

Celebration Sunday Afternoon Service

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. It is good to be with you guys and just be here sharing what God's doing.

And I want to ask you to open your Bibles to John chapter 13. I want to thank Pastor Gardner. Without him I wouldn't even be here today. I just figured I'd say that.

But I still remember about nine years ago when the conversation started about starting Vision Baptist Church.

And the only gigantic issue with starting a church, you're like, yeah man, it was an awesome decision. And yeah, it seems that way until you're the guy sitting on the other end of the field.

And dad looks at you and goes, I'm leaving. Dad, really? So at the ripe old age of 28 years old, you're going to leave the country you've been ministering in this long.

[0 : 54] And there were three different guys during that time that came to me and they said, I promise you that we'll be behind you. I promise you that I'll do whatever it takes to make sure that we can do whatever needs to be done at Peru and at the Bible College.

One of those guys was that long-winded dude from South Africa trying to get you to go on his missions trip. Just in case you're wondering, if he's watching, he used to talk about souls being saved and churches being planted.

And that's the reason you need to go to Peru. And now he says, go to South Africa so you can go hunting. Just saying. But Mark Coffey, he came to me and he said, Chris, I promise you all I'll do absolutely whatever it takes.

I will make sure that we're not leaving behind a ministry that's going to fail. And Mark's been true to his word. The second person that came to me was John Pearson. And then the third person was my dad. And I'm thankful that all three of those guys have been true to their word.

MJVI, John is a part of a business group that has been very, very, very good to our ministry in Peru, trying to help it be able to keep going. And then Vision Baptist Church. You all have been amazing.

[1 : 54] And I want to thank you for being the kind of church that you are. And just I've been the recipient of many of those dollars that have been taken up here in the ministry in Peru. And many souls have been saved.

Many churches have been planted because of your faithfulness. And all I can say is thank you. Thank you for being that kind of a church. Thank you for caring about the gospel around the world. Open your Bibles to John chapter 13.

And this is not your typical missionary message because here's the deal. I'm preaching an anniversary message. So we're just going to go over here, John chapter 13, go over a few verses and just share with you.

Hopefully you can think and pray through this passage as I have over the last few weeks. So title of the message today, if you like taking notes, is this, pop quiz. How many of you had a teacher that used to do pop quizzes?

You remember that? I was in Bible college and there was one teacher. His name was Octavio Paredes. And that guy loved pop quizzes more than he loved his wife, I'm sure. Because I'm telling you, it seemed like every single time he had a chance, there was always a pop quiz.

[2 : 55] And you always had to know all of the answers to everything. He was just crazy like that. And so what I would always try and do, since I'm such a spiritual, godly man, is I was in Bible college.

And I decided to find the most difficult passages to explain in the Bible. And I would come to Octavio before class would start and start up a conversation on a passage and pretend I didn't get it so that when class started, he'd forget the pop quiz and keep on doing that.

Because I just didn't like pop quizzes. Okay, so here you're going to find out today, and I just want to ask you some things that are going to make you think through what's going on. So let me give you a little of the background of John chapter 13.

The book of John is an amazing book. John is the last disciple to have written a book telling about Jesus' ministry. And it's almost like he looked at it and said, What holes, what gaps do I need to fill in so they can really get what Jesus was about?

And so they're writing about it, and you'll find things in John that you don't find in the other Gospels because of this. You come to John chapter 13. In John chapter 11, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.

[4 : 01] And this is what makes the entire group of people say, Okay, no more. We can't deny his miracles. It's kind of hard to deny a miracle when the dude that was raised from the dead is eating lunch with you.

So that's kind of what's going down. So they're sitting there. They're like, No, Jesus has never done this. No, he didn't do that. No, he didn't walk on water because not many people saw him. And then all of a sudden, everybody was there for the funeral. And then when he raised Lazarus from the dead, his enemy saw it.

And if you read that passage, you'll see, so all of a sudden, that was the straw that broke the camel's back, and they're sitting there. There's this tension going on. And then you have Mary anointing his feet. And then you come to John chapter 13.

