

## 02/24/2019 - John 13

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 25 February 2019

Preacher: Benjie Slaton

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Men, please remain standing. We're going to read God's Word together from John chapter 13. And while you're turning there, I figured I might as well introduce myself. My name is Benji Slayton. I am a pastor here in the area planting a church up on the northeast side of our city around Hamilton Place Mall out through Collegedale and Udawah.

I joke with people and tell them we are planting to the mall and beyond. And they generally get an idea about what we're talking about. And we have come. We've been here since the summer.

We've been gathering a group and are looking towards what God will do with us. But we stand in partnership with First Press as well as other churches in the city with thank you for your generosity, for your support for us.

And we're really thankful and excited for what God is doing in our city. OK, let's turn to God's Word from John chapter 13, continuing on in your series.

I'm going to begin with verse 21. After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit and testified, Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.

[ 1 : 1 1 ] The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table close to Jesus. 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? Jesus answered, it is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it. So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

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

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.

And when he had 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.

[ 2 : 1 8 ] Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me. And just as I said to the Jews, so now I say to you where I am going, you cannot come. A new commandment I give to you 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. Simon Peter said to him, Lord, where are you going?

Jesus answered him where I am going. You cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward. 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.

Amen. This is the word of the Lord. Amen. Please have a seat. And while you're sitting down, I'm going to pray that the Lord would bless our time together. Father, we do pray that you would send your Holy Spirit to meet us now, that we would be like the disciples here, that we might see the glory of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

[ 3 : 35 ] Do that, we pray. Amen. Amen. Well, it would be no surprise to say that every place has its own kind of culture. I'm from Texas.

I grew up in Texas. And the town that or the neighborhood I grew up in has very much a Friday night lights kind of a culture. Football's a big deal. Football's king. It was not uncommon at my high school to have upwards of 10,000 or more people at Friday night football games.

It was a big deal. But we all have multiple cultures. My family is Lebanese by heritage. My grandparents and on my mom's side have that immigrant identity.

We have the food. We have the language. We've got the joking around. We've got all the old immigrant things. In fact, if you want to know a little bit about my family, just go watch my big fat Greek wedding, and you'll kind of get the idea of what they're like.

But my family moved here from South Texas. We've lived in Austin and San Antonio for the last 15 years. And so I've really grown to love Latin culture.

[ 4 : 41 ] Latino culture is warm and it's festive. It's forgiving and affectionate and generous. I really just love it. Every place has its own culture.

Every family has its own culture. And it's so surprising to say that every church has its own culture. As a church planter, one of the great things about being a church planter is that I don't have to be anywhere on a Sunday morning, and I get to go and visit around at different churches.

So I've visited dozens of churches over the last few months. And each one feels remarkably different. You begin to get a feel for the culture when you just drive up.

You see the different architecture. When you come inside, there's different decor that communicates things. You see the greeters at the door. Sometimes there are no greeters. Sometimes there's really aggressive greeters.

Sometimes they're laid back. It's the way that people dress. The way that they speak to one another. The style of worship. The style of the leadership. It all communicates something about how a church thinks about itself.

[ 5 : 47 ] How it talks about itself. And talks about other people, both in and out of the church. It communicates what it values as most important. So I've been telling our folks that we've been gathering to plant this church, Grace and Peace Church.

If I didn't say that before. Is that we want to have a gospel culture. By that I mean that the church should be a place where every person, every activity, every message expresses the gospel.

The gospel, that great truth that you and I, each one of us, are far more broken. Far more sinful. We're far more rebellious against God than we would ever want to admit is true.

About ourselves. But in God's entry into the world through Christ Jesus, we can be far more loved and accepted and reconciled than we ever dared could be true.

And so a gospel culture is a place where that message is seeping out in conversations, in everything we do.

[ 6 : 57 ] Don't you want to be a part of a church that's like that? I sure do. How do we continue that kind of a church culture, in your case, to continue and sustain a culture of a gospel culture like that?

In our case, create one out of nothing. How do we do that? Well, this passage that we're looking at, we get an intimate look and a revealing look in this moment between Jesus and his disciples.

And if you'll listen for it, here's what you're going to see. Or hear, I should say, if you're listening for it. If you'll listen for it, you'll hear Jesus showing you two different threats to a gospel community.

