SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



DEEP DIVE

John

Chapter Thirteen, Verses 1–38

Loved to the End — the towel and the basin, the morsel and the night, and a commandment that is always new

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

On the last night before the cross, Jesus washes the feet of twelve men — the one who will deny Him and the one who will betray Him among them — and then gives them a new commandment: love one another as I have loved you. Read through four teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul**, **C.H. Spurgeon** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind John's key words.

THE PASSAGE

John 13:1–38

towel · example · night · new commandment

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

Contents

Four movements from the basin to the rooster's warning

—	**How to Read This Study** · *the four voices & their colors*	3
—	**Before the Passage** · *from the signs to the upper room*	3
I	**Loved to the End** · *John 13:1–11 · the towel and the basin*	4
II	**An Example to Follow** · *John 13:12–20 · the example and the warning*	6
III	**The Morsel and the Night** · *John 13:21–30 · Judas goes out*	8
IV	**Glory, Love and a Boast** · *John 13:31–38 · the new commandment*	10
V	**The Passage in the Whole Bible** · *cross-references*	13
†	**At a Glance** · *the four voices side by side*	14
†	**Key Insights & Questions for the Table** · *discussion*	14
†	**Sources** · *where each voice comes from*	15

"By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." — John 13:35

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

John 13:1–38

Loved to the End — The Lord of all kneels with a towel, the betrayer walks out into the dark, and love becomes the mark of every disciple

† How to Read This Study

This study walks John 13 in 4 movements, in John's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; **C.H. Spurgeon**, the preacher who turns the doctrine into a call to the heart; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the passage so you can see where John is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word — R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle — MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions; Command / instruction; Key repeated word; Sin / warning; Promise / blessing; Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · JOHN 13:34

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."

† Before the Passage

John 13 is a hinge. Chapters 1–12 are often called the Book of Signs: seven public miracles, crowds, debates in the temple, and a closing verdict — "though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him" (12:37). Chapters 13–21 are the Book of Glory. The doors close, the crowds are gone, and for five chapters (13–17) Jesus speaks only to His own. What He says in the upper room He says to men He knows will fail Him before the night is over.

The word that opens the chapter is "hour." Through the whole Gospel it has not yet come — "My hour has not yet come" (2:4; compare 7:30; 8:20). In 12:23 it arrives: "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." Now John writes that Jesus knew "His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father" (13:1). Everything in chapters 13–17 happens in the shadow of the cross, on the last evening of His earthly life.

The setting is a supper "before the Feast of the Passover" (v1), in a room in Jerusalem. How this meal relates to the Passover meal of the other Gospels is an old question (compare 18:28; 19:14); Guzik treats it as open, and so will we. The guests did not sit on chairs; they reclined on couches around a low table, leaning on the left elbow, feet stretched away from the table. Roads were dusty and sandals open, and washing a guest's feet was a servant's work — Sproul says it was so menial that only a Gentile slave could be required to do it. Luke tells us that on this same night the disciples argued about which of them was the greatest (Luke 22:24).

The chapter moves from a basin to a rooster. Jesus washes their feet and explains what He did (vv1–20); He names a betrayer, hands him the morsel, and Judas goes out into the night (vv21–30); then He speaks of glory, gives the new commandment, and warns Peter that he will deny Him three times (vv31–38). Love frames the whole chapter: "He loved them to the end" (v1) and "love one another, even as I have loved you" (v34).