And in John chapter 13, what you find is this. You find a group of guys that love themselves. Okay? If you look at the other Gospels that explain this timing, they're all discussing this.

Who's the greatest? Who's the greatest? Who's going to sit on the right hand of Jesus? Who's going to sit on the left hand of Jesus? And they've got this fight going on within each other.

[5 : 01] They're kind of going, No, dude, you don't know. Jesus really loves me. There's no doubt about it. I'm the guy. I'm the guy that's going to be... That's kind of what's going on. And that's the attitude in the room. And then Jesus walks into the room of these guys that are looking at each other and talking to each other.

And he walks into the room. And all of a sudden, a hush comes over the room as Jesus starts disrobing and starts to wash the feet. Of the disciples.

Now, washing feet in those days, man, that was a big deal. Because see, here's the deal. If you were a Jewish slave, you could say that you were not going to wash the feet even if your master said you had to.

Because it was that low down dirty of a job. Now, the Gentile slave, the lowest guy on the totem pole, that guy was the guy that was required to wash feet.

This is like, I'm talking about you have no idea how bad it gets. And then Jesus walks in and he says, I'm going to bring myself into a place to where I am placing myself below the Jewish slaves.

[6 : 02] And placing myself onto the level of the lowest Gentile people. These people, see these disciples, they're in there alone with Jesus. And they're having an intimate moment with Jesus.

And in John chapter 13, what you find is you find pride. You find arrogance. You find haughtiness in this room as they're sitting down to eat. And all of a sudden, Jesus breaks all of that up by his example.

The best message or the best thing that you find on humility in the Bible is when Jesus does exactly this. In John chapter 13. The service and this attitude that you find with Jesus is bleeding into this next portion that I want to share with you.

So these people are all about themselves. They could have been good old red-blooded white middle-class Americans. If you want to get down to it. Because they're all about themselves.

And then you come to John chapter 13 and here's what you find. Starting in verse 21. You're going to find first that he knows of the betrayal. He knows what's going to happen. This isn't going to surprise him. And so you come to verse 21.

[7 : 02] 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.

Now can I tell you that Jesus wasn't surprised. But if you want to talk about something that's pretty amazing is this. Jesus has about 24 hours before he's going to be hanging on the cross of Calvary.

And he's not troubled because of what's going to happen to him. He's troubled because one of his own are going to betray him. He's troubled in spirit. He's hurting in spirit. Just the idea of the fact that the people that I've spent this much time in my life with are going to betray me.

And he goes down into that passage and he says, listen, I'm troubled in spirit. But he says, I know what's going to go on. You're going to betray me. Then the disciples looked to one on another doubting of whom he spake. Who in the world could it be that was going to do something like this?

Like, can you not imagine? If you look at the other gospels that actually say, is it me? Is it me? Is it me? Is it me? And just let me tell you, if it's you, don't ask if it's you. Because Judas does. And he goes, duh, is it me?

[8 : 08] You know, like, really, Judas? You want to ask if it's you? This passage right here, this is what's going on. And then verse 22, then the disciples looked on one another doubting of whom he spake. Then now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of the disciples whom Jesus loved.

Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. Okay, so they're laying down around the table. They're laying on their left arm and with their right arm they're taking the food and they're eating the food.

And John is sitting there laying next to Jesus and he says, one of you is going to betray me. And you know, Peter, guys, I don't know if you're like this, but Peter's the guy I like the most.

Because God can use a guy that's just got too big of a mouth. Because that's Peter. Peter's sitting there and he looks over at John and he goes... So John looks up at Jesus and he says, who is it?

The Bible says, he then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, he it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it.

[9 : 12] And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it unto Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop, Satan entered unto him and then said Jesus unto him, that thou doest, do quickly.

This is how simple it goes. It's going to be the guy that I give the sop. When he gives the sop, which is actually a habit back in those days to the guy that you were honoring the most.

He gives this sop to Judas and as he gives it to him and he says, none of the disciples looked around and said, oh, it's got to be Judas then. They said there must have been some mistake.

