

The Just shall live by Faith

Volume 2 - Study 11 **Last Supper: Jesus' Warnings to the Apostles**

C. Ronald Johnson, Christian Wilderness Press: **John 13:1 – 15:5 ...when Jesus knew that his hour was come...having loved his own...he loved them unto the end.**

These are brief studies, not
“teachings” or “doctrines.”

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Teachings and Warnings

John 13:1 Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, [and] having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

The Apostle John, author of this gospel, here has set the stage for the following chapters of the Passover. Please note '**having loved his own**', which is the clear implication that '**his own**' are these 11 disciples / apostles, which the Father had given him. Moreover, note '**which were in the world**' in that Jesus will no longer be on earth and in the world and they will be continuing his work on earth and in the world. This fact will be somewhat emphasized throughout.

All that Jesus tells the apostles during this time he tells in '**love**'. He will tell many wonderful things, but he will also emphasize *warnings*, *warnings* to them which Christians in reading these chapters tend to lightly pass over.

Having set the stage, John skipped the meal and its Passover ceremony and has proceeded to tell about the loving Discussion that Jesus had with the apostles in those hours from sundown unto midnight; but also the Discussion continued as Jesus and the apostles moved on from the upper room toward the mount of Olives wherein was the garden of Gethsemane. Be sure to pay attention to the warnings as they were essential for all of it to work.

13:2-5 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and [will have] went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded.

John tells how the discussion began, that Jesus spoke through his action of washing in turn the feet of each disciple. The apostles have been basking in the glow of the Passover meal and its ceremony with the very Son of God. However, now Jesus commences a Discussion of the Ages.

In verse 1 is Jesus' love; and now they are being taught of that kind of love, which they shall be expected to have one toward another. Instead of telling them, he is showing them.

13:6,7 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

From the time that he had risen from the supper Jesus had not spoken a word and austere silence had begun mounting in the room as Jesus went from apostle to apostle. Then Peter broke silence with an objection.

Therefore, Jesus addressed Peter and all with '**What I do thou knowest** [the Greek is 'see' or 'perceive'] **not now; but thou shalt know** [the Greek is 'understand' or 'fully be resolved'] **hereafter.**'

This is usually the way of things with God; his children are supposed to accept in faith everything that comes from him. In Luke 5:4-6 it was very early in Peter's relationship to

Jesus and then Peter had something of an objection, but he said, '**...nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.**'

Much more should obedience be with the apostles, but now we see Peter in another of his objections. We Christians are often confused and do not know the source of things that come to us, but Peter well knew that it was coming from Jesus the Son of God. Yet, he drew back (his feet) because *he did not understand*. Then he ignored Jesus and continued to self-righteously reject *what he did not understand*. All of his life he had wanted *first to understand*. Three years with Jesus and Peter still wanted *first to understand*. So it is with nearly all of us.

After three years with Jesus, the disciples / apostles had a close familiarity with him, and this at times led them into carelessness about who they were with – the very Son of God. Moreover, in Christianity's familiarity with the scriptures Christians too much want *to understand* and thus we *miss what is above us*.

Therefore, at this point, a very real need had become apparent for Jesus to give these *warnings* and for the apostles to accept them and for the Holy Ghost to continue reminding them in the future. The apostles' high position and authority before God demanded proper awe, respect, and obedience. Yet, due to their flesh (i.e. their fallen human nature) they need *warnings*.

13:8-9 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet.

Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

I imagine that Peter was completely surprised and shocked by this rebuttal from his Lord. So often Peter voiced that which all were thinking, but feared to speak it. Here is the first *warning* that Jesus gave during this Discussion of the Ages.

The statement '**...thou hast no part with me**' surely for a moment brought this passover love-feast to a halt. Surely it took moments, perhaps minutes, for Peter and all of them to recover from this sudden shock. They had become jolted into the awe, respect, and obedience so much needed for this moment and this Discussion. And then Peter said for all, '**Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head**'.

Dependence upon understanding vanishes when a chosen one fears that he has offended his Master. To lose out on the Master's purpose, to be put aside... well *that is the end* of such a chosen one. As Paul would say, "Lord, forbid!"

Here, too, is why the Apostle John began with '**having loved his own... he loved them unto the end**'. Their place with Jesus, arranged and worked out by the Father, had these men separated unto *Jesus' own*. Not only were they *with him* in the work on earth for the Father, but the Father's earthly work was being passed over unto them. And from his place with the Father, the Son would be *with them* in a manner they did not yet comprehend.

13:10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean...

