

The Contours of Biblical Love

Gospel of John, Part XLV

John 13:1

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I. The Feast of Passover

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

Jesus' love for His people compelled Him to offer Himself a sacrifice for them. John tells us in his first epistle, "*By this we know love, because [Jesus] laid down His life for us*" (1 Jn 3:16a). Jesus teaches us what love is.

II. The Contours of Love

A. Love is purposeful

1. Jesus came according to plan (cf. 12:23, 27; Eph 1:3-6)

First, the Eternal Son of God took on human flesh according to plan. The Father sent Jesus to accomplish a task. What was that task? That task was to give His life a ransom for His people.

2. Jesus kept to the plan (cf. 2:4; 7:30; 8:20)

Second, throughout His ministry Jesus kept to the plan. He did not get distracted along the way.

3. Jesus fulfilled the plan (cf. 13:3; 17:4; 19:10-11, 30)

Finally, Jesus fulfilled the plan. He set about to fulfill the plan that He and His Father had orchestrated. At the close of His time with the disciples, He prays to His Father, "*I have glorified You on the earth, I have finished the work which You have given Me to do*" (17:4). The Father gave the Son a work to do and the Son fulfilled it.

Love is _____. Love is not wistful sentimentality; it is not passionate sensuality; it is not momentary intensity; it is not wishful thinking.

This is one reason laziness is such a grievous sin: laziness is not _____. Solomon reminds us in Proverbs 18:9, "*He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great destroyer.*" The lazy one consumes what others produce but refuses to produce for others. He takes and does not give.

- I. Prologue: The Identity of the Son of God (1:1-18)
- II. Jesus Proven to be the Christ & the Son of God in His Public Ministry (1:19-12:50)
 - A. The Son of God Revealed (1:19-4:54)
 - B. The Son of God Rejected (5:1-12:36)
 - C. Conclusion (12:37-50)
- III. Jesus Proven to be the Christ & the Son of God in His Passion and Resurrection (13:1-20:31)
 - A. Introduction: He knew His hour had come (13:1)
 - B. Jesus Prepares the Disciples for His Departure (13:2-17:26)
 - C. Jesus Departs this world to the Father (18:1-20:29)
 - D. Conclusion: Purpose of the Gospel (20:30-31)
- IV. Epilogue: The Future Mission of the Son of God (21)

B. Love is personal (cf. 10:14-15; 17:6, 9-10; Ps 136)

Second, love is personal. Notice our second phrase, *“having loved His own who were in the world...”* There is a unique love which Christ has just for His people.

Jesus has already spoken of this personal love. *“I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own, just as the Father knows Me, and I know the Father, and I lay down My life for the _____”* (10:14-15).

When Jesus prays His high priestly prayer in John 17, He declares, *“I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word... I pray for them. I do not pray for the _____ but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them”* (17:6,9-10).

While there is a general beneficence which Christ has for all humans since all are made in God’s image, there is a special love which Christ has for His own. In the OT this personal nature of love is called _____ – covenant faithfulness. God is loyal to His own; His love is personal. Note that *hesed* cuts two ways:

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love [hesed] endures forever.... to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt, for his steadfast love endures forever; and brought Israel out from among them, for his steadfast love endures forever; with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, for his steadfast love endures forever; to him who divided the Red Sea in two, for his steadfast love endures forever; and made Israel pass through the midst of it, for his steadfast love endures forever; but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, for his steadfast love endures forever;

Because love is personal, love sometimes involves violence. Love is not a universal feeling of tolerance. It is a steadfast loyalty to specific people.

C. Love is persistent (2 Chr 24 esp v. 22; 1 Cor 13:4-8a)

Finally, love is persistent. John writes that Jesus, *having loved His own who were in the world, loved them to the end.* Jesus followed through on His intention to give Himself for His people.

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 13, *Love never _____*. Love is covenanted; love is bound; love delights in long-term loyalty; love keeps going. In Paul’s words, *love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.* It is when our loyalty is most severely tested that we discover whether we are loyal or not, whether we love or not.

III. Conclusion