

Day One

Jesus Loves the Betrayer & Denier

Today's Focus: *Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. (John 13:1b ESV)*

Reflections from a Former Fear Monger

My parents were killed in a plane crash on June 24, 2011 and it marked my life forever. When my parents died, I experienced grief. After that experience, I knew I never, ever, wanted to feel pain like that again. In fact, if you were sitting across from me right now, you'd hear the emphasis on "ever" and my broken voice, with tears welling in my eyes. I had known pain before but never to that degree.

Unwelcome change comes to all of us at some point, in some form. Life is fleeting. Christian or not, we can all agree on the fact that we aren't doing this thing on earth forever and, in all honesty, that began to cause me great anxiety.

Since the plane crash, I have been in this constant state of tug-o-war with God. Only, he's not really playing. My pride tells me he is and that I can some how "out tug" him to be in control. It wasn't until recently that I finally dropped the rope and stopped playing. My final surrendered simple came from pure exhaustion of fighting for control. But my continued surrender is because He keeps being worth it, and because He has provided me with joy in the undoing of my control. This joy is something I never have to fear losing.

The surrender of control has been a slow release of my flesh but a quickening of my Spirit. This is because as I move closer to Him, He has revealed pieces of His glory, which in turn reveals my true heart condition. This revealing has become the very fanning of my flame (2 Timothy 1: 6 NIV) and I need to have more.

One of the things the Lord is teaching me is that my bondage to fear has me a kept woman unable to experience true love (1 Corinthians 13). True

love takes vulnerability, knowing there will be pain and grief amidst the joy and beauty. Love is going to hurt if I love like Jesus loved because it's vulnerable, the only real way to love.

Yet I found myself faced with the reality that I don't think I'm all that content with Jesus' love because His love may mean that type of loss again. I knew I needed Him to come and heal the most broken place of my heart: my soul. My soul was hungry for true love yet it was the very thing my flesh rejected. Thank goodness He came to heal and save the sick because my soul was sick (Luke 4: 18 NIV).

“Love.” This word is plastered all over social media, bumper stickers on the car driving in front of us, and all throughout the shows we watch to unwind in the evening. Culture is defining love for us by telling us what it is, how it looks, and what we do to receive it. Down to the emoji, our culture has got love defined for us. The thing about it is, it's not until we get some cross-training that we will ever be able to identify the lies of the culture-training that is so deeply rooted in us.

For that very reason, we are going to get some cross-training training on love. **Please record how God's word defines love after reading 1 Corinthians 13.**

What characteristics are most impactful to you? Pray and ask God why this may be.

As you allow this biblical description of love to soak in your mind, think on the ways this is in opposition to the cultural definition. In doing so, let's take this exercise one step further by comparing this to how the world may define love. **In the space provided below, list possible differences between the world's definition and God's definition of love.**

**If you are struggling to trust and believe God's love for you, tell Him! Relationships take communication and understanding God's love is met with challenges. So tell Him these parts of you and ask Him for eyes to see and a heart to hear before you decide to begrudge Him.*

World's Definition

God's Definition

Keep all of this information stored up in your mind as we head over to meet with Judas and Jesus. As you begin to read today's passage, you may be tempted to focus in on Peter. For now, our focus is solely on Judas and Jesus so imagine Judas in that room with the rest of the disciples. Imagine him listening to Jesus as He prepares to wash his feet. **Think on these things as you begin reading John 13:1-17.**

**Please don't gloss over this part because it's the meat of what we are doing here in this study. It would be like skimming a book and saying you know what it's about when really, you are missing out on experiencing the full picture. Let's not be skimmers of God's word!*

At the time Jesus was preparing to wash Judas' feet, what had already happened in Judas' heart? **Write verse 2 below.**

Jesus, about to be betrayed by Judas — his friend, his follower, one of his “persons” — washed Judas' feet. Jesus washed Judas' feet with **full knowledge** his “friend” was about to betray him in the worst way. A way that a friendship just doesn't come back from. It is in our closest relationships we often feel the most pain, isn't it? **How does this specific act of love Jesus showed for Judas impact you? Record your thoughts below**

I don't know about you, but these verses cause me to pause. My mind couldn't help but travel back to this day in John 13 and wonder what Jesus was feeling during this encounter with Judas. I can't help but wonder what desires or longings he may have had knowing his friend would betray him. I'm also struck by Judas' ability to go through with the betrayal, especially with the amount of history their friendship had. Regardless, the fact remains that in spite of Judas' pending betrayal, Jesus washed his feet with the rest of the disciples He loved.

Take time to write out the second half of verse one below starting with “He had loved...”

Jesus had loved his disciples **until the very end**, even his betrayer. **What does this truth mean to you? Record your pondering below.**

Now, let's take this truth and merge it with 1 Corinthians 13. I love merging Scripture because it gives such a rich picture of truth! This is what I call fullness at it's finest.

As you merge the two passages, record how Jesus showed love to Judas on this day the disciple became the betrayer.

It can be easy to read this Scripture at a distance but, truth be told, we are the women on these pages of Scripture, and if we are followers of Jesus then, girlfriend, you are a disciple. So we end our first day together by being a witness to Jesus' love toward His betrayer and disciple, Judas. Welcome to this grand narrative of Scripture.

As we close today, take some time to ponder what impacts you about this scene between Judas and Jesus in John 13.