

He Loved Them to the End

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Preacher: Tom Holland

[0:00] Tonight, we're actually beginning, by my calculations, the 20th year of Fat Boys.

! And for those of you who are new, if any of you here are new, or have forgotten, Fat Boys stands for Faithful, Available, and Teachable. I've had all summer, really, to reflect on where the Lord would have us to go this fall and winter.

My plans are to teach the lofty words of John's Gospel, chapters 13 through 17.

I've been looking at various commentaries. I've found some that are old. I like the old writings.

Nothing's new. There's nothing new under the sun.

And I found some of the Puritans. And they call, one of them at least, called this the Inner Sanctuary. And I thought that was an appropriate title for us.

[1:18] And you'll remember that when you get to those chapters, it's just immediately before the arrest, trial, torture, and crucifixion of our Lord.

And all of this takes place in the upper room, where Jesus really lays out the plans for the apostles. And through them, I think, to the church down through the centuries and millennia, after he departs, he, the Lord, departs.

And these five chapters, I believe, contain unique and precious statements from the mind and the mouth of Christ to his followers for all time.

The last moments we spend with a loved one, and certainly last words spoken to us by that loved one are unique, they're precious, and they're memorable.

[2:24] You know, I can remember my dad on his deathbed, and he and I talking. Some of you probably have experiences. But here we have, in these chapters, the immeasurable profundness of words spoken to us by the Lord Jesus Christ, God in human flesh, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, Second Person of the Trinity, and our Sovereign God.

And obviously, his last words to us, I believe, should bear great weight. We should hang on them to see what it is he would have us to remember after his departure.

Now, there is a certain level of caution or danger here when we promote one section of Scripture over another. And by that I mean we have to always remember that every word of the Bible is inspired.

It's inerrant. It's authoritative. We can look at the genealogical tables found in the Old Testament, and we realize those are just as God breathed as John 3.16.

But there are sections of Scripture, and particularly, I think, for the church in the New Testament, that are regarded by true believers as uniquely precious coming from the mind of Christ.

[4:02] That is most certainly true of the last moments Jesus spent with his followers as he is journeying to the cross. His last hours with his followers, we find him in these last hours engaged in a very solemn work.

And again, the location of this work was apparently the upper room. And John, who by the way, never used his name in any of his writings, never started out like Paul, you know.

Paul, a follower of Jesus Christ by the grace of God the Father. John never used his names. He doesn't record for us everything that happened that night.

In fact, we have to lean on other evangelists, other writings, to learn, for instance, the instituting of the Lord's Supper.

We learn that from other gospel accounts. But John does reveal to us incidents and utterances not mentioned by some of the other inspired writers.

[5:16] We can sum up John's writings by saying that he reveals to us the Savior's love and tenderness for his own.

I think if we'll keep that in mind, this will really impress our hearts and our own minds with what's being said. Now, the portion of Scripture we shall be studying for the next several months takes in the five chapters of John's magnificent book.

The Gospel of John, I think, is a magnificent book. We all know, of course, that chapter divisions were inserted centuries after the actual writings.

I mean, Paul never said, well, let's look at the third chapter of John. It didn't exist. Chapter divisions came later. But we can really divide this narrative, I think, under three main headings.

One, we're going to be looking at, not tonight, but the almost unimaginable act of the Christ of glory washing the feet of his followers.

[6:36] We're going to look at that. And when we put it in the context of who it is that's washing these feet, I think it's going to have a profound impact on all of us.

We also could put a heading here, and that's the tender conversation that the Lord has with his disciples after the departure of the betrayer, Judas Iscariot.

Judas leaves, and then the Lord really starts to speak to his followers in a most intimate and really moving, heartfelt way.

And then we will be closing probably a year from now or more, maybe two, with the intercessory prayer that the Lord engages in just prior to entering the Garden of Gethsemane.

Now, I don't think you'll remember this, but when we get to John 17, I will point out that the Lord there enters into his intercessory work.

[8:03] We really catch a view of heaven because that's what the Lord is doing in heaven. You know, when you wake up at three o'clock in the morning, and you're looking at that dark ceiling, do you ever think, I wonder what Jesus is doing right now?

Well, I can tell you, he ever lives to make intercession for us. And that's his present day ministry. He's making intercession for his children.

So we're going to take a very verse-by-verse, word-by-word look at the intercessory prayer, what I call the true Lord's Prayer in John 17.

What we will witness throughout our study is a pure and, in some cases, a humanly difficult, it's humanly difficult to grasp the level of love flowing from the triune God to his people for all generations.