It couldn't be Judas. There's no way. Look at the verse here. It says, thou doest, do quickly. Now, no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. What do you mean you don't know why?

He just gave him the sop and he said the person that was going to betray him was the one that was going to receive the sop. But even after Jesus said that, they look at it and they're like, there's absolutely no way it could be Judas.

[10:14] 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. He then having received the sop, went immediately out and it was night.

So he knows that the betrayal, he knows exactly what's going to go on. Nothing's going to surprise him. And later on in the passage, he's going to say this. You will know that I'm God because I said this way before it happened.

And maybe when I'm gone, you'll know that I am God. So you come here. He knows of the betrayal. Now, the word betrayal, that's a rough word.

Okay, do we not expect our enemies to attack us? You expect your enemy to. You have this one guy that doesn't like you. Expect that to go down. But all of a sudden, this word is a word that is so heavy with meaning because here's what he says.

He says, I was betrayed. You know what betrayed means? It means that you're hurt by someone you would have never expected it of.

[11:16] Jesus is troubled in spirit. He's looking at Judas and he looks at him and he says, listen, I know exactly what's going on. The betrayal is one of the most painful experiences ever.

And Jesus says, I'm troubled in spirit because of this. They stare around at each other like, who could it be? And then Peter finds out who it is. See, when you look at Judas, he looked the part of a Christian, but he wasn't a Christian.

Okay, Judas. Here's the deal with Judas. Judas would have had a fish on his car. You know what I mean? One of those little fishes that say you're a Christian. Judas would have had one of those in his car. Judas may have even had a cross tattoo on him.

You know, that's the kind of guy Judas was. You never know. Judas was like this guy that he was a really. He had all the cool t-shirts that said, this blood's for you. You know, all of those Christian t-shirts. For a matter of fact, Judas won all the memorization competitions in the church because that's just who Judas was.

He was the guy that everybody went to and looked at and looked up to, to the point to where when Jesus said, it's me. I mean, it's you. Nobody could even fathom the idea. And Jesus says, I want you to understand.

[12:19] I know of the betrayal. And see, here's what you have to understand. Following Jesus is so different than looking like you follow Jesus. You can fit in here.

Man, have you ever noticed how we put our game face on to come to church? My dad was talking about that this morning in Sunday school. Have you ever noticed how we put our game face on? Now, this never happened with us when we were on deputation because my dad was perfect and never had an issue with us at all.

And us kids never did. But we'd be driving down. Did I say we? Some people would be driving down the road on deputation. And let me just tell you, a little tiny itsy bitsy station wagon is not a cool place to be when you're a family of six.

Okay? And can I just tell you that things weren't... Here's what would happen though. You're pulling up to the church. You're like, everybody put a smile on. It's like, Stephanie, I can't believe you. And Joyce said, we're going back and forth with each other.

And you know, David, I promise you, even when he was a baby, he was still David. And so we're sitting there. We'd pull up to the church. And all of a sudden, it was amazing. As soon as those doors opened, we went from like, hello, brother.

[13 : 23] How art thou? That's kind of what... It's different to look like a Christian. And it's different to actually be a Christian. But I want to get to the heart of the subject that I'm trying to get at here today in this passage.

Look at the next part. Verse 31 through verse 35. See, Jesus knew of the betrayal. But he also knows of the behavior of those that follow him.

We're going to finish four more verses. Not much time left. I promise you we're just about done. But here's something that Jesus says that is so, so, so important. Look at verse 31.

The Bible says, therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, now is the son of man glorified. And God is glorified in him. Verse 32. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself and shall straightway glorify him.

Verse 33. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You shall seek me, and as I said unto the Jews, whether I go, you cannot come. So now I say unto you, a new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

[14 : 32] By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. If you underline verses in your Bible, or if you're doing it on a touch screen or whatever, you ought to underline those two verses.

Because here's what Jesus says in verse 31 through verse 35. He says, I know of the behavior of those that believe me. The central and most important point in world history is about to happen here in this passage.

He starts now to be even more intimate with the disciples because there were 12 people, but now there's 11. Judas is gone. I can be as intimate as intimate can be. These are the men that love me.

