Love Is All You Need

John 13:21-38

“Love Is All You Need.” Do you remember that hit Beatles’ tune? They had the right title and words for this music, but they did not have any understanding of the pure love that brings joy, contentment, and happiness. In this section of our study we learn how important the right kind of love is and how to express and receive it. We will begin by reading John 13:21-38 NLT:

21 Now Jesus was deeply troubled, and he exclaimed, “I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me!” 22 The disciples looked at each other, wondering whom he could mean. 23 The disciple Jesus loved was sitting next to Jesus at the table. 24 Simon Peter motioned to him to ask, “Who’s he talking about?” 25 So that disciple leaned over to Jesus and asked, “Lord, who is it?” 26 Jesus responded, “It is the one to whom I give the bread I dip in the bowl.” And when he had dipped it, he gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. 27 When Judas had eaten the bread, Satan entered into him. Then Jesus told him, “Hurry and do what you’re going to do.” 28 None of the others at the table knew what Jesus meant. 29 Since Judas was their treasurer, some thought Jesus was telling him to go and pay for the food or to give some money to the poor. 30 So Judas left at once, going out into the night.

31 As soon as Judas left the room, Jesus said, “The time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory, and God will be glorified because of him. 32 And since God receives glory because of the Son, he will soon give glory to the Son. 33 Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer. And as I told the Jewish leaders, you will search for me, but you can’t come where I am going.

34 So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.

35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.” 36 Simon Peter asked, “Lord, where are you going?” And Jesus replied, “You can’t go with me now, but you will follow me later.” 37 “But why can’t I come now, Lord?” he asked. “I’m ready to die for you.” 38 Jesus answered, “Die for me? I tell you the truth, Peter—before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me.

The person who tells the following story begins by saying that he had been blessed by
some truly humble people.

“One I remember most is Joan Hollister Gilbert. Joan was a delightful person who had a long, difficult, and courageous battle against cancer. During her illness, her husband, Jack, was diagnosed with cancer, and she had to deal with that and eventually with Jack's death.

“A few years later when Joan was dying, with just a few days left to her life, she invited Charleen and me to come and sit by her bedside. She said she knew she was going to die, and she talked about it. Most people in my experience choose not to do that. She said she wasn't afraid. She said she was excited about entering the presence of God.

“But that was by far the shortest part of the conversation. Most of the time she talked about people for whom she was concerned. She talked about us and our children. She talked about her children and the children of others.

“I found out that on that day, and the day before, and the day after, leading right up to her death, she invited a whole list of people to come to her bedside so she could bless them before she died. Those who could not come she talked with on the telephone.

“If anyone ever had a right to be self-concerned, and if ever there was a time when she had every justification to be primarily focused upon herself, it was Joan and it was then. But she lived out humility. She cared more about others and their needs than she cared about herself and her own needs. That's the way it was with Jesus. The humble person cares about people in need."

Beginning in verse 21 Jesus lets us know that He knew that He was about to be betrayed by Judas and it troubled Him the same way it would trouble us if a friend we have known and loved would betray us. Betrayal is one of the most painful emotional experiences that anyone can go through. If a husband betrays his wife by having an affair with another woman and his wife finds out about it her sense of betrayal may never go away, whether they remain married or not. It is the breaking of a trust and that really hurts when you are on the receiving end. And I would bet that if that betrayed wife divorced her husband and one day remarried, she would have a great deal of difficulty trusting her new husband and I think you can understand why. She would always be wondering if he were going to do the same thing to her that her first husband did. In fact

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she may even manufacture a false sense of guilt thinking there may be something wrong with her that would drive any man into the arms of another woman. What a terrible load for someone to have to carry because of the uncaring nature of one who lives only for themselves. Remember, Jesus was fully human as well as being fully God. So he felt all the same kinds of things that you and I feel and I know He must have been deeply hurt by what Judas did.

When Peter heard Jesus tell them that one of them was going to betray Him, Peter once again, as he did so often, sprung into action, most likely to deal with the traitor. John was reclining on one side of Jesus and Judas on the other. Because Peter was not close enough to Jesus to lean over and ask Him personally who it was that would betray Him, he motioned to John to ask Jesus who it was. John leaned over and asked Jesus who it would be, and Jesus indicated to John that it would be Judas and gave Judas the morsel of bread. When a host normally gave a guest a morsel of bread at supper it was a sign of friendship, so the other disciples did not notice anything out of the ordinary when Jesus did this.