These five chapters are for all generations. They were good in the second century. They're good now. Nothing in there has been voided or changed or proven to be false.

[9:22] And this is why we're going to call our study the inner sanctuary. We're going to be able to fly on the wall, if you will, in the inner sanctuary of Christ.

As he meets with the men that are going to carry on the ministry and lay the groundwork and the blueprint for the church until Jesus comes back, whenever that is.

So magnificent is the inner sanctuary that the inspired writer John the Apostle begins with words that are both tender and touching.

In verse 1, and if anyone really believes we're going to get to verse 2, then you're wrong. Verse 1 has this to say. Now, before the feast of the Passover, Jesus, knowing that his hour had come, that he would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

Very profound. And by the time we end here tonight, you're just about going to have that verse memorized. Very profound.

[10:54] At the very outset, John does two things here. First, he gives the precise date of when this is all occurring. John does two things here.

He says it is before the feast of the Passover. John, obviously through the power of the Spirit, journeys, takes us into the very mind of Christ, where we learn something that is nearly incomprehensible to our finite minds.

The passage says, Jesus knowing. Now, we understand something. Jesus is the omnipotent God, right? He knows everything.

Everything. But can we really grasp the significance of those two words? Jesus knew something. Jesus knew something. And because He is God in human flesh, He knew it in the most profound, detailed, thorough, and intimate sense.

He knew. He knew. But what did He know? He knew that the hour, or His hour, had come.

[12:23] He knew all that. And that He would depart out of this world to the Father. And He knew that in minute detail.

He knew what was going to happen. He knew every lash of the whip that was going to be His in just a matter of a few hours.

He knew when they were going to pluck out His beard and tear out His hair and rip His garments off. He knew all that. Now, this concept, as we lay the groundwork for what is going to come later, is very important.

Jesus knew He would soon separate from His followers. That's very important to grasp.

He knows He's going to be leaving. He's going to separate from His followers and He's going to depart out of the world of space-time.

[13:30] He had lived for eternity in a world not of space-time. He entered space-time and He took upon Himself human flesh or I think the Greek says He pitched His tent with us or tabernacled with us.

And now it is time to leave the space-time continuum and go back to eternity. And because He was departing and because He loved His followers with a love immeasurable, He would now manifest that love and He's going to leave them with words that were necessary to see them through.

And when I say them, I'm talking about the apostles in the upper room but all that came after them including the men in this room tonight in the 21st century, He's going to leave them words that were necessary to see them through until His return for them ages ahead.

Ages ahead. However long that is. These words will see this generation through. These words will see that generation back there through. You know, at my age, I think we've got three generations in here anyway.

And it will see us through. We see then in this opening statement an expression of love at a level that without the instruction of the Spirit of God would be incomprehensible for the finite mind to grasp.

[15:19] You know, the unsaved religion professor at some secular university doesn't have a clue what this section of Scripture is about. Not a clue. The unsaved mind can't grasp these things.

These are grasped by the indwelling Spirit of God as He teaches us. And again, John tells us that Jesus having loved His own would love them until the end.

He would love them until the end. So the first things that we observe in the opening lesson on the inner sanctuary, we learn the very objects of His love.

The Holy Spirit tells us through John's inspired writing. He describes the object of the love of Christ as His own.

His own. Wouldn't that be great if someone comes up and says look at where you come well I belong to Jesus. Jesus owns me.

[16:31] Jesus owns me. He says the objects of the love of Christ are His own. And I want to make a few observations concerning those two words His own.

And again we're laying a foundation. The lesson is not going to be lengthy. But it's a foundation.

And we're going to build on that. First, there is the broad definition when we think of His own as we take a broad definition of all that would ever live in His created world.

The Lord dispenses what the Puritans called general grace. It's still around to all who are in this world.

In our day, this very day, both the just and the unjust the saved and the unsaved when I say just and unjust justified not justified received many blessings based upon the love of the Creator.

And Colossians identifies the Creator, doesn't it? It's Jesus Christ. They have air to breathe. That's universal. You can't say, well, I'm not going to go to Bangladesh because they don't have any oxygen over there.

[18:01] Well, they do have. We have air to breathe. We have water to drink. We have rain to cleanse and replenish the earth.

And we can go on and on. Those and a lot more that we could talk about exist under the heading of general grace.

I tell people, do you not realize that were it not for the grace of God, none of us could take another breath of oxygen. He holds our breath in His hands.

And we couldn't even breathe. And He created within the human body, He created air pressure.

And, you know, air pressure, whether you realize it or not, forces air into your lungs.