These are the men that are with me. There's no doubt about it. He's as intimate, as intimate as it comes. When you look into this passage, it's almost like looking into a love letter between Jesus and his disciples.

It almost feels weird as you're listening because he's talking so beautifully to these disciples. And here's what he says. He says, I know the betrayer is going to come. And then he says, I know what your behavior is.

[15 : 32] And then he says, there's a new commandment. And here's the new commandment. I want you to love each other. Now, can I say, I know a lot of churches that wouldn't.

We've had testimonies today of how much we've loved each other in the church. And so I'm not saying Vision Baptist Church, but I want to ask you something today. Are we truly loving each other? You say, Chris, what's most important?

Missions is most important. Yeah, missions is very important. But can I tell you that missions is nothing more than an outpouring of the way we love each other in the church? Because here's the deal. What happens outside those walls is nothing more than what happens on the inside of these walls on the way that we love each other.

And here's what Jesus says to the disciples. He says, by this, all men are going to know something about you. All men. He says, how many of us in America especially, we don't like being judged?

Do we? You know, everybody knows exactly what the Bible says about judge not that you be not judged. But Jesus looks at his disciples and says this.

[16 : 38] The world is going to judge you on one thing. And this one thing is going to tell you whether or not you are truly a disciple of mine. This is what's going to scream to the world that we are the real deal.

And can I just tell you, it's how you love each other. He says this to a group of guys who none of them ever tried to say, Jesus, let me wash the feet. They said, Jesus, you go ahead and wash the feet.

These guys weren't about serving each other. They were about serving themselves, the most important person. They have three people that are important in their lives. And they were me, myself, and I. That's who they were. And so you come here to this pastor and he says, do you love each other?

He says, there's a new commandment, loving each other. We're obsessed. We're obsessed nowadays with impacting the outside of the church. And can I just tell you, we need to impact the outside of the church. But do you know what you need to impact the outside of the church with?

You need to impact them with what goes on inside of the body. We love each other so much that there's no other explanation for it outside of the gospel.

[17 : 38] Because can I tell you, Aaron Basher cannot do in Morocco what his church has not taught him to do at home. You say, Chris, we need more missionaries. We need more missionaries. Absolutely, no doubt about it.

That's my heartbeat as well as yours. But can I tell you, it has to come from what happens on the inside of the church. The way that we're going to know that we're the real deal, the way that all men will know that we're his disciples, is not by the Bible we carry, is not by the amount of missionaries we send out, or the amount of support we give.

The way that the people that don't know Christ are going to know that we are truly his disciples, is by the way we love each other. The way we love each other.

If we don't know how, or if we do not love those inside the church, then trying to love those outside the church will never, ever, ever work. Jesus says, this is the way all men are going to know.

But here's something strange. He says it's a new commandment. But if you look at the Bible, in Leviticus chapter 19 and verse 18, he tells us about loving each other. And then in Deuteronomy, I'm trying to make the computer guys go crazy now, because I'm going to give you a bunch of them.

[18 : 40] In Deuteronomy chapter 6 and verse 5, it talks about loving each other. So loving each other is not really... See, you're a verse behind now. Come on now. Do it right. There you go. That's not love the Lord that God. You're going to love Him all in your heart, with all the soul, with all the mind.

And then in the book of Leviticus, it talks about loving each other, but here's the difference. Here's the difference that comes in. What was new was the way He says to them, now the love that I want you to show is a love among disciples.

You say, Chris, what does that mean? Does that mean we need to stop doing stuff outside the church? No, it means that you need to look at it and say, am I loving others inside the body to a point that the only explanation for it is the gospel?

The gospel is the only way to explain why I would give myself to my brethren in the church the way that I do. Can I tell you the way to make a strong church? Is when we're loving each other and that love is pouring out because we understand the importance of the Great Commission.

But if we think that the importance is nothing but the Great Commission, we miss out on something very, very vital because if we don't do here what we ask to do there, it will never be able to be reproduced.

