

X. The Holy Spirit in Biblical Perspective

Led by the Spirit

“The Last Sermon from the Last Supper – When? Where? Why?”

John 13

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We are starting a new series in John 13 through John 17, focused on the Upper Room Discourse. This study will be an opening view from which the Upper Room sermon will be given. This is God’s Word. It’s the truth. John 13:1–20 says [1] *Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to 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, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, [3] Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, [4] rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. [5] Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. [6] He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, do you wash my feet?” [7] Jesus answered him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.” [8] Peter said to him, “You shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me.” [9] Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!” [10] Jesus said to him, “The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you.” [11] For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, “Not all of you are clean.”*

[12] When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand 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, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. [15] For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. [16] Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. [17] If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. [18] I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, ‘He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.’ [19] I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he. [20] Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.”

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

We have just finished our theme of being led by the Spirit based on Romans 8:14 which says ‘those who are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.’ I believe this is the magisterial text on the Holy Spirit. I don’t think the Holy Spirit is so much neglected as He is anonymous. If I say God the Father or God the Son, you think of something but if I say God the Holy Spirit, most are wondering how they’re supposed to think. It’s a challenging way to think – God the Holy Spirit. It’s kind of faceless more than neglected. Then what does He do? Because we don’t understand what He does then the church becomes a playground for false teachers who distort the work of the Holy Spirit, deceive people and even manipulate people.

So I wanted to go to one of the most powerful texts in the Scripture and that is Romans 8 in order to show how the Spirit delivers us from condemnation to salvation, from being dead in our sins to regeneration and brings us into the family of God whereby we cry our 'Abba Father!' The Holy Spirit bears witness in our life and empowers us. The Holy Spirit brings us into the cause of Christ so that we kill sin and pursue obedience. The Holy Spirit assures us and fixes us on Jesus against whom no one can stand. It is that Jesus who erases all charges, removes all condemnation, to whom we are fastened and He is ours and we are His where nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ.

There was no doubt in my mind when I finished Romans 9, which I feel is so foundational to who the Holy Spirit is and what He does, where I felt led to go and that was clear to me as well. It was the passage that our Savior teaches us in the Upper Room Discourse particularly the text in John 14 through 16. Then I realized that in a few weeks communion is going to take place and the Upper Room sermon took place in the Upper Room where Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. John 13 is where He launches the Lord's Supper. It was great to see how a plan comes together. So here we are to start our study from the lips of Jesus through the Upper Room Discourse.

There are six sermons recorded in the Bible that Jesus preaches. Three are major compilations and three are minor compilations. The three major compilations are the Sermon on the Mount, the Olivet Discourse and the Upper Room Discourse. Notice two things. One is that those sermons are identified by where they were delivered. Also where they were delivered all elevates us, where they are being delivered from a place of elevation. Five of the sermons Jesus preached are found in the Gospel of Matthew and one is found in John which was His last sermon He delivered when He brought the Disciples for the Last Supper. He did it in a place called the Upper Room.

Why do we call this the Upper Room? We call it the Upper Room because Jesus called it the Upper Room. In the Gospel of Mark, they had sacrificed the Passover Lamb, getting ready to celebrate the Passover and the Disciples wanted to know where they were going to do this. Jesus told them to go to the city where they would find a man who will take them to an expansive guest room – the Upper Room. It is there they would celebrate. So what does Jesus tell us about the Upper Room? One is that it is an Upper Room. Two, it was a guest room. Three, it was expansive (large). Four, it was in the city of Jerusalem.

As the Disciples prepare for that Passover meal there with Jesus, we begin to wonder whose house the Upper Room is in. No one knows for sure. I think it belonged to Barnabas or Barnabas' brother who had a son named John Mark who was Barnabas' cousin who keeps showing up in Scripture. I think whoever owned this large house probably owned the Garden of Gethsemane and the olive press there. Jesus obviously knew about both places and used both places. I don't have time to tell you why I think this but perhaps in the future I will be able to spend more time on this because I need to move onto our study as we come to the Lord's Table in a timely way.