The apostles were clean... '**ye are clean**'. At that moment in the passover feast they were '**clean**'. (We shall see more of this as the Discussion proceeds.) Therefore, at this point in their walks with God they did not need their feet washed. Indeed, a great and awesome respectful obedience, manifested in awed silence, accompanied Jesus as he continued moving from apostle to apostle.

13:12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

This Discussion of the Ages had begun with an '**example**' (i.e. an acted out parable or teaching) which had shocked the apostles. First of all the '**example**' was a *warning*; Jesus

would be gone, no longer to physically keep them from the world, no longer to stand between them and the things and people of the world. Indeed, they would be plunged into the world as sheep amid wolves; and in treading through the world their feet would become soiled. Therefore, 1) they must be vigilant to keep cleansing their feet (in the spiritual sense, more on this as the Discussion unfolds), because 2) if not, then **'thou hast no part with me'** in my continuing work on earth for the Father.

In this parable to the apostles, then, periodically the gathering mire upon the feet must be removed. For example, often Jesus would go aside for prayer with the Father.

Secondly it was a *commandment* to each apostle. Yes, each apostle would be able with the Spirit's help to spiritually cleanse his own feet and he should be doing it on a regular basis. Yet, in knowing the soiling affect of the world on their feet, each apostle was *commanded* to remind each other and when needed to help each other in cleansing before God.

An example of helping each other in this is in Galatians 2:11 and following verses with Paul and Peter. Another example is in Acts 9:10-19 with Ananias and Saul. And another example is in 9:26-28 with Barnabas and Saul before the council of Apostles.

Jesus performed his foot-washing example just before the apostles were to commence their life's work. The *commandment* to them was toward *helping each other regarding humility before God* so that Jesus' work on earth be properly continued. That is, Jesus' commandment was for *their safety before the Father so as not to anger Him and become disqualified from the work*. Their glorious walk would have *very narrow boundaries*.

Note, then, that Jesus' *commandment* was not regarding a ceremony of physical foot-washing. Jesus had simply given an example. Never again are we told in the Bible that the apostles repeated it, nor are we told that others repeated it.

Neither was this *commandment* to the apostles meant as "servitude" to each other. Elsewhere in scripture Jesus spoke that the greatest apostle among them would serve the other apostles (Matthew 20:27 and 23:11, also Mark 9:35 and 10:44), but that is not connected with this verse of John 13:12.

Some Christians have developed varied doctrines of "Christian servitude" (i.e. "becoming servants" to each other) in a local church, and others have developed periodic ceremonies of foot-washing for "servitude in the church". I do not see these concepts in this verse.

13:16,17 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater [i.e. larger] than his lord; neither he that is sent greater [i.e. larger] than he that sent him. If ye know [i.e. see and perceive] these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

In this verse, an apostle is '**servant**' to Jesus; Jesus is the one '**sent**'; and the Father is '**he that sent him**'. There seems to be confusion on the part of many Christians in reading this verse, as if somehow the verse allows for Jesus to be "equal but not greater than the Father", and perhaps *even makes it possible for a Christian to be "equal but not greater than Jesus"*. However, this verse has to do with something else entirely.

Here is the crux of the matter and it has much to do with this verse (and following *warnings*) to the apostles who would soon go out by the Spirit into the world. Note in the verse that the meaning of the Greek word is properly '**larger**' *as in spreading or expanding* and not '**greater**' *as in higher*.

Jesus loved each of '**his own**' and wanted each to be successful and happy in Jesus' continuing work on earth for the Father. And Jesus knew that with these men God would not only be *enlarging* and *spreading* the work, but would continue throughout the ages with chosen others. The world has a way of sucking into its system successful men and women. The soiling (i.e. unclean) effect to an apostle could easily rise up past the feet and begin climbing up the legs.

No matter how expanded a *certain* line of Jesus' work might grow (i.e. headed by a *certain* apostle), Jesus reminded them that *no work would ever be larger than the work of the One who ordered, inspires, and energizes the work*. Here, then, is another *warning*.

How often through the ages has a true work of God begun and in its success been co-opted by the world's system (i.e. the work continuing to carry the Lord's banner or name, but with the Lord no longer in attendance). Thus, as God's energizing of the work ceases, it is hardly noticed because the banner has been carried on by the strength and energy of men for quite some time.

The Apostle John continues in the next chapters with the *Warning* Theme.

John 14:26,27 But the Comforter, *which is the Holy Ghost*, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

'the Comforter, the Holy Ghost' will be sent 'in my name'. In other words, *the work on earth for the Father was, is, and always will be Christ Jesus' work*. Everything to be accomplished in each apostle's ministry will be done with help from heaven by means of the Holy Ghost. And all of it will function within the very Name (i.e. authority-of-work) of Jesus. Here is the reminder that the work on earth would continue to be Jesus' work and not the work of the apostles. Jesus *warned* that the ongoing, spreading, and expansion of the work would not be due to the labor of the apostles, but due to the doings on earth from heaven.