As soon as Judas ate the bread Satan entered into him and would now use this poor fool to accomplish the most horrible act in history; the cold, calculated murder of God Himself, in the human form of Jesus. Perhaps you can imagine an event worse than this, but I cannot. Had Judas not been such a selfish, self-serving fool he probably would have accepted Jesus as his Savior. But the only thing he thought about as the treasurer for the group was the money box and his false god, the love of money, drove him to betray the true God and the only person that could save His soul and grant him eternal life in Heaven. There are many of the same kind of fools running around today and their fate and eternity are going to be exactly the same as Judas’ for exactly the same reason. Whether it is out of stubborn pride, or greed, or lust, or love of money, those who are foolish enough to ignore the truth that is available through God’s Word in the Bible are going to determine their own future and they are going to be sending themselves to Hell. No one should blame God, because He sent Jesus to pay the price for their sins. They do not even have to do anything good in order to receive the gift of salvation. The only thing they have to do is reach out and accept it. They do not have to jump in a pool full of alligators; they do not have to walk a half-mile across crushed glass in their bare feet; they do not have to pray ten hours every day for ten years; and they do not have to put up with the conversation of a far left liberal for hours each day, or come to think of it even a few minutes might be more than I could bear. **There is simply nothing you have to do except believe in what Jesus did for you.** Why in the world do you think people will not believe that or do it?

There is no other religion in the world that offers salvation on the basis of love alone. They all require some kind of good works. That alone should make people realize there is something unique about the God of the Bible. He does not want to beat you up, He wants to lift you up. But He cannot lift you up if you keep putting Him down, if you keep avoiding Him, or if you kick and scream and run away when you bump into Him somewhere. That certainly sounds like insane reasoning and behavior, does it not?
Let me just make one more illustration and then I promise I will stop. Suppose you go out to your mailbox one day and you find there an invitation for a private audience and dinner with the president of the United States. He tells you that he will send his private plane, “Air Force One” to pick you up at the airport and fly you back to Washington. The letter further states that the government of the good old USA wants to honor you before a joint session of Congress and confirm on you the title of “Most Intelligent, Best Looking, Most Gifted and Talented, Kindest, and Most Generous United States Citizen.”

Well, I would imagine you would take that letter, tear it up, and say “I am not going to go, that is no big deal, besides that is on the day of the week when I play golf.” Is that what you would do? I doubt it. You would probably be overwhelmed and go to the phone and immediately accept. But here we have the King of the universe sending you a personal invitation, delivered by no one other than His Son, to be adopted into His family, become His son or daughter, to become royalty, and to inherit wealth that far exceeds all the money and material possessions in the world. Yet most refuse that invitation, choosing to remain where they are, and live as they have always lived, in a state of quiet desperation.

Now if you are still struggling with this, I encourage you, when you put your head on the pillow at night, or wake up in the morning, or sometime you can be alone with God, just ask Him sincerely to reveal His truth to you, and then keep an open mind for what will begin to come your way.

If you ask Him sincerely, we can guarantee He will reveal the truth to you and before long you will believe. We can also guarantee that if you try it you will like it.

Now getting back to the Last Supper, as Judas left only John had any idea that he might be up to no good and we have no indication that he told anyone else what Jesus had revealed to him about Judas being the one who would betray Him. Most likely none of the other disciples had a clue that he was up to anything but the work Jesus had assigned him to do in connection with their financial resources. Perhaps he was going to give some money to the poor or to buy supplies.

Verses 31–38 set the stage for what has become known as the “farewell discourses,” which continue in chapters 14–16. These verses contain two themes—Jesus’ relationship to the disciples and His specific prediction about Peter. Once again Jesus speaks of God being glorified as well as His own coming glorification (verses 31–32).