I
MOVEMENT

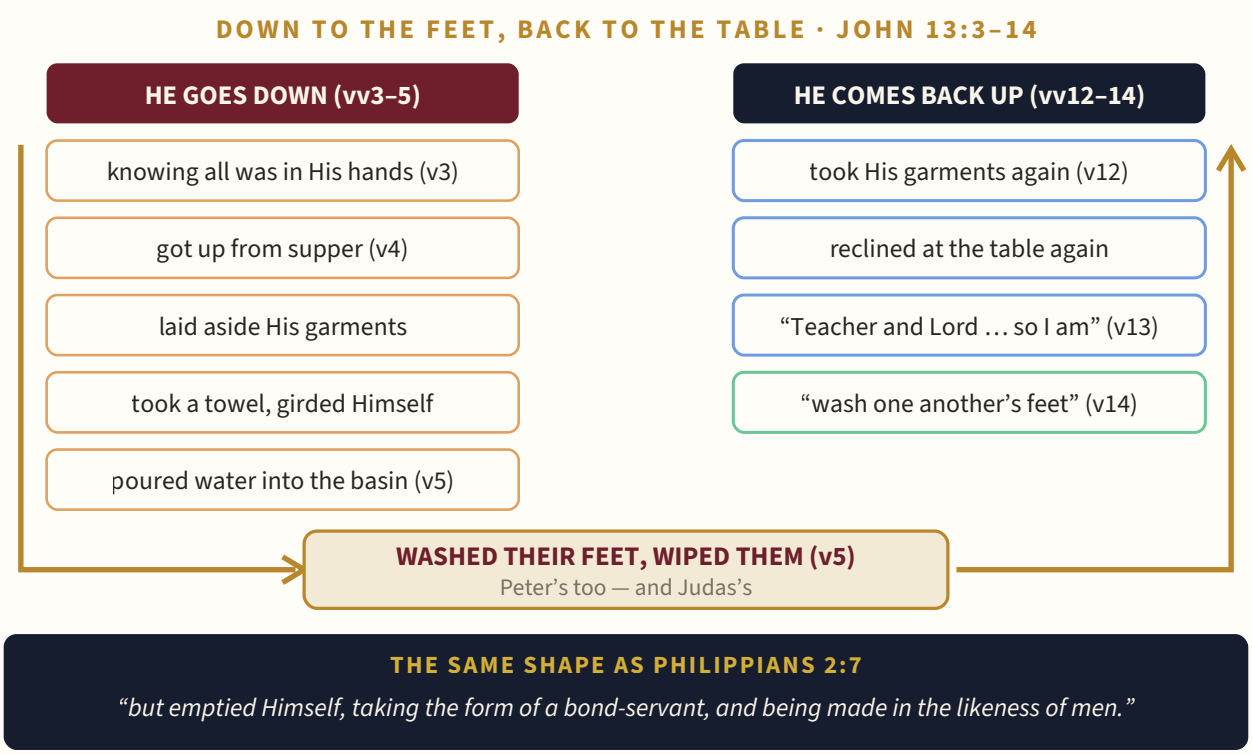
JOHN 13:1–11

Loved to the End

The Lord with all things in His hands takes a towel — and Peter learns he must be washed

> [1] *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.* [2] *During supper,* ⚠ *the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him,* [3] *Jesus, knowing that* △ *the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God,* [4] *got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and* △ *taking a towel, He girded Himself.* [5] *Then He poured water into the basin, and began to* ⟲ *wash the disciples'* ⟲ *feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.* [6] *So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, "Lord, do You* ⟲ *wash my* ⟲ *feet?"* [7] *Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but* ☆ *you will understand hereafter."* [8] *Peter said to Him, "Never shall You* ⟲ *wash my* ⟲ *feet!" Jesus answered him, "*⚠ *If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."* [9] *Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, then* ⟲ *wash not only my* ⟲ *feet, but also my hands and my head."* [10] *Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to* ⟲ *wash his* ⟲ *feet, but* ☆ *is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you."* [11] *For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean."*
>
> JOHN 13:1–11

FIGURE · DOWN TO THE FEET, BACK TO THE TABLE



Read down the left and up the right: the One who knew all things were in His hands went all the way down to His disciples’ feet, then rose, reclined again, and told them to do the same.

εἰς τέλος ἠγάπησεν αὐτούς

EIS TELOS ĒGAPĒSEN AUTOUS · “HE LOVED THEM TO THE END” · G5056

Telos is the end, the goal, the completion of a thing. “To the end” can mean to the last moment of His life, or to the uttermost degree; Tenney (in Guzik) takes it as “to the fullest extent,” and John probably means both. The same root returns on the cross: “It is finished!” (19:30) is *tetelestai*, from *teleō*. The love of verse 1 runs straight to Golgotha. The verb is *agapaō*, and “His own” (*tous idious*) recalls 1:11 — “He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.” The world refused Him; these He kept loving.

