

Weekly Scripture and Sermon Study: History & Context Guide

John 13: 31-35

History, Culture, & Context

In this section of John, Jesus is meeting with His disciples and discussing what is considered the mark of discipleship.

In verse 31-32, we read “When Judas was gone, Jesus said, ‘Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.’”

Glorifying is to make visible. There are instances in the Old Testament where God shared His glory, for example in Exodus 33 with Moses. These verses in John show that the cross is the greatest revelation of God’s glory!



Verse 33 says, “My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.” According to the NRSV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, “Disciples sometimes called their teachers “Father,” and sages could refer to their disciples as their “children.”

Verses 34-35 comprise the heart of this passage, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” Jesus is the embodiment of God’s love and we, as disciples, are called to embody Christ’s love. Also, the idea of loving others was not a new concept, however, the sacrificial love that Christ teaches us is revolutionary!

Questions to Consider

1. In what ways does our Christlike love show that we are His disciples?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 13. Taken together with John 13:31-35, how can we define “love”? What are the characteristics of love?
3. What makes Christian love so unique?