And then giving you the central key for how you can create it in your own body. Last week, you as a church were looking at the beginning of chapter 13, this classic passage that is often highlighted during Holy Week, specifically on Monday, Thursday.

Monday, of course, meaning the word command right from our passage. A new command I give to you in verse 34, that you love one another just as I have loved you.

[ 8 : 09 ] You are to love one another. It's the passage where Jesus begins by washing the disciples' feet. And by the time we pick up, they're at dinner. They're having this intimate conversation between Jesus and his disciples.

But there's actually a structural detail that you need to notice in this passage. And that is that the passage begins and ends with betrayal. It begins with Judas's betrayal.

Jesus bringing into the light Judas's betrayal. And it ends with Jesus predicting Peter's betrayal. And they mirror one another in important ways. But they also set up for us to highlight Jesus' command right in the center of the passage.

It's amazing. The scriptures are nothing less than masterfully written literature. They're God's word. They're more than that. But they are at least nothing less. So that's how I want to look at this passage is we'll look at Judas and the threat that Judas brings.

And then we'll look at Peter and the threat that he brings. And then we'll look at what Jesus is trying to teach us about creating a gospel culture. So first, Judas. And we all know Judas betrayed Jesus.

[ 9 : 21 ] That enough is that is clear enough. Judas. Judas's plan was clear to Jesus. So he announces it to he announces to the whole group of at dinner that someone is going to betray him.

And then he identifies Judas by giving him bread. Why did Jesus do that? Why would he have done that in this culture? If you're having a big dinner and you give you can honor someone specifically honor a person by giving bread to them.

Why would Jesus have honored Judas in that moment? Is he honoring him? I think that he is. I think Jesus is specifically honoring Judas by giving him the chance to repent.

By giving him the opportunity to turn away from this path that Judas was a long way already down and turn in repentance and faith and come back and be reconciled unto God.

But this was Jesus's last and final appeal to Judas's conscience. Sadly, Judas leaves without any repentance.

[ 10 : 35 ] Look back at verse 26. Jesus answered, it is he of whom I will give this morsel of bread when I've dipped it. So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot.

Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. And Jesus said, what you are going to do, do it quickly. And then in verse 30. So after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out and it was night.

When Judas took the bread, it says that Satan entered him. Judas and his unbelief was given over to the enemy of God and the enemy of God's people.

And the gift of bread somehow sealed that. It's like a reverse Eucharist going on. You know, in the Lord's Supper that we celebrate when we as Christians by faith and through the power of the Holy Spirit receive the bread, we are made one.

We are united to Christ by his spirit. And in this moment, when Judas receives the bread, he is made one and united to Satan. And John dramatically adds, and it was night.

[ 11 : 49 ] The night of spiritual darkness. You see, the first danger that John is highlighting for us is to a gospel culture is fearing unbelief and fearing the unbelievers.

Just like Judas. Jesus tells us throughout his parables that we should expect that inside the people of God, there is going to be a mix of believers and unbelievers all the time.

The wheat and the tares, the sheep and the goats. There will always be good and evil in the church. And thankfully, following Jesus's example here, our job is not first and foremost to rid the church of unbelievers.

To cleanse the church, to just figure out who the faithful people are. To focus solely on purity. To the contrary, what Jesus is doing here is calling us to offer to them repentance, to offer them the hope of life and of faith and of reconciliation.

Theologian Leslie Newbigin says it this way. He says, here is the strange paradox of the church. The church is at the same time sinful and holy.

[ 13 : 05 ] The Lord himself is present in its life. Yet Satan is also present. This is a summons for us of both realism and faith.

The disciple who understood Jesus will not be shaken by sin and apostasy in the church. You hear what Newbigin is saying and what Jesus is modeling for us is that you cannot create and sustain a gospel culture by insulating yourself and avoiding people who are unbelievers.

Jesus knew Judas's heart. Jesus knew Judas's plan. And how did Jesus deal with him? Jesus brought him near. Jesus fed him.

Jesus washed Judas's feet. Jesus offered to him honor, the opportunity to repent. Jesus opened himself in vulnerability to Judas and Judas repaid him with betrayal.