ὁ λελουμένος … νίψασθαι

HO LELOUMENOS … NIPSASTHAI · “HE WHO HAS BATHED … TO WASH” · G3068, G3538

Verse 10 uses two different verbs. *Louō* (G3068) is to bathe the whole body; it stands here in the perfect tense — bathed once, and still clean. *Niptō* (G3538) is to wash a part — hands, face, feet. A man who had bathed at home walked to supper on dusty roads and needed only his feet washed at the door. The picture: the believer is cleansed once for all and needs daily washing of the dust he picks up. “Part” in verse 8 is *meros* (G3313), a share or portion — without His washing, no share in Him. The towel of verses 4–5 is *lention* (G3012), a Latin loanword for a servant’s linen cloth, found only in these two verses.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik reads verse 1 as the turning point of a life: "Jesus lived His life in anticipation of this hour." He notes that the Passover timing is debated and leaves it open. Verse 3 matters to him because Jesus stooped from strength, not weakness: "Jesus went into this situation as a victor, not as a victim." He knew His authority and His relationship with the Father, and that security freed Him to serve. Following Morris he calls the washing "a parable in action." Peter's refusal sounds humble but is pride that will not be served, and Jesus' answer shows the order of grace: "Having a part with Jesus begins simply with receiving something from Him, not achieving something our self."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul (13 April 2003) opened with the news footage of Iraqis beating a fallen statue with their shoes — the foot as a sign of contempt — to show how low this task was: "Only a gentile slave could be required to do such a menial task." He reads "His own" in verse 1 in his Reformed way — Jesus is "preparing to give an atonement not for the whole world, but for His own," a point many evangelicals read more broadly. Laying aside His garments pictures Philippians 2, but Sproul guards it: "God does not lay aside His deity when He becomes incarnate in the Son." On the bath he says, "One touch of the cleansing power of Christ cleanses us from all sin."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "Jesus Washing His Disciples' Feet" (No. 612, 29 January 1865) takes Peter's question, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" and answers that He still does: "He is still their servant as well as their friend." He separates the once-for-all cleansing of Christ's blood from the daily washing of a child who has walked through the dirt of the world — forgiveness of recurring sins, care in small troubles, acceptance of poor prayers. He marvels that the exalted Lord stooped unasked: "Christ's way of rising is to go down." And he leaves no one else at the basin: "No one else could cleanse us."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry calls the washing "an action of a singular nature; no miracle, unless we call it a miracle of humility." Christ "loved them to the end, continued his love to them as long as he lived," and their failures only showed it more: "Our infirmities are foils to Christ's kindnesses, and set them off." On verse 3 — knowing all things were in His hands — he draws the lesson that real assurance humbles: "A well-grounded assurance of heaven and happiness, instead of puffing a man up with pride, will make and keep him very humble." Peter must be washed by Christ, or have no part in Him.

II
MOVEMENT

JOHN 13:12–20

An Example to Follow

"Do you know what I have done to you?" — the Teacher and Lord as servant, and the one who lifts his heel

12 *So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to*
them, "Do you know what I have done to you? 13 *"You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am.*
14 *"If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.*
15 *"For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.* 16 *"Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is*

not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. 17 *"If you know these things, ☆ you are blessed if you do them.* 18 *"I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'HE WHO EATS MY BREAD ⚠ HAS LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME.'* 19 *"From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, △ you may believe that I am He.* 20 *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."*

JOHN 13:12–20

"Even my close friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me."

PSALM 41:9

Ὑπόδειγμα

HYPODEIGMA · "EXAMPLE" · G5262

A pattern shown so that it can be copied — the sketch the apprentice works from. It appears six times in the New Testament (John 13:15; Hebrews 4:11; 8:5; 9:23; James 5:10; 2 Peter 2:6), sometimes as a pattern to follow, sometimes as a warning to avoid. Here it is the first kind, and the clause is precise: "that you also should do *as* I did to you" (*kathōs*) — not merely *what* I did. Verse 16 adds the logic of rank: a *doulos*, slave, is not greater than his *kyrios*, master; an *apostolos*, "one who is sent," not greater than the sender. Verse 17 then pronounces a beatitude — *makarioi*, "blessed" — not on knowing but on doing.