I had a cousin, he's still around, and to get his way with his parents, he used to say, if you don't do this or that for me, I'll hold my breath. Well, his parents, my aunt and uncle, went into panic mode. [19:06] And they gave him whatever he wanted. Then one time, he made the mistake of staying with his grandfather. And he said, if you don't let me do such, such, I'm going to hold my breath.

He said, go ahead and hold your breath. And when you can't hold any more and start breathing, I'm going to spank you. He held as long as he could. But you can't kill yourself by holding your breath. And my cousin got a good paddling after he started breathing again. He found out that won't work with grandpa. So, we have this general grace.

But when the Spirit of God tells us that he loved his own, the entire human race was not what he had in mind.

They don't fit under the banner of his own. Who then are his own? This is important because his own are the objects of a special love not enjoyed by the majority of the inhabitants of this world.

[20:15] The fact of the matter is, he doesn't have in mind the majority of people on this planet. His own are those given to him by the Father, purchased by his blood, and placed into the mystical body known as the church.

That's his own in our age. That's his own. These are the called and justified ones, and they stand nearer to the Lord of glory than all the angels of heaven.

The angels look at us, or will look at us someday, and marvel. I mean, we sometimes, unfortunately, even the true church takes for granted, you know, the atonement, for instance, and the angels are going to look at us and say, man, what did it feel like when you're on earth knowing that Christ died for you?

What did that feel like? Even the angels marvel that the Lord of glory has done for his own, the humans, what he has done.

The old writers called his own, they referred to his own as his jewels. They also call it his peculiar treasure, and his crown of rejoicing.

[21:49] That's describing believers through the ages. But John in his inspired writing is even more specific as to the identity of his own.

This is what we're going to grasp tonight, and then we'll move on next week. They were his own who were in the world.

You need to put that complete sentence there. Yeah, it's his own, but who were in the world. That further identifies for our purposes who his own were.

And again, this is profound. At this present moment, Jesus has many who are his own that are now in glory.

glory. Right? They've gone on. And they're in glory. My father-in-law got saved late in life. He died in February.

[22:49] He sang. He died technically on a Tuesday. He was brain dead. But he sang a solo on Sunday. You know, he sang. And he sang my first day in heaven.

What is my first day in heaven going to be like? Don't miss that Diane show blubber. But there are many that belong to Christ that are already with him in glory.

And I would imagine every one of us in this room has a father, mother, a grandparent, or other relative that is in heaven singing praises before the throne of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And there's no doubt, we're not arguing, that such are not the special objects of his eternal love and delight. He loved them so much he took them home to be with him.

In our own minds, I think we can almost see our loved ones robed in white, shining the reflected glory before the majesty on high.

[23:55] No doubt they cast their eyes upward to both see and hear the angels proclaim holy, holy, holy, thrice holy. I always think of a father, son, holy spirit, but he's thrice holy as the Lord God almighty who was and is and is to come.

But as majestic as this scene is, the words in John 13, his own, do not apply to the heavenly host. They don't apply.

As Paul admonished this, he said, what do the scriptures say? I love to use that. I use that all the time. People start questioning this or arguing what do the scriptures say?

And in John 13 we read that Jesus loved his own who were in the world. And that's the identity.

Jesus loves every one of his children, but here we learn that he has a special love for those who yet remain in the world even though he physically has departed.

And he's put a very special love on his own that are in the world. Is there any example of this that might prove our point? Think of a mother who has a deep love obviously for every child under her roof.

[25:24] I mean you can't go to a mother and say who's your favorite, right? You can't do that. But when she has a son who is in a far off land engaged in war, her love for that child takes on new heights.

The Christian mother will spend much time in the quiet of the night on her knees praying and weeping for the safety of that child will do so.

Why is this? Because the one at war is in a hostile world and has special needs. Does that resonate with us?

Fellas, we live in a hostile world. We live in a Christ rejecting world. We live in a world that hates Christ, hates Christ's followers.

We see this, don't we, a lot at VOM. There's believers that have died today for their faith or more actually because they didn't deny Christ. We live in a hostile world and we have special needs as we must endure the onslaught of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

[26:54] now let's be honest, we sort of live in a place that's been pretty decent. I think dark days are coming for our country, but it's been pretty decent.

We live on the buckle of the Bible belt. We may be the last to experience it, but the world's getting dark. We were talking about that already. The lights are going out.

The lights are going out. I'm not speaking out of context here because I have the video. I'd be glad to share it. And I'm not going to call any names, but I was watching one of the presidential candidates and she said this.

I'm not calling names. When I'm elected, we need tough laws to prevent pastors from speaking out against abortion, homosexuality, transvestites.