I'm taking a little time to give information on this Upper Room because it's an important place. You might consider this the epicenter of Christianity or ground zero. What will happen in that Upper Room? When Jesus goes to that cross many of the Disciples will flee back to that Upper Room in fear, locking the door behind them. Then Jesus will rise and when He comes to affirm His resurrection on that first Lord's Day He will go to that Upper Room. He manifests Himself and you have the first Lord's Day worship service. Unfortunately, there was one man who did not make the Sunday evening service. In fact there are a lot of people who

don't make the Sunday evening service. One of them was Thomas so Jesus comes back the second Sunday to the Upper Room and now Thomas is there. When Jesus ascends He tells them to go back and pray and where do they do that? They leave the Mount of Olives and go back to this Upper Room. But now it's not eleven frightened Disciples, with one having apostatized – Judas – now it's 120 including Jesus' family after the resurrection praying there. It is a large room.

As they are praying, Peter's ascendancy and leadership is being affirmed. One of the first things he says is that they have to replace Judas Iscariot. So they do. They replace Judas with the greatest apostle in all of the Bible – Matthias. He was named for my grandson (smile). Matthias is added to them and they continue in prayer. As they devote themselves to prayer the risen Savior baptizes them with the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, with three manifestations. One is a mighty rushing wind that was so loud that it began to draw people from all over to find out what was happening. Secondly, were people that had these cloven tongues right in front of them and thirdly, the people that were there in fulfillment of Joel 2 began to speak a language they didn't know but somebody else knows. It is a known language but unknown to the speaker and they say 'we hear them talking in our own language.' Thus the outpouring of Pentecost and the fulfillment of Scripture is taking place. Jesus will have already taught them about it in that same room when He gave the Upper Room Discourse in John 14 through 16.

Before He gives the Upper Room Discourse He does something else in that Upper Room. He celebrates the last Passover Supper and institutes the first Lord's Supper which has been occurring now for over 2,000 years Lord's Day after Lord's Day and here we are, what He launched in that room. I love it when it says He came there having loved His Disciples and He would love them to the end. What does it mean 'the end'? It was to the end of His ministry of humiliation. He will go to the cross and be buried. He still loves us but now He loves us from the ministry of exaltation for He is highly exalted.

One of the things Briarwood loves is to be committed to the Great Commission of making disciples – life on life discipleship, particularly making use of small groups. Jesus is our Model and here is what you learn about Jesus is Discipleship 101. Discipleship is both relational and informational. Secondly, most of us do it backwards than Jesus. We teach and then we model. When Jesus would do discipleship He would model and then teach. He would model prayer and then He would teach us to pray. That is why Luke says in Acts 1:1 *[1] In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach.* That is the way Jesus would do it. That is the way we ought to be discipling – do and teach. No wonder the man that wrote John also wrote I, II and III John. This is what he said in I John 1:3, *[3] that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.* It is what they saw modeled and then how they were mentored, is what they have done so here Jesus puts this discipleship into practice for us.

He is about to give us something that I want you to think about as we come to the Table. He is about to give us a new commandment but before He gives us this new commandment, He models the new commandment. Let's look back at John 13. There is the one that betrays which is the one with the money bags or the treasury, Judas. John 13:31–35 says *[31] When he (Judas) 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 glorify him at once. [33] Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I*

*said to the Jews, so 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: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. [35] **By this** all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*

So He is about to launch on a sermon that tells us how we are to love one another which is called the Upper Room Discourse. Who enables us to love one another? He is called Holy Spirit but He starts by telling us to love one another after having loved them with a towel and a basin, doing the work of a lowly servant. The text says 'even though He knew He was the Son of God' and all of the excellencies of His commitment to accomplish the task of the Father to the glory of the Father, He grabbed a towel and a basin and He did the work of a servant. He loved them who in just a few moments He knew would abandon Him. Then after modeling it He said "I'm going to teach you." Do you want people to know you follow Me? Love one another. Do you want others to follow Me? Then love one another. I give you a new commandment – as I have loved you I want you to love one another.

Remember what we are learning in John 13. Here is the burgeoning of the church. The Upper Room is the birthplace of the New Testament church. It facilitates the New Testament church until they get so many they have to start meeting on the Temple mount in Solomon's portico. Here you see it with the Last Supper and the first Lord's Supper and here you see what a mixed multitude the church is because here in this first assembly you have one who will betray Him, one who will deny Him, and the rest of them will flee Him.

So what do we find out about the church whom we are supposed to love one another? We just found out that it's a mixed multitude. There are some among us that aren't really one of us who will go out from us. Then there are many of us that unless Holy Spirit empowers us, we will betray Him and deny Him. We will flee, just like Peter did, in the day of suffering and adversity but that did not stop Jesus from loving them with all of their challenges. He grabs the towel and the basin, then kneels to wash their feet. We see how quickly in the text there is the work of grace.