ἐπῆρεν ἐπ᾽ ἐμὲ τὴν πτέρναν αὐτοῦ

EPĒREN EP' EME TĒN PTERNAN AUTOU · "HAS LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME" · G4418

Pterna, the heel, appears only here in the New Testament. To lift the heel is the picture of a horse or mule that kicks the one who feeds it, or of a man who trips another by trickery. Jesus quotes Psalm 41:9, where David laments a friend who ate his bread; Jesus leaves out "in whom I trusted" — He was never deceived about Judas (6:64, 70). Then verse 19: "that you may believe that I am He" — in Greek simply *egō eimi*, "I am" (G1510), the phrase of 8:24, 58 and 18:5–6, which echoes God's name in Exodus 3:14.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik draws the plain lesson from verses 12–17: Jesus washed their feet so that they would wash one another's — humble, practical service of each other, especially in restoring a brother who has picked up the dirt of the world (here he leans on Spurgeon's caution that it be done with care). He cites Calvin against making the act a ceremony while missing its meaning. On verse 18 he stresses that Jesus was never surprised: "Jesus didn't tell His disciples that one of them would betray Him because He just learned about it." He told them beforehand so that the betrayal, when it came, would strengthen their faith instead of breaking it.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul is clear that the command to wash one another's feet is about humility, not a new rite: "Jesus is not instituting a sacrament to be repeated on a regular basis among the people of God." He knows some churches practice it, but he says the cleansing it pictures belongs to baptism. "Jesus is giving a model or an example of humility to His disciples." In his next sermon (17 April 2003) he takes up Psalm 41: "This whole psalm is not a messianic psalm" — David confesses his own sin in it — yet David is a type of "David's greater Son," betrayed by a friend at his table. And in "I am He" Sproul hears the phrase "where the supreme name of God, Yahweh, is rendered by the phrase Ego eimi."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

In "The Teaching of the Foot Washing" (on John 13:1–19) Spurgeon pictures Christ as the host who still meets His people at the door with water for their feet: "Christ cares for our minor matters with a personal interest." Then he turns to the church. Feet-washing will always be needed among believers, and he rejects the idea that each should mind only his own business. He notes how hard it is to be served: "Sometimes it is more humbling to have your own feet washed than to wash other people's." And to those who want honor in the church: "Covet humble work, and when you get it be content to continue in it."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry presses verse 14 on ministers and on every believer: we are to stoop to the meanest service for one another's good, and where a brother is defiled by sin, we "must wash our brethren's polluted feet in tears." He notes that Christ adds the blessing to the doing, not the knowing. On verse 18 he writes, "The word of Christ is a distinguishing word": Jesus knows whom He has chosen, and the Scripture about the friend who lifts his heel had to be fulfilled even in His own company. The warning was given ahead of time so that the disciples' faith would be confirmed, not shaken.

III
MOVEMENT

JOHN 13:21–30

The Morsel and the Night

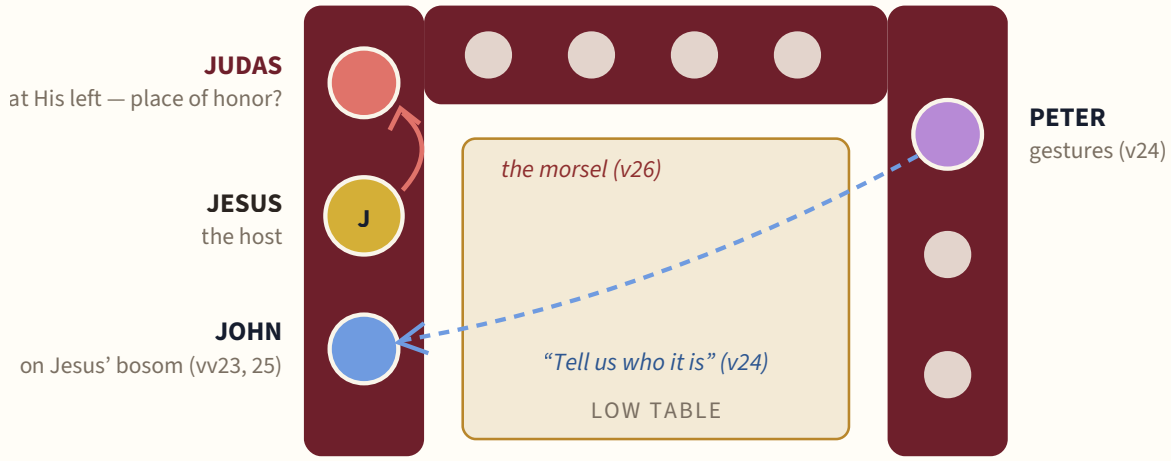
"One of you will betray Me" — the last offer of love, and the door closing behind Judas