We need to toughen up our laws on them to guarantee women reproductive rights and equality on them. That's frightening language in a constitutional republic that was founded the way we were.

[28:06] That's frightening. We live in a hostile world. It's getting more hostile. And in the context of John 13, King Jesus is about to depart from that world, but he knew that his disciples were to be left behind.

They're going to remain in it. And for this reason, the Lord's heart turns in love toward them. Now, there is a very close connection to the words of John and the words of Christ in the intercessory prayer, which we'll get to someday, but let me read to you John 17, 11.

Jesus speaking, obviously, and now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world. Talking about the apostles and those who would come after them, and he said to the Father, and I come to thee.

I'll leave them behind, and he's going to the Father. So as we meet here tonight for this first lesson on the inner sanctuary, it is an encouraging truth that the Lord Jesus, though presently in glory, regards his own that are in the world with a special love and a special care that is most suited to both our needs and our circumstances.

think of that when you wake up at three in the morning and it's like the world is crashing in. You ever notice that things seem worse at three in the morning? They do at three in the afternoon.

[29:51] But they just do. We live in a sin-filled world. We live in a world that's getting darker, though we are in a world of sorrow and we can be certain that Jesus loves his own that are in the world and he has on each and every one of us a watchful eye.

A watchful eye. I've told you guys this before. When you wake up at three in the morning, remember the Lord has VBE, very big ears, and he can hear the softest whispered prayer in the middle of the night.

Now you may be thinking, but you don't know the things that I have done for him to put a watchful eye on me. I'll give you two responses to that truth. First, I don't know what you've done, but I know the things that I've done.

And if he won't leave or forsake me, I promise you he's going to abide with you. Jesus loved his own that were in the world while he was still here on earth, and he loves his own that are in the world still, even though he is now in glory.

He is in heaven. Physically. Of course, we know he didn't leave us as orphans, did he? He said his spirit. But my second response is this.

[31:14] Now, I don't know the things you have done, but I know the things that Christ has done. They've been recorded in the word of God, and this I know, his grace is sufficient to meet the day.

It is sufficient. one ounce of his grace is more powerful than all the accumulated sins of all his people since the dawn of humanity to the close of humanity.

His grace will see us home. It will see us home. And note in our closing that the first verse of John chapter 13 ends with these words.

He loved them to the end. He loved them to the end. Well, that leads to a question that we really do need to answer, and Sean MacArthur is going to help me answer it.

It ends there, but he loved them to the end, and we're going to talk about the end. What's the end? What end are we talking about?

[32:30] And this is another example of how wonderful it would be if we understood the original language of the New Testament. I wish I did. I don't. The word used here is telos.

It has nothing to do with time. We're not speaking of time here. That's not what we have in mind.

The word telos means perfection, completeness, uttermost, or eternally.

It wasn't any accident the New Testament was written in Greek or the Old and Hebrew. Very expressive. It can mean uttermost, eternally, perfectly, completely.

In other words, the Lord Jesus loved His own with the fullest possible measure of love. I mean, if you had a giant cup and you wanted to pour Jesus' love in there, you'd discover that cup has no bottom.

The oceans of the world could pass through there continually. That's how much love He has for His own. It's complete. It's to perfection. Christ loves His own with a perfect, eternal, redeeming love.

[33:56] That is the level of love described by Paul which surpasses even knowledge. We can't even grasp it. It's beyond our knowledge.

You can read about that in Ephesians 3.19. So how perfect and how complete is this love with which He loved His own that are in the world until the end of the age?

Christ loves His own with a perfect, eternal, redeeming love. And it is perfect and again we appeal to Paul this time in the book of Romans chapter 8.

We love chapter 8 don't we? Listen to this level of love. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? what's out there that's going to separate us?

Well tribulation? We've all had some of that haven't we? Distress? Persecution?

[35:07] Famine? Nakedness? Peril? Sword? Just as it is written for your sake we're being put to death all day long.

We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered. But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. And then Paul says this, for I am convinced that neither death nor life nor angels have to be holy angels fallen angels nor principalities nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth and then Paul throws in I think a catch-all nor any other created thing perhaps or anything in creation nothing in creation will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

actually I like because he says in there nothing in life nothing in death nothing in all creation.

what else is there? And I love dearly love my Wesleyan friends we've discussed this and they'll say well I think you can jump out though you can just said nothing it said nothing and I think that's a fitting way to end tonight we join Paul's inspired words in that passage I just read you by saying this having loved his own he loved them perfectly and to the uttermost and to the uttermost