

FURTHER PRE-EASTER THOUGHTS 2020

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Last week we considered the “hour” that Jesus referred to and how that hour had now arrived. We thought about the prospect that lay ahead, and how His soul was troubled. Later He would be in the Garden of Gethsemane where under extreme pressure, that even affected His body, he would sweat “great drops of blood”. He was to take upon Himself the sin of the whole world, and endure the judgment of His Father. But look please with me at John 13:1 where John writes this

“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”

The events we read of in the first eleven verses of John 13 take place on the last evening Jesus will spend prior to His death. Later that night he will be arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, very early in the morning He will be falsely accused and tried by the Sanhedrin. Then He will be led to Pilate where He will be condemned to death, beaten and crucified naked on a cross. In less than twenty four hours from this time Jesus will endure the unspeakable. All this He knew **“when Jesus knew that His hour had come”**

At this critical dreadful “hour” which Jesus describes again in Luke 22:53 when He was in the Garden of Gethsemane **“But this is your hour and the power of darkness”** what was paramount in His mind. Love was paramount and this He demonstrates by His the washing the disciples feet

And [supper being ended, the devil having 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 to God, ⁴ rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. ⁵ After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded. ⁶ Then He came to Simon Peter. And *Peter* said to Him, “Lord, are You washing my feet?”⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.”⁸ Peter said to Him, “You shall never 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, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head!”¹⁰ Jesus said to him, “He who is bathed needs only to wash *his* feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.” ¹¹ For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, “You are not all clean.”

Foot washing was the work of slaves. Even a Jewish servant wasn’t required to carry out this demeaning task, so it was left to Gentile slaves. Imagine they see their Master, The bread of life, the light of the world, the door, the good shepherd, the resurrection and the life (see Gelu’s latest video) the way the truth and the life, the vine, the King of Glory, kneeling to wash their feet. He washed them all, including Peter who He knew would disown him, Thomas who would doubt Him, even Judas who would betray Him for 30 pieces of silver.

“Having loved His own”

These were those who had yielded themselves to Him, and those who do this now are “His own”

His Father had given them to Him. Jesus says in John 17:6-8 “**“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. ⁷ Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. ⁸ For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.**”

Soon these would be bought at the cost of His blood, and be no longer their own. They would become His wife, His bride. He had loved those, poor and sinful creatures that they were, and had called them to be His disciples. He had loved them in their imperfections. John had called down fire from heaven upon those Samaritans. Thomas had doubted and with a heart of love and tenderness Jesus said Thomas “**put your finger here, see my hands, reach out your hand and put it in my side. Stop doubting and believe**”. To Philip He said “**don’t you know Me Philip even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father**”. He said “**This very night you will all fall away on account of Me for it is written “I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered**” In spite of it all He kept on loving His own as He still does.

He loved them till the end (uttermost in Authorised)

Never any hate, never any anger or weariness towards His disciples “**He loved them to the end**”. This is so for you and me, and therefore be encouraged. Such love has no human counterpart. Soon He would go to the cross and bear such agony of body and soul but “**He loved them till the end**”. He was to go from life to death, from death to Resurrection, from resurrection to ascension, from ascension to the glory of His Father’s throne. Would this alter His love, would He love His own any less? His disciples would face persecution, stoning, prison, death by awful and cruel means and still “**He loved them to the end**” not only to the end of His life on the earth.

Sometimes I have heard people substitute “gutter -most” for “uttermost” but good as that thought is, I don’t think it conveys the real meaning. The Hebrew expression “**His mercy endures forever**” can as accurately be rendered “**His mercy endures TO THE END**”

Jesus could not love any more intensely, any better, any longer than forever. His love is perfect. He loves us to the UTTERMOST. Hallelujah

One of my favourite hymns is “The love of God is greater far” and this verse in particular. This is supreme poetic truth sadly so rarely found in our modern songs

Could we the ink the ocean fill
And were the skies of parchment made
Were every stalk on earth a quill?
And every man a scribe by name
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry
Nor could the scroll contain the whole
Though stretched from sky to sky

Romans 8:31-38

“What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? *It is* God who justifies. ³⁴ Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”³⁷ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”

God bless and keep you in these trying days

Steve