21 *When Jesus had said this, △ He became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you,*
that ⚠ one of you will betray Me." 22 *The disciples began looking at ⟲ one another, at a loss to know of which one*
He was speaking. 23 *There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.* 24 *So Simon*
Peter gestured to him, and said to him, "Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking." 25 *He, leaning back thus on*
Jesus' bosom, said to Him, "Lord, who is it?" 26 *Jesus then answered, "That is the one for whom I shall dip the*
morsel and give it to him." So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon
Iscariot. 27 *After the morsel, ⚠ Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus said to him, "What you do, do*
quickly." 28 *Now no one of those reclining at the table knew for what purpose He had said this to him.* 29 *For*
some were supposing, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus was saying to him, "Buy the things we have
need of for the feast"; or else, that he should give something to the poor. 30 *So after receiving the morsel he went*
out immediately; ◷ and it was night.

JOHN 13:21–30

FIGURE · WHO RECLINED WHERE

AROUND THE LOW TABLE · JOHN 13:23–30



The text fixes only John's place: reclining in front of Jesus, he could lean back on His chest (vv23, 25). Judas at Jesus' left is a reconstruction (Sproul; Morris, cited by Guzik) — it explains how the morsel could pass quietly, and why no one at the table understood (v28).

A schematic of the reclining supper: John's place is in the text; Judas's place beside Jesus is a common reconstruction that makes sense of the quiet handing of the morsel.

ψωμίον

PSŌMION · "MORSEL" · G5596

A small piece of bread, a mouthful. The word appears four times in the New Testament, every one in this scene (13:26 twice, 27, 30). At a meal, the host who dipped a choice piece in the dish and handed it to a guest paid him a mark of favor; Tasker (in Guzik) calls it a sign of courtesy. Jesus' last act toward Judas is an act of honor — love offered to the end. "After the morsel, Satan then entered into him" (v27): the same hand that received the bread received the enemy. In verse 2 the devil had already "put into the heart" of Judas to betray; in verse 27 Satan enters. The thought had become a takeover.

ἐταράχθη τῷ πνεύματι

ETARACHTHĒ TŌ PNEUMATI · "HE BECAME TROUBLED IN SPIRIT" · G5015

Tarassō is to stir up, agitate, like water in a pool (5:7). John uses it of Jesus at Lazarus's tomb (11:33), of His soul as the hour approached (12:27), and here as He names the betrayer. Then, in 14:1 and 14:27, Jesus uses the same verb to tell His disciples, "Do not let your heart be troubled." The One who was troubled for them tells them not to be troubled. John reclines "on Jesus' bosom" (v23, *kolpos*, G2859) — the word of 1:18, where the Son is "in the bosom of the Father." As the Son is to the Father, the beloved disciple is to the Son.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik sees Jesus fully in control and still grieving: “He loved Judas, and was troubled for Judas’ sake, much more than His own.” With Morris he places Judas close to Jesus, perhaps in the place of honor, so that the conversation could be private and the morsel a final appeal. Bruce, he notes, says Satan entered only because Judas opened the door. Then the sobering lesson: “Judas had the best example and the greatest Teacher, and was still lost.” Three years beside Jesus did not save him. “Judas shows us that fallen man needs more than an example and even more than good teaching.”