The crucifixion and death of Christ was a cowardly act on the part of the Jewish leaders and the Romans, but an incredibly brave and faithful act on the part of Christ. It was an act that consequently revealed the glory of God. In John 12:23 Jesus said, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified (NAS).” Daniel 7:13 identifies this title as messianic, and Jesus sometimes used it this way as we can see in Matthew 26:64, “Jesus said to him, ‘You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see The
Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

What did it mean for Jesus to glorify the Father? He tells us in His prayer in John 17:1-5 NAS:

1 Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You.
2 even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.
3 "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.
4 "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.
5 "Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

This is the way we can all glorify God, by faithfully doing what He calls us to do. In our Lord’s case, the Father’s will was that the Son die for lost sinners, be raised from the dead, and then ascend to Heaven. The Son glorified the Father and the Father glorified the Son (John 17:1, 5).

What do you suppose it means to glorify God or Christ? Well why not take just a little time to find out what the Bible means when it speaks of “glory,” “glorify,” or “glorification”?

One source defines GLORY as, "The singular splendor of God and the consequences for humanity." God’s glory refers primarily to His majestic beauty and splendor. His glory is over all the earth. Creation proclaims the glory of God.

Psalm 19:1-6 NLT:

1 The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship.
2 Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known.
3 They speak without a sound or word; their voice is never heard.
4 Yet their message has gone throughout the earth, and their words to all the world. God has made a home in the heavens for the sun.

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3 Psalm 57:5, 11; 108:5; 113:4.
It bursts forth like a radiant bridegroom after his wedding. It rejoices like a great athlete eager to run the race.

The sun rises at one end of the heavens and follows its course to the other end. Nothing can hide from its heat.

Romans 1:20 NAS:

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

God’s glory is revealed by His mighty acts of salvation and deliverance. His glory is revealed in praise.

References to the glory of God are frequently made regarding His physical appearances at various times in the Old Testament in the image of light and fire. In the writings of the Rabbis of the Old Testament we also find the term, shekinah glory, a phrase meaning the “dwelling glory.” It refers primarily to the presence of God in the pillar of cloud and fire in the Old Testament. The first clear reference to the glory cloud is found in Exodus 13:21–22 NLT:

21 The Lord went ahead of them. He guided them during the day with a pillar of cloud, and he provided light at night with a pillar of fire. This allowed them to travel by day or by night.
22 And the Lord did not remove the pillar of cloud or pillar of fire from its place in front of the people.

At the time of the exodus, the glory of God appeared in the pillar of cloud and fire to lead the people through the sea and wilderness, Nehemiah 9:11–12, 19 NLT:

11 You divided the sea for your people so they could walk through on dry land! And then you hurled their enemies into the depths of the sea. They sank like stones beneath the mighty waters.
12 You led our ancestors by a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night so that they could find their way.
19 “But in your great mercy you did not abandon them to die in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud still led them forward by day, and the pillar of fire showed them the way through the night.

At Sinai, with Israel encamped around the mountain, the glory of God came in the cloud and fire to speak with Moses in the sight of the people. When Moses was given a
glimpse of that glory unconcealed by the **cloud and fire**, his own face became radiant. Listen to what God said to Moses in Exodus 33:17-23 NLT.⁹

> 17 The Lord replied to Moses, “I will indeed do what you have asked, for I look favorably on you, and I know you by name.” 18 Moses responded, “Then show me your glorious presence.” 19 The Lord replied, “I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will call out my name, **Yahweh**, before you. For I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose. 20 But you may not look directly at my face, for no one may see me and live.” 21 The Lord continued, “Look, stand near me on this rock. 22 As my glorious presence passes by, I will hide you in the crevice of the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. 23 Then I will remove my hand and let you see me from behind. But my face will not be seen.” ¹⁰

The picture of Israel encamped around the **glory of God** on Sinai portrays God dwelling in the midst of His people. When the tabernacle is completed and the people set out on their march, the **glory cloud** of God’s presence dwells above them throughout their journey.¹¹ When they make camp, the tribes encircle the tabernacle (Numbers 1:50–2:2), and the cloud reminds them of His presence in their midst. Later, the same **glory** filled the new Temple that Solomon built.¹² The psalmists celebrated Jerusalem and the Temple as the place where God’s **glory** dwelt.¹³ **God was in their midst.**¹⁴