[19 : 44] Serve your brothers. Remember, it's spoken to a group of people that are full of themselves. We're never full of ourselves, are we? We never think we're the most important people.

It's spoken to a group of people that think that it's all about them. Our Facebook feed is filled with friends that really aren't. And you know what Facebook's job is? Facebook's job is to pretend to have what the church should have.

You know what Twitter's job is? Twitter's job is to try and pretend that the church, pretend that they have what the church should have. Oh, these are my friends. I've got 4,400 friends on my Facebook, and let me just tell you, if I don't know half of them, it's a miracle.

The church should be a place where we're loving each other. We Instagram, we tweet, but we forget that one place that God has called us to have community in, that we ought to love each other, is in the body of Christ.

I read a psychology book a few years back that talked about the person that messed up American culture was a guy that brought in the central heat and air. You know, back in the old days, guess what you did just when it was hot inside?

[20 : 55] You went outside. What did you do? You sat on the... Guess what? Most of our houses don't have porches anymore because now we have AC units. Isn't it awesome? Because this is what we do. We go inside our car.

We crank our car. We open that magical door to where we don't even have to touch anything, and we pull out. We go to our job, and if we're really neighborly and love those that are around us, here's how we do it. Down south.

Up north, they don't even do that. Okay? Like, we wave at each other. Oh, yeah, man, I'm a good neighbor. We've created ourselves and lived in a way that is a bubble, and we don't understand what it's really like to love each other.

We have tons of excuses why we can't do it. We're busy. We're tired. We live too far away. I wish we could do more. We can't really do more. Can't you hear that same attitude in the disciples as they had a reason why they could not wash the feet of the other disciples?

What we need to realize is that we have two options in here. Here's what Jesus says, verse 34 and verse 35. He says, All men are going to know by the way that you love each other. Everybody will know that you are Christians by the way that you treat each other.

[22 : 03] You have two choices. Either Jesus is a liar, or we can do what He's called us to do. Because see, when Jesus tells us to do something, either we can do it, or He lied because He's telling us to do something that's totally impossible.

We ought to be loving one another. They live in a time where there's great gulfs of separation. There's a language separation, religion separation, national animosities. There's differences of condition.

There's differences of sex. The world is split up into these little tiny segments in Bible times, and there's no advocacy group saying, Oh, everybody needs to come together and sing Kumbaya. There's nobody saying that.

And He looks at them and He says, The church is the one place where those that are loved are loved without mattering what group they belong to, without mattering what language they belong to, without mattering.

The church is a place where we love each other and we don't love each other because we fit together. We love each other because we have been loved by Christ. So what pours out into the world?

[23 : 01] You know what pours out into the world? The exact replica of what goes on inside the building. Thank God we're nothing like this. And here's what He says. The way I want you to love is this way.

I want you to love. He didn't say, I want you to wash feet. He said, I want you to love them as I loved you. I want you to do like I did, the same attitude.

I want you to love that way. Jesus' own love becomes the model and the standard for the love of us and our family, the body of believers.

Now, that's really cool if I leave it there, but do you realize that Jesus washed the feet that were going to go running to deliver Him to His crucifixion?

Love them as I loved them. Now, it's cool. He washed Peter's feet. And you know, Peter's a big mouth and he denies Christ, but he comes back around in Pentecost. Everything's cool, but he washes the feet of Judas.

[24 : 02] You're talking about stinky feet, man. Those are stinky feet. But he washes them every single moment knowing this guy's going to betray me.

And these same feet that I'm washing, I'm preparing them so that they can run to deliver me to those that hate me the most. And he says this, I want you to love like I love.

I want you to love like I love. They have a right. Here's the deal. They have a right to judge us, but what they get to judge us on is on this. Are we loving with each other?

Are we loving in a way that the only explanation is the gospel? Are we loving those around us to the degree that the world questions why we would love that way? Y'all have met Ronald and Ronald, of course, worked here in the church.

He was here this morning and now he's in Norcross working and one of his best friends, his name is Juan. And what Juan said to me every single Sunday when I'd pick him up out of his vomit on the sidewalk at the church and take him to his house is what he said all the time.

