

Love One Another (John 13:18-38)

Faced with betrayal and denial, Jesus calls his followers to love another. With less than 24 hours left to live, he holds up the defining mark; the distinguishing characteristic of those who follow him. It isn't our buildings, programs or cultural engagement. It isn't our eloquence, theological precision or ability to win an argument. According to John 13:34-35 people will know we belong Jesus by the visible, tangible, discernable love we have for one another. What will it take for us to love one another? What will it produce here in St. Pete? And how is Jesus' self-giving love the pattern and the power we need to do it?

1. The betrayal of a close friend (John 13:18-30)

In the first half of John 13 Jesus washed the disciple's feet giving them a picture that summed up the whole purpose of his life and mission. He also gave them a pattern to follow. *"Love like this!"*

John 13:18 = Psalm 41:9 the psalmist describes feelings of betrayal by those closest to him.

V25 John is reclining to Jesus' right and could lean back against Jesus' chest and ask him...

V26 Is Judas also in a seat of honor? Sharing bread this way is a gesture of honor; symbol of friendship.

V30 Judas leaves the warmth and vibrancy of a shared meal and steps into the night; into darkness (is consumed by it). Dramatic! Sad, terrifying; sobering.

2. The call to love one another (John 13:31-35)

VV34-35 Jesus isn't making a suggestion. A pattern has been set. An example given.

"as I have loved you..." That's the "newness" of the command. Jesus is saying, *"The measure; quantity; depth, scope of your love for one another is to be found in my love for you."*

Jesus' self-giving love is both the pattern and *the power* we need.

2 Corinthians 5:14; 2 Peter 1:5-10; Romans 5:6-10; 1 John 3:11, 16

We're up against radical individualism (self-love and inward focus) and consumerism (what's in it for me?)

This will take time, prayer, discernment, action, patience, courage and humility.

We have an audience. The city of St. Pete is watching. What do they see?

3. The denial of a close friend (John 13:36-38)

Peter would deny Jesus that very evening. He would reject him (disown; abandon) out of fear and self-preservation. Jesus loved Peter despite what he knew about him.

QUESTIONS (Pray, read the passage and pick 4-5 questions to discuss. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide.)

1. Read John 13:22-38. How do the disciples react when Jesus announces that one of them will betray him? V22
2. Dipping a piece of bread in the dish and passing it to someone was a sign of special friendship. Why would Jesus use this as the sign to indicate which disciple would betray him?
3. In John 13:21, Jesus is troubled in spirit. Troubled by the serious wounds that only a deep friend can give, troubled by what it will all lead to. How might Jesus' openness to deep friendship (and hurt!) serve as a model for us in our own relationships? How is Judas' departure into the "night" a sobering warning?
4. With only hours left in his life, what new commandment does Jesus give his disciples? (V34) In what way is Jesus' commandment "new"?
5. It isn't our buildings, programs or cultural engagement. It isn't our eloquence, theological precision or ability to win an argument. According to John 13:34-35 people will know we belong Jesus by the visible, tangible, discernable love we have for one another. How does this challenge our priorities? What obstacles will we face as we set out to love another here?
6. Daryn mentioned that "love" has been central to LCSP's missionary strategy from the start. What opportunities has it brought us? What opportunities are before us still?
7. Where will we find the strength, inspiration and power to love one another with a self-giving sacrificial love? What should we do if discover we're callous, indifferent or uninspired?

Pray we would love one another *as Jesus has loved us*, with a self-giving sacrificial love – so that the those around us might come to believe in Jesus and know his deep love.