In his visions Ezekiel saw the **glory** of the Lord return to dwell in the Temple again (Ezekiel 43:2–9), a time when the **glory** would return to a purified people and dwell among them forever. That will not however take place until the Millennium begins.¹⁵

We are told that God’s **glory** was seen again on earth in the coming and person of Jesus Christ. John 1:14 says, “**The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son.**” As such, Jesus was the new tabernacle for God’s **glory**. In Jesus, God dwelt among people. Since Christ was (and is) the very image of God, to see the light of his face was to know the **glory** of God (2 Corinthians 4:4–6). To see Jesus was to see a “light to the Gentiles and the **glory** of Israel” (Luke 2:30–32). The disciples who witnessed the **Transfiguration** (Matthew 17:1–8) saw His **glory** in a marvelous way (2 Peter 1:16–17), for it was a **glory** that burst out of His human body. This outburst of **glory** was a preview of the **glorification** Christ experienced in resurrection and ascension.¹⁶¹⁷

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⁹ Op Cit., Elwell.

¹⁰ Also see Ex 34:29–35; 2 Cor 3:7–18.

¹¹ Ex 40:34–38; Nm 10:11–12.

¹² 2 Chr 5:13–6:1; 7:1–3.

¹³ Ps 26:8; 63:2; 85:9.

¹⁴ Op Cit., Elwell.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Jn 17:5; Phil 2:5–11.

¹⁷ Op Cit., Elwell.
Because Jesus humbled Himself and was obedient to the point of death, God highly exalted him as we see in Philippians 2:6-11 NLT:

6 Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. 7 Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, 8 he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross. 9 Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names,

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

After Jesus suffered death on the cross, He entered into His glory (Luke 24:26) with a new and glorious body, 1 Corinthians 15:42–43 NLT:

42 It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. 43 Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. 18

The glorified Christ appeared to His servants. Stephen saw His glory (Acts 7:55), and Saul was blinded by his splendor (Acts 9:3). That same Christ is predicted to return in glory. He will sit on His throne in judgment (Matthew 25:31); evil will be punished. 19 At the return of Christ the whole earth will be filled with His glory. 20

Now we do not feel competent in any way to introduce the splendor of the Psalm we are about to read for you. This Psalm just knocks our socks off. This Psalm is a prayer to God from King David at the coronation of his son, Solomon, as king of Israel. David, praying for Solomon, shows the goodness and glory of his own kingdom as well as the kingdom his son will rule over and, now do not miss this, he is therefore also praying for Christ's kingdom to come, which will not happen until after Jesus’ Second Coming when He returns and rules during the Millennium. Just imagine if you can, that David is praying for his son and at the same time God has let him know that one of his direct descendants will be the Messiah (Jesus Christ) who will one day rule the world in glory. So David is praying for Jesus as well. If you do not believe in God, this kind of foretelling of the future should be enough alone to make you think seriously about whether you just may be mistaken. Imagine David, a thousand years before Christ, knowing that Jesus would be born and then one day also rule over the entire earth. We just stand in awe of what God

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18 Also see Philippians 3:21.
19 Mt. 16:27; 24:30; Mk 13:26; Lk 21:27; 2 Thes 2:9–10
can do. Listen to this remarkable prayer.

Psalm 72:1-19 NLT:

1 Give your love of justice to the king, O God, and righteousness to the king’s son. 2 Help him judge your people in the right way; let the poor always be treated fairly. 3 May the mountains yield prosperity for all, and may the hills be fruitful. 4 Help him to defend the poor, to rescue the children of the needy, and to crush their oppressors. 5 May they fear you as long as the sun shines, as long as the moon remains in the sky. Yes, forever! 6 May the king’s rule be refreshing like spring rain on freshly cut grass, like the showers that water the earth. 7 May all the godly flourish during his reign. May there be abundant prosperity until the moon is no more. 8 May he reign from sea to sea, and from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth. 9 Desert nomads will bow before him; his enemies will fall before him in the dust. 10 The western kings of Tarshish and other distant lands will bring him tribute. The eastern kings of Sheba and Seba will bring him gifts. 11 All kings will bow before him, and all nations will serve him. 12 He will rescue the poor when they cry to him; he will help the oppressed, who have no one to defend them. 13 He feels pity for the weak and the needy, and he will rescue them. 14 He will redeem them from oppression and violence, for their lives are precious to him. 15 Long live the king! May the gold of Sheba be given to him. May the people always pray for him and bless him all day long. 16 May there be abundant grain throughout the land, flourishing even on the hilltops. May the fruit trees flourish like the trees of Lebanon, and may the people thrive like grass in a field. 17 May the king’s name endure forever; may it continue as long as the sun shines. May all nations be blessed through him and bring him praise. 18 Praise the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone does such wonderful things. 19 Praise his glorious name forever! Let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen!