[25 : 03] Nobody loves me. You know what he was saying? I'm looking for something that would explain how God is real because I know what it's like to live but I don't know what it's like to be loved. And every single Sunday I'd say I love you and I said that God loves you and this preacher loves you every single Sunday he got saved and there's a difference in his life but that difference came because he was looking at something that made no sense at all.

Why would an American be in Peru loving people that don't look like him, that don't talk like him, that don't eat like him, that don't do like him? Why in the world? Well, there's only one explanation and that explanation is the gospel.

The gospel is the only thing that makes that make any sense. If we fail in this endeavor then the world would be given the right to deny that we are his disciples. If we fail in loving each other the world has the right to look at us and say you are not his disciples there's no way you can be his disciple because I don't see love I see anything but that.

Are you truly his disciple? It's our mark of authenticity that we truly follow Christ. They took it seriously to the point that in the book of Acts when some of the people in the church had problems what they did was this they went out and sold their property so they could take care of their problems.

It's a little bit different than what we do nowadays. Do you love one another? John wrote 1 John and Well and deals with this in depth and one of the first writers of the history of the church was Tertullian and here's what he wrote I thought this was great he says he writes that the Roman government was disturbed about the early church Christians were increasing in number by leaps and bounds and 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 so they sent spies to the Christian gathering and came back with a report that said 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 each other there's no explanation if they were to send spies among us what would they say?

[27 : 24] whether they say that we truly love each other or not there's just something that tells others outside the church we're real it doesn't convince Jesus it doesn't convince the father but it says to the unbelievers that we are real they recognize us by the way that we love one another here's the question today are we real?

what do outsiders see when they look inside our church? all you have to do is mention church to a guy and you'll know exactly what his attitude towards church is have you ever tried that?

oh church let me just say that's a mean place horrible place can I beg you let's keep it up vision so we can have another eight years of showing people what it's like to love each other so that we can love the world the same way that we love each other while we're showing that we are truly his disciples we don't win the loss by being Christian cannibals we tend to spread gossip before we spread gospel but can I just tell you we've got to get down to saying I want to love you in a way that makes no sense except outside of the gospel what have you done this week that makes no sense outside of the gospel if we don't if we don't do this right then we need to become a social club and take church off the church outside because we ought to be loving one another are we real?

are we a loving church in a dying culture? do those who are not Christians see God in us by the way we love each other? Jesus created a community that was founded on the love between Christians and do we love others inside this building in a way that the only explanation is that we have trusted Christ now this is where I'm closing up we're just about done but who have you loved this week that way?

who have you loved this week that way? how will you love somebody this week that will show them that you're truly a believer in Christ? Paul in the book of Romans 13.8 says you owe love you owe love to your brethren you owe love to your brethren in your community you owe love to your brethren at Vision Baptist Church pop quiz is over how do we do?

[29 : 32] now let me ask you this this one question we'll close with this how do you love the person you like the least in your church?

and that'll show how you're truly a disciple of Christ we would never hang out you wouldn't be my friend because we're just so different but I love you because I know the God of the Bible and Jesus looks at the disciples and says the whole world will know all men will know about one thing how they love each other you know what we send to Morocco?

we send a group of guys that say let me show you what it's like to understand and comprehend the love that the gospel brings to a people that don't understand you know what we send to China? we send the same thing you know what we send to Tunisia? we send the exact same thing to Burkina Faso we send the same thing we send the same thing everywhere we go how have we shown with a person we like the least how we are truly disciples of Christ do you really pass the test in the pop quiz of saying I really am a disciple of Christ and you can see it in the way that I love those that surround me dear Lord I thank you for Vision Baptist Church I thank you dear Lord for eight years of faithful ministry and Lord I thank you for sending the gospel around the world with men and women that truly are examples of loving you and of giving their lives to you dear Lord I beg you that you would help me to love others in a way that the only explanation truly is the gospel thank you for all you've done in Jesus name this message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo Georgia for more information log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times location contact information and more audio and video recordings