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew’s

Sproul (17 April 2003) imagines the dread in the room as each man wondered about himself: “They hoped that it would not be them, but they did not know.” He explains the reclining posture and the seating that lets John lean back on Jesus’ chest, and he argues from Near Eastern custom that Judas sat in the place of honor: “the seat of honor was not at the right hand but the left hand.” The man who betrayed Jesus was not at the edge of the room but at His side. Jesus hands him the bread, sends him off quickly, and Judas leaves into the dark.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon’s “The Betrayal” (15 February 1863) is preached on Luke 22:47–48, but it is the fullest portrait of Judas we have from him. Judas preached, shared the miracles, and kept the common purse, and the others never suspected him: “They never said, ‘Lord, is it Judas?’” Jesus washed his feet, warned him at the supper, and was patient with him to the last. Spurgeon traces the fall to the love of money and turns the scene on his hearers: “To have a fair reputation and a false heart is to stand upon the brink of hell.” And: “He who shall say, ‘Well, we have no Judas amongst us,’ is probably a Judas himself.”

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry notes how deeply Jesus felt it: “The falls and miscarriages of the disciples of Christ are a great trouble of spirit to their Master.” The disciples were slow to suspect one another — “charity thinks no evil” — and the morsel shows Christ’s patience even toward His enemy: “Christ sometimes gives sops to traitors.” Kindness can “help to destroy” a fool who will not repent. When Judas leaves, no one drives him out: “Christ needed not to expel him, he expelled himself.” He went out into the night, and the room was purer for his going.

IV
MOVEMENT

JOHN 13:31–38

Glory, Love and a Boast

“Now is the Son of Man glorified” — a new commandment for the little children, and a warning for Peter

31 *Therefore when he had gone out, Jesus said, “△ Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is ⟲ glorified in*
Him; 32 *if God is ⟲ glorified in Him, God will also ⟲ glorify Him in Himself, and will ⟲ glorify Him*
immediately. 33 *“Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews,*
now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’ 34 *“A new commandment I give to you, that you*
love ⟲ one another, even △ as I have loved you, that you also love ⟲ one another. 35 *“☆ By this all men will*
know that you are My disciples, if you have love for ⟲ one another.” 36 *Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, where*

are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later." 37 *Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right now? ⚠ I will lay down my life for You."* 38 *Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, ⚠ a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times.*

JOHN 13:31–38

"You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD."

LEVITICUS 19:18

FIGURE · TWO FAILURES, TWO ENDINGS

JOHN 13	JUDAS ISCARIOT	SIMON PETER
WARNED	"one of you will betray Me" (v21)	"you deny Me three times" (v38)
HIS HEART	the devil put it in his heart; Satan entered (vv2, 27)	"I will lay down my life for You" (v37)
WHAT HE DID	took the morsel and went out immediately (v30)	denied Him three times (18:17, 25, 27)
JESUS' WORD	"What you do, do quickly" (v27)	"I have prayed for you" (Luke 22:32)
WHERE IT LED	"and it was night" (v30)	turned again and restored — "Tend My sheep" (21:17)

Sproul: "It is not just Judas, but Simon as well." Both fell that night; only one came back.

Read across each row: Judas and Peter were both warned and both fell, but one went out into the night and the other was prayed for and restored.

ἐντολὴν καινήν

ENTOLĒN KAINĒN · "A NEW COMMANDMENT" · G2537, G1785

Greek has two words for "new." *Neos* is new in time — recent, young. *Kainos* is new in kind or quality — fresh, unused, not worn out. John uses *kainos*. Love for neighbor is as old as Leviticus 19:18; what is new is the measure and the source: "even as I have loved you." The Latin *mandatum novum*, "new commandment," gave the Thursday of Holy Week its English name, Maundy Thursday (Bruce, in Guzik). John calls it both old and new in 1 John 2:7–8. Verse 33's "little children" is *teknia* (G5040), a tender diminutive used only here in the Gospels and seven times in 1 John.