And yet, even in that betrayal, Jesus was victorious. Even in the betrayal of Judas's unbelief, it was the means by which Jesus would be known and glorified and shown for who he really is.

[ 14 : 23 ] Jesus was victorious. Now, let me stop and say to the unbeliever, the non-Christian who's visiting with us. We're glad you're here and you need to forgive us for a little bit of insider talk right now, because the reality is, is that for us as Christians, we need to be reminded that the people who are not inside this room are equally valuable to Jesus.

You, as a non-Christian, are valuable to Jesus and you are to be brought near and you are to be called to repentance and to faith in Christ.

And that is our call because we do not need to fear in case the unbeliever comes into our body, because that's rooted in the idea that Jesus is not king over that person as well.

There is not a person in this world, believer, unbeliever, young or old, rich or poor, for whom Jesus Christ is not king and head over. Ruling and reigning in authority over all people in this world.

We need not fear. We need not fear. We could get an amen for that. So that's the first thing.

[ 15 : 37 ] We need not fear unbelief and unbelievers in the church. And in the community. Second thing, Peter. Peter's threat is different. It's the threat of spiritual pride.

Both Judas and Peter's private betrayals are revealed by Jesus. They're similar in that. They're similar also in the fact that both of them will betray Jesus in the night, the dark night of unbelief.

John points that out. But and there are other similarities that we just don't have time to get into. But we can contrast these two betrayals as well. Think about it. Peter is coming to Jesus.

This betrayal happens for Peter in the context of faith. Peter wants to support Jesus. He wants to come as a worshiper of Jesus. In fact, he comes to Jesus at the end of our passage and he says, Jesus, I want to follow where you're going.

I can go with you. In fact, Jesus, I will lay down my life for you. How foolish. Jesus says, you're not going to lay down your life for me.

[ 16 : 41 ] I'm going to lay down my life for you and I'm going to lay down my life for everyone in this world. I am the one who has come to lay down my life. Not you, Peter. In some ways, John is showing us that Peter is no better than Judas.

You know, they're both threats to the church, but from different sides. Judas is a threat from the outside of the church. Peter is a threat from the inside. It's the threat of pride.

The threat of arrogance and self-reliance and superiority. Now, it would be easy for me to go through and trot out the spectacular falls of prominent Christians whose pride and self-assurance led to massive and public failures.

I don't think we need to do that this morning. What I really want to do is point out the way that our spiritual pride can attack a gospel culture inside a particular group of believers.

You see, the engine of pride is the belief that we don't really need God's grace. You see, the fuel, the pride is fueled when we begin to create the us when we create subtle criteria in which a church will be able to show who are the real Christians and who are not the real Christians.

[ 18 : 08 ] And we do this in various ways. We can create a church culture where you are demanded to uphold faultless reputations.

Where people who are weak and failures are. Rejected. You can create a church culture where you avoid contact with struggling and needy people in the body.

You've seen that before. Somebody's life falls apart and it seems like everybody takes a step back from them. It's the kind of culture where people are judged by the failures of others who are close to them.

Well, you know, if she just loved her husband better, he wouldn't do those things. Or if they just parented a little bit better, their children wouldn't have been wayward in that way.

It's the kind of culture where gossip reigns supreme. That favorite of southern gossips. Bless her heart. But she is just dot, dot, dot.

[ 19 : 10 ] You see, each of these things marks a subtle rejection of grace. It's idolatry. It's building a church culture based upon our knowledge, our sophistication, our success in business, our class standing, our family lineage, our intellect, our schooling, our marital status.

And it goes on and on and on. These twin dangers of fearing unbelief and of spiritual pride can destroy the church. And the reason why they destroy the church is this, because both dangers give undue importance to the people who are sitting in the pews and not to the king who reigns supreme over every one of the people in the pews.

You see, when we take our gaze away from the glory and the person and the work of Jesus Christ in our midst and put it on any other criteria of success, we will destroy the church and we will destroy a gospel culture within it.

We will create a church that is about purity and self-importance instead of Jesus. So what do we do about that? What do we do about that?

There's two threats. Jesus gives us, though, the key for how a gospel culture can be created. He gives us the way forward. Not just does he give us a way forward.