Peter says 'you're not going to wash my feet.' Jesus says 'if I don't wash you then you don't have any part of Me.' Peter says 'ok wash me.' You see our instinctiveness personally is 'I don't need grace' but when we're told we need grace and the Holy Spirit convicts us, our next movement is surrender. 'Then just wash all of me.' Jesus says 'When I wash you, you're clean. You don't need anyone else to wash you.' So Jesus washes their feet. Judas goes out to betray Him. Then having fulfilled this Last Supper He tells them that they are to go out and love which is a new commandment. How is it new?

Loving one another is in the Old Testament so how is this a new commandment? I want to give you three thoughts on this to think about as you come to the Table. The first one is we are to love one another which is a new commandment because we are to love as Christ has loved us. It is a love that is modeled by Christ. That means it is a love that is unmerited. So my dear brothers and sisters, we have to quit making people merit our love. If someone doesn't get it just the way we think they ought to get it in their relationship with us then we're not going to kneel and wash their feet. We're going to cut them off or we'll have all kinds of things to say about them. Notice the patience of the Lord for those who are about to deny Him and flee Him but He loves them. Now there is a love that is glorious, sparkling dew. It is a love that is unmerited and relentless.

Secondly, it is a love that is demonstrated and observed. It is not only modeled after the redeeming love of Christ, but it is a love that reveals our love to Christ. Do you want people

to know that you're His disciple that you love Him, then love one another. That is how they will know it. So obviously when they see it that means our love is observable and intentional. In other words, we don't put bumper stickers on our car saying do random acts of love. Christians don't do random acts of love. Christians love intentionally, thoughtfully, purposefully, carefully, unmerited, relentless, unstoppable love – in the name of Christ, following the model of Christ for one another and that's what God has called us to.

Thirdly, it's a new love because it's a love from a risen Christ who will send His Holy Spirit. It is a love that is supernatural that is empowered by the Holy Spirit. When that Holy Spirit comes upon you you'll be able to love with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Some will have gifts of teaching to love with. Some will have gifts of hospitality, administration but you'll deliver those gifts out of love to Christ with the love of Christ. You'll deliver those gifts freely. You'll not only have the gifts of the Spirit but the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. You'll also have the perseverance the Holy Spirit gives to us.

I'm not opposed to programs in the church. By the way, what I love about people of Briarwood is that we have all kinds of programs where you can love people all over this city and all over the world but those programs did not cause that love. Almost every single one of those programs came because of the way some of you loved and then they said let's just help other people do it. It wasn't the program that generated the love but the program was generated by the love that God laid upon your heart. It was generated by your love for one another.

This passage obviously speaks volumes to all of us because who is the first Shepherd, the first Elder to give the first Supper? It was Jesus and what did He do before He did it? You have a pretty big job because there are about 2,000 people in here if you have to start washing some feet but I know you have. I know you love these people. I know you shepherd them so that as their feet get dirty in this world, they are being washed with the grace of God. I am thankful for you. You and I are supposed to love one another like that.

I am overwhelmed by your love for one another and am so glad I can say that about this congregation. I see a love that is reactive and proactive. I see a love that is crisis and a love that takes place when there is no crisis. I see a love that is responsive and transforming, imperfectly otherwise we wouldn't be coming to this Table. We are not perfect but imperfect but it was imperfect at that Table on that day in that Upper Room. So it will be imperfect for those who come to this Table but you are loving one another and I get to see God's covenant of love throughout generations upon generations in this church. I see your love and I'm astounded by it. I've never served with a staff more committed to Christ than this church. By no means are we perfect for there is only One at this Table and we come now to drink and eat of Him and the blessings of His grace. Love one another.

We have a nation that desperately needs Christ. We need to speak the truth. I believe they will listen and they will hear Jesus instead of us when they see us love one another. While I praise God for what is here, I ask God for His glory that you and I will love one another all the more in the newness of Christ's model and the power of the Holy Spirit and that people will marvel at the One whom we follow, Jesus. Oh how they loved one another. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments as we come to this Table. Come and minister to us, I pray, by Your Spirit. We prepare our hearts. We have a great Redeemer who loves us. Help us to model the love of our Redeemer. Help us to show the love we have for our Redeemer and how

we love one another even as we pass the bread and the cup to each other – we pass the love of Christ to one another day by day by day that the world would hear of the love of Christ for them through us, for I pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.