ἐδοξάσθη

EDOXASTHĒ · "HE IS GLORIFIED" · G1392

In verses 31–32 the verb *doxazō*, "to glorify," appears five times in two verses — "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him … God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately." The first is aorist: the moment Judas walks out, the cross is as good as done. In John, the cross is not a defeat to be reversed by glory; it *is* the glory (12:23–24, 32–33). Then comes the glory of resurrection and return to the Father (17:5).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik counts it: "Jesus made five references to glory in the space of two verses." The world saw shame at the cross, but "The cross most perfectly made known the heart of Jesus; and for Jesus, to be known was to be glorified." With Tenney he reads "new" as fresh, not merely recent, and he notes Tertullian's report that pagans marveled at how Christians loved one another. "Where I am going, you cannot come" fell on the disciples hard — "This would have been like an earthquake to the disciples." On Peter he is careful: "Peter's denial was terrible, but it wasn't the same as what Judas did." He quotes Clarke: "Christ must first die for Peter, before Peter can die for him."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Preaching on Maundy Thursday 2003, Sproul says of the love command, "There is nothing new about that commandment" — it is in the Law. "The only novelty I can guess about this commandment Jesus gives on Maundy Thursday is the context of the betrayal." With Judas just gone into the night, Jesus calls for a love that does not run: "The love Jesus was asking about was the love that is steadfast, the love that stands up when push comes to shove." Then He tells Peter the truth about himself, and Sproul ends where the chapter ends: "It is not just Judas, but Simon as well."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

In "Christ's New Commandment" (MTP 51) Spurgeon calls it the eleventh commandment and finds it new in its extent, its motive and its source. The old law said love your neighbor as yourself; this says as I have loved you — and "Christ loved us better than he loved himself, for he loved us so." The motive is redemption by blood, the bond a family stronger than blood, and the love a witness to the world: "No sermon can be so eloquent to the world as a true manifestation of the love of Christ." When the world presses in, "let it only weld you into a firmer union the one with the other."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry calls the command new because it was restored from neglect and because it never wears out: "It is an everlasting command; so strangely new as to be always so." Christ points not to miracles but to love as the mark of His people: "Brotherly love is the badge of Christ's disciples." Peter's offer to die is sincere but over-confident. Henry hears Jesus answer, "It was an easy thing to leave thy boats and nets to follow me, but not so easy to lay down thy life." And the comfort of the warning: "He knows not only the wickedness of sinners, but the weakness of saints."

V
THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

From the burning bush to the charcoal fire — where John 13 reaches back and forward

> *"God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'""*
>
> EXODUS 3:14

> *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*
>
> MARK 10:45

> *"For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves."*
>
> LUKE 22:27

> *"but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men."*
>
> PHILIPPIANS 2:7

> *"We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."*
>
> 1 JOHN 3:16

> *"but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."*
>
> LUKE 22:32

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik, with Tasker, sees in the towel the Servant of Isaiah's prophecy, and with Clarke he reads Peter's boast in the light of the cross: "Christ must first die for Peter, before Peter can die for him." The man who could not follow that night followed later (13:36; 21:18–19).

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul hears Philippians 2 in the laid-aside garments — glory set aside, never deity — and Psalm 41 behind the betrayal, with David as a type of "David's greater Son."

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

Four teachers, one upper room. Guzik walks the scene and its lessons; Sproul supplies the culture and the doctrine — and reads "His own" in a particular-redemption way not every reader shares; Spurgeon turns the basin and the morsel into a searching of the heart; Henry gathers it into Puritan counsel. They differ on details (where Judas sat, what is "new" in the commandment) and agree on the main thing: the Lord of glory washed feet, and we must too.

THE MOVEMENT	GUZIK · the text	SPROUL · the doctrine	SPURGEON · the heart	HENRY · the counsel
I · The towel	A victor, not a victim; a part with Jesus begins with receiving.	A Gentile slave's task; glory laid aside, never deity; one touch cleanses.	Still our servant; once-for-all blood, daily washing; rising by going down.	A miracle of humility; true assurance makes a man very humble.
II · The example	Wash one another's feet; Jesus was never surprised by Judas.	An example of humility, not a sacrament; Psalm 41; "I am" is the divine name.	Christ the host at the door; more humbling to be washed; covet humble work.	Wash a brother's feet in tears; Christ's word distinguishes.
III · The night	Troubled for Judas' sake; the best Teacher, and still lost.	Each man feared it was he; Judas likely in the seat of honor.	No one suspected Judas; a fair name and a false heart.	Christ gives sops to traitors; Judas expelled himself.
IV · The commandment	Five glories in two verses; the cross is His glory; Peter is not Judas.	Nothing new but the context; love that stands when push comes to shove.	The eleventh commandment; love that welds believers together.	So strangely new as to be always so; the weakness of saints.