[ 20 : 42 ] He actually gives us a command. Do this. Love one another as I have loved you. You are to love one another. It seems like such a simple idea that we blow right past it thoughtlessly.

But the central core of a gospel culture in the church is one where believers love each other. You would think we know what that means, but we live in a we live in a romanticized culture that talks about love all the time, but doesn't have a great way of actually thinking about and loving people.

You know, love, we think, is the most passionate of feelings, but it's really not. Affection. Affection is a feeling. Infatuation.

That's a feeling. Gratitude. That's a feeling. Liking to be around someone. Those are feelings. But love is something different.

Love is a state of mind. Love is a way of acting towards one another. I like to tell my kids that love is an action before it's a feeling. When I perform a wedding, when I ask the bride and groom to come forward, I don't ask them, do you love one another?

[ 21 : 57 ] OK, great. I ask them if they are willing to sacrifice for that person, if they are willing to act in love towards that person when things get tough in sickness and in health.

For richer, for poorer. In plenty and in want and for better or worse. Love is the faithful and committed action for the good of another person.

What Jesus is saying here is that your responsibility is to love the other people in this room, even when it's tough. To sacrifice for their good.

To serve them when the chips are down. To be patient with their failings. To overlook no doubt their irritating quirks. You're to bring your life close to them and their life close to you.

You are to share your time. You are to share your resources. You are to share your very life with them. We are to love one another in the same way that he has loved us.

[ 23 : 03 ] Why? What is the outcome of that? And this is where it hits close to home. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples.

No. It's a little close to home. This is the way that people will come to Jesus. It's the way that they will come to the church.

It's the way that they will be converted is by your love of one another. We could say it this way. Jesus' key missionary strategy is the love of his people for one another.

A gospel culture is absolutely necessary for an effective mission. How do we learn to love? Well, there's no better place to learn to love than 1 Corinthians 13.

Right? It's that beautiful chapter on love. Let me just read from verse 4 a couple of things that Paul writes. He says, Love is patient and kind. It does not boast or envy.

[ 24 : 06 ] It's not arrogant or rude. It doesn't insist on its own way. It's not irritable or resentful. It doesn't rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices at the truth. Love bears all things.

It believes all things. It hopes all things. It endures all things. It's glorious. Glorious. You should be tutored by Paul in what love is.

But don't forget how this passage begins. Verse 1 of chapter 13 in 1 Corinthians says this. If I speak with the tongues of men and angels, but I don't have love.

I'm a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and I have all faith, so as to move mountains, but I don't have love.

I'm nothing. If I give away everything I have and if I deliver myself to first sacrifice, but I don't have love, I don't gain anything.

[ 25 : 09 ] You see, what Paul is saying is that without love, our witness is just irritating noise. I wonder. If we went and talked to the culture at large and asked them what they think of Christians, if they might not describe us as noisy and irrelevant.

A lot of yelling, not a whole lot of listening and not a discernible amount of loving. I think sadly, that's probably the case to all of our shame.

And that may be true, but that is not a new thing. I want you to listen to this quote from St. Chrysostom. He was the Archbishop of Constantinople, now Istanbul.

He was writing in the end of the fourth century and listen to what he says. If the pagan outsider sees a Christian man trembling with the fear of death, how will he accept the words spoken in the church of immortality?

When he sees us ambitious for power and enslaved by the other passions, he will remain more firmly fixed in his own belief since he entertains no exalted opinion of us.

[ 26 : 22 ] Indeed, indeed, Chrysostom says, we, we, he repeats, we are responsible for their remaining in error.

When they observe us attacking our neighbors more savagely than any wild beast, they call us the plague of the world. These things hold the pagans back and do not permit them to come over to us.

Perhaps, you know, perhaps we lack a clear and effective mission in our cities, in our churches and in the culture at large because we lack a gospel culture in our churches.

What do we do about that? I know of a church, they're working very hard to create a gospel culture, and I saw it at work in one scenario. I'm sure this happens in other places at other times, but I saw it one time.

There was a young woman who had grown up in that church. She had grown up in the youth group. She came from a family that was loving, but unstable.

