. How are the Son and the Father glorified?

[26 : 31] They're glorified together in this one great moment. Because in this moment, we see how determined God is to save his sinful people by the Father sending and the Son choosing to lay down his life.

God says in 1 John 4 10, in this is love, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. So do you believe that Jesus was Lord over his betrayal?

He was Lord over Satan and still is. That he freely chose to lay down his life so that you might know God as your father.

Are you a disciple whom Jesus has loved? He calls his own disciples little children.

[28 : 02] This is the only time it's used in the gospels. It's full of affection and it picks up the promise to all who did receive him who believed in his name he gave the right to become children of God.

And he leaves his children with a command to carry out until he returns. That you love one another just as I have loved you you also are to love one another by this all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.

Incredibly Jesus has tied his reputation to his people in his church. And Jesus is specific about who we are to love in this special way.

It's one another. It's our brothers and sisters whom Jesus has loved. If only this command wasn't situated in between two betrayals this command would be way more comfortable.

This is more than just kindness and a smile to one another. This is much more. It implies that you and I will harm one another and intentionally sometimes.

[29 : 35] And worse than that you and I will at points be faithless in following Christ. But what does our brother or sister need in that moment?

What will bring glory to the God who sent his son to a hostile world? Being injured by a brother or sister in Christ or seeing them falter in their faithfulness that is the very opportunity for God's love to be displayed.

If you lay down your life to help remind them that Jesus has laid down his life for them, it is in the darkness that God's love shines brightest.

Love this is a kind of love the world knows nothing about but when they see it they will see God through us.

That is an incredible privilege. So who are you struggling to love?

[30 : 48] Love love love love love Schwar growth enough to obey with our own resources but the more we see our inability to love one another like Christ did the more we cherish that our Lord chose to lay down his life for us but then the more we cherish that our saviour loved us in this way the higher his standard of loving one another becomes or we realise anyway and then the higher we realise this calling is we realise how unable we are to love one another in this way which makes us cherish the fact that Jesus loves us and chose to die for us I wanted to share an example of a time that I've wronged someone and have helped me show Jesus' love but I'll be too ashamed with all the examples I came up with but it's been throughout my whole Christian walk from my parents through to all of you but that's the context where we get to show God's love to one another and to the world we're about to sing these words who else could rescue me from my failing who else would offer his only son who else invites me to call him father only a holy God only my holy God only our holy God no one took Jesus' life from him he freely chose to lay it down it is in the darkness that God's love shines the brightest would you pray with me

Father I pray that for the rest of our days that you would teach us and show us more and more just how much you have loved us Lord I pray that as we look to our great shepherd who died to wash us of our failing I pray that as we do that that we would all overflow in thankfulness and in a desire to honour you by laying down our life for one another Lord I pray that you would help each one of us give us the power to carry out this great love Lord help us as a church to honour your name we thank you for your great love for us in Jesus name we pray

Amen