The people of God have experienced and continue to experience the glory of the presence of God. The glory cloud of the Old Testament allowed God’s people to experience His glory. 21 Christ then came as the representative of the glory of God; God was still in the midst of His people in Christ. When Christ ascended, He sent his Spirit to live within each believer (John 16:7–14) so that God could still live in the midst of His people. The Spirit of glory rests on those who suffer for the name of Christ (1 Peter 4:14); that Spirit is the guarantee of the glorious resurrection of those same believers in their future.

21 Ps 106:20; Jer 2:11.
heavenly home (Romans 8:16–17).  

God has given His people the hope of glory. They will share in the glory of Christ. The sufferings of this age do not compare with the glory that will be revealed (Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17). The whole of creation longs to see the glorious freedom of the children of God (Romans 8:21). This hope of glory is so certain that Peter can speak of participating in it even now (1 Peter 5:1) while looking forward to that eternal glory (1 Peter 5:10). As partakers in the glory of Christ, the Church is called to glorify God. I do hope that you now understand a bit more about the glory of God than you did just a few minutes ago.

These verses reveal the courageous and confident way in which Jesus faced His final hours which are referred to as His passion. He had no doubt that God was fully in charge of everything that was happening. The wording of John 13:33 (“I am with you a little while longer. . . ‘Where I am going, you cannot come’”) reminds us of what Jesus said to the Jews back in John 7:34 and 8:21. Jesus repeated these words for His disciples for whom they carried a different meaning. His glorification would involve separation from His disciples. But one day the believing disciples would go to be with Him (John 14:1–3), and they would also see Him after His resurrection. But during this time of His suffering and death, it was important that they not try to follow Him. Although Peter is sure that he will follow Jesus to the death, he does not understand that death is precisely where Jesus is going (John 14:5).

But there would come a time when Jesus would be glorified in these disciples and He would glorify them in the same way He was glorified.

John 17:20-24 NLT:

20 “I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. 21 I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me. 22 “I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. 23 I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me. 24 Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I

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22 Op Cit., Elwell.
23 Rom 5:2; Phil 3:21; Col 1:27; Jude 1:24–25.
24 Col 3:4; 2 Thes 2:14; 2 Tm 2:10.
26 Ibid.
am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began!

God’s glory is also revealed through His love for us. You cannot experience God’s glory without also being touched by His love. The new commandment in verse 34 (“love one another, even as I have loved you”) is repeated in the teaching of John 15:12. Commands to love were already known in the sense of the highest devotion to God, but Jesus’ command that the disciples should love one another was new both in its scope and its motivation, which sprang from the love Jesus had for them.

The disciples’ responsibility was to love one another just as Christ had loved them. They would certainly need this love in the hours to follow, when their Master would be taken from them and their brave spokesman, Peter, would fail Him and them. In fact, all of them would fail, and the only thing that would bring them together would be their love for Christ and for each other.

The word love is a key word in Christ’s farewell sermon to His disciples. The word new does not mean “new in time,” because love has been important to God’s people even from Old Testament times (Leviticus 19:18). But love would take on a new meaning and power because of the death of Christ on the cross (John 15:13). With the coming of the Holy Spirit, love would have a new power in their lives.

This section begins and ends with love: Jesus’ love for His own (John 13:1) and the disciples’ love for one another. It is love that is the true evidence that we belong to Jesus Christ. The church leader Tertullian (155–220 A.D.) quoted the pagans as saying of the Christians, “See how they love one another.” And how do we evidence that love? By doing what Jesus did; laying down our lives for other believers (1 John 3:16). And the way to start is by getting down and washing one another’s feet in sacrificial service.

29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.