[ 27 : 31 ] They were constantly in crisis from one thing to another, all kinds of problems. And so when she graduated high school, she was really ready to kind of get out of her house. And so she ended up going overseas and working for a Christian agency overseas.

And while she was there, she developed a romantic relationship with a much older man. And that relationship ended with a pregnancy. And so she returned home early.

Nobody really knew why. And she came to she went to the youth pastor. And that was the first person she told about what had happened and about the pregnancy.

She hadn't revealed it to anybody else. And over the course of weeks and months, there were quiet, closed door conversations, caring for this young woman's soul.

And beginning to help her to reveal that pregnancy to her family and to friends and to other people that she needed to deal with. And over time, it began to help.

[ 28 : 33 ] She everyone knew that that secret wouldn't be able to be kept for long. And at first, she would go to church intermittently and she would sit on the very back row and she would hardly be able to make eye contact with anyone.

She didn't participate in anything. And over time, she began to participate more and more. She would she would take communion. She would sit with friends and with other people.

She began to share her story with people who asked. Of course, there were quiet conversations, but all of those quiet in all those quiet questions, there was a rigid rejection of gossip about her.

People were encouraged to go and to speak to her directly if they had questions and they did. And she began to reveal her story more and more to people. And as her pregnancy became public knowledge, the women of that church rallied around her.

They threw her baby shower. Her baby was baptized in that church. The women began to provide child care so that she could go back to school. And move forward in life.

[ 29 : 37 ] She even began to share that story publicly at that church. It was a beautiful story of redemption, but it's not the redemption part that is the most glorious part of that.

I think the glorious part of this story is the fact that we can each see ourselves in the story, in the brokenness of the story. There were two parents that had deep regrets about the family life that had affected their children.

The father that sadly couldn't protect his daughter, a mother that felt like she failed her daughter. This little girl who regretted the fact that she hadn't taken her faith very seriously and found herself embroiled in this situation.

This girl who had now become a woman. Was dealing with the complexities of her own sin and her own victimization. She was also not only a girl and a woman, and she was now a mother having to deal with the reality that her child would bear the brokenness of that situation by her very existence.

You see.

[ 31 : 13 ] This is exactly why Jesus brought Judas close to him and why he bore with Peter in his weakness. Jesus came to serve them, to sacrifice for them.

That is why Jesus went to the cross and submitted to an unjust trial, to beatings, to a public humiliation and crucifixion and laying in the power of sin and death for three days until he was raised victorious.

Jesus did that so that he could join in this world of brokenness and bring about redemption. This is what Jesus is talking about in verse 31, which is the climax of this passage.

When Judas had left, he said, now is the son of man glorified. Now Judas has gone. The passion has started. I've sent him on to do his wicked work and it will result in the glory of God being seen.

What does it mean that God is glorified? It means that God is seen for who he is and what he's like. It's accurately and truly and fully seen because when we see who God is, we worship him.

[ 32 : 27 ] We praise him. And Jesus in that moment was bringing glory to Jesus. His sacrifice showed who God is and what he's like.

Do you want to know who God is and what he's like? Look at Jesus. Look at the sacrifice of Jesus. If you see nothing else in this passage, you need to see that.

And you need to see that in Jesus, he is calling you to come to him. He's calling you. To repent, to turn away from all of these things that you would use to make you feel like you're a real Christian and feel like your church is the place that's going to prop up your sense of superiority.

And he's going to call you to the humility of submitting to him and to seeing that he is the one who has come for salvation.

And in him. We can find a church culture that will proclaim it. You know, it's beautiful about his command here. He says.

[ 33 : 37 ] Love one another as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. You know what that means? It means at that very moment, each one of those disciples sitting in that room.



Held in their hands the capacity to obey him. As I have loved you, I've washed your feet and I'm going to show you in the morning how far I'm willing to go to love you.

And as you have me doing it now, go and do it likewise. They had it right there. And so do you. You have the ability to follow Jesus in his call of love.

May it be true. That first press. Sustains and continues this gospel culture that has been here for so long. And the grace and peace.

Our church would be able to create it. May that be so. Amen. Let's pray. Father, we pray that you would make us people who follow you, who create that kind of culture, that it would result in you being glorified in all the world, knowing who you are and worshiping you.

[ 34 : 53 ]    Amen.