JOHN 13:1–38 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **He knew everything — and took a towel.** Verse 3 says Jesus knew the Father had given all things into His hands; verse 4 says He got up and girded Himself with a towel. Guzik: "Jesus went into this situation as a victor, not as a victim." Security in God frees a man to serve. THE TEXT
- **Bathed once, washed daily.** Verse 10 uses *louō* for the whole bath and *niptō* for the feet. The believer is clean before God once for all, and still needs the daily dust washed off. THE GREEK
- **Pride can look like humility.** Peter's "Never shall You wash my feet!" sounds modest. Guzik: "Having a part with Jesus begins simply with receiving something from Him, not achieving something our self." GUZIK
- **Blessed is in the doing.** "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them" (v17). Spurgeon: "Sometimes it is more humbling to have your own feet washed than to wash other people's." SPURGEON
- **Jesus washed the feet of the man who would betray Him.** Judas was in the room for verses 1–17 (vv11, 18). The basin went around the whole table. Love offered to an enemy is still love. THE TEXT
- **Closeness to Jesus is not the same as faith in Jesus.** Judas sat near Him, kept the purse, and took the honored morsel. Guzik: "Judas had the best example and the greatest Teacher, and was still lost." GUZIK
- **"And it was night."** John's four words (v30) are more than a time stamp. Judas walks away from the Light of the world (8:12) into the dark, and Henry notes, "Christ needed not to expel him, he expelled himself." HENRY
- **The cross is the glory.** *Doxazō* five times in verses 31–32, beginning the moment Judas leaves. In John the cross is not the opposite of glory but its fullest display. THE GREEK

- **New in kind, not just in time.** *Kainos*, not *neos*. The command to love is old (Lev 19:18); the measure — "even as I have loved you" — is new. Henry: "so strangely new as to be always so." THE GREEK
- **Two failures, two endings.** Judas and Peter both fell that night. Sproul: "It is not just Judas, but Simon as well." One went out into the night; the other was prayed for (Luke 22:32) and restored by a charcoal fire (21:15–17). SPROUL

† Questions for the Table

1 **Jesus knew all things were in His hands — and that freed Him to kneel (vv3–4). Where does my insecurity keep me from serving?**

A victor, not a victim: security in the Father makes a man able to stoop.

13:3-5; Phil 2:7

2 **Like Peter, where do I refuse to let Jesus — or a brother — do something for me?**

A part with Jesus begins with receiving, not achieving.

13:6-10

3 **Whose feet is Jesus asking me to wash this week — and whose is the hardest to wash?**

He washed Judas's feet too. Blessed is in the doing.

13:14-17

4 **Judas was close to Jesus for three years and was still lost. What is the difference between being near Jesus and belonging to Him?**

The best example and the greatest Teacher are not enough without a new heart.

13:18, 21-30

5 **"By this all men will know …" If someone watched our group for a month, what would they conclude about our love?**

Brotherly love is the badge of Christ's disciples.

13:34-35; 1 John 3:16

6 **Peter promised more than he could deliver. What promise have I made to God in my own strength — and what does Luke 22:32 say to me?**

Jesus knew Peter's weakness and prayed for him before he fell.

13:36-38; Luke 22:32; John 21:17

John 13 begins with a love that goes to the end and ends with a man who will fail before morning. Between them the Lord of all takes a towel, washes the feet of a betrayer and a denier, and tells the rest of us to do the same. The night Judas walked into is not the end of the story; the love that washed Peter's feet also brought him back.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

† Sources

Each teacher's section summarizes the pages below in our own words; short quotations are verbatim from them. Matthew Henry (1662–1714) completed his *Commentary* himself through the Gospels and Acts. Henry's Commentary and C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) are in the public domain; Guzik and Sproul are summarized — consult each author's own work.

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