If a work ever did become known as an apostle's work then the work no longer would be Jesus' work; and the apostle **'hast no part with'** Jesus' work any longer.

Being with Jesus, the apostles already knew and had experienced the Holy Ghost. Yet, now Jesus mentions the Holy Ghost as '**the Comforter**' (i.e. intercessor, consoler). Then each apostle was commanded (13:2) to be a *comforter* to others in the work. The word also means '**advocate**'. Jesus in heaven, with the Father and Holy Ghost, would be a Joint Advocate for each apostle involved in the work.

Therefore, it is in this special sense that Jesus said, '**Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you**'. Jesus' '**peace**' 1) is of heaven and 2) is dependent on each apostle's ongoing connection with heaven.

Jesus' kind of peace has nothing in common with the world's kind of peace. I suggest that Jesus' peace is not the same as *accord, agreement, conciliation, harmony, pacification, a treaty, or a truce with others*. It is not *calmness, composure, contentment, quietude, relaxation, repose, serenity, stillness, or tranquility*.

These words are from the dictionary and they are the world's varied concepts of the word '**peace**'. Whatever the high-peace-of-Jesus is, it is not any of these.

Jesus' part to an apostle was to grant him *Jesus type of peace*. The apostle's part was '**Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid**'; and I have no doubt that for this each apostle would also have to rely on help from the Holy Ghost.

'he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you'. The enormity of all that Jesus had said and taught, and the enormity of becoming apostles and being thrust into the world... all of it would have been impossible without the Holy Ghost's teaching, remembering for them, and comforting them.

And their part was '**Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid**'.

14:28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come *again* unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater [i.e. larger] than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

Jesus had said it; they had heard it; and the Holy Ghost would very quickly and clearly

bring it back to their memory; or else all of it would have vanished like a wonderful but very weird dream.

The essence of this verse had to become real to each one, first regarding Jesus' trial and crucifixion, and then later in the ministry of each regarding the whole aspect of being chosen as a disciple of Jesus for three years so as to be made into an apostle. I wonder how long it took for each apostle to settle into his call to Jesus' work with its awesome authority and awesome connection with Jesus and the Father in heaven.

14:30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

'Hereafter I will not talk much with you'. Each apostle (later during his ministry in varied parts of the world) would very often wish that Jesus would talk to him, but that would seldom if ever be the case. The apostle must depend on the three years with Jesus and the things given to him: the *Comforter*, the *Peace*, the *commandment to advocate* for each other, and *the scriptures*.

Moreover, Jesus-type-of-work was such that *the Purpose of the Father flowed through the Son continually downward unto and through the apostles and into the world as God-worked-fruit*. (More on this in chapter 15.) In other words, in their walk and labor, the apostles would be connected unto the Father by and through the Son.

The Father's *Purpose* in the apostles amounted to much more than their simple *obedience to the Purpose*. The *Purpose* was (and is) a living thing, a staircase from heaven to earth if you will (i.e. like in Genesis 28:12); but Jesus placed the emphasis of this Connection upon the Father and not upon the apostles working for the Father.

The apostles may have never seen the *Purpose* in a vision (as did Jacob) or often felt or sensed its continuum; yet, the *Purpose* and its *Connection* always had enclosed them, for such was (and is) the Vine to Its branches (chapter 15).

Jesus said, '**the prince of this world... hath nothing in me**'. These words were not meant as verification to the apostles that Jesus had never sinned (or a similar concept). The apostles were to go out into the world (of which Satan is its prince); whereupon worldly dust would cling at their feet trying to soil them. They would be going out '**in Jesus**' and this verse, then, verified to them that *nothing of the world* and *nothing belonging to the world's prince* was '**in me**'.

Therefore, in their leaning on and depending on being '**in Jesus**', they could walk on through the world knowing that (before the Father) they were '**clean**' and in no sense were they "of the world". The world would keep grabbing at them, yet this would affect only their feet. And that, then, in the time of need would be washed away again and again and again.

Dear reader, *cleansing needed for the feet only, in that the rest was already clean* was a parable to the apostles, a spiritual teaching. In the parable, *the body above the feet* represents the spiritual part of the apostle. *The feet* represent the apostle's flesh, much affected by the world and its things.

Examples of this were the many recorded times when Jesus would go aside for prayer (the very same reason of cleansing by being with the Father). In doing this, Jesus was not cleansing his feet; rather the Father was cleansing the Son's feet, which feet (flesh) had recently walked in the world. Then in John 20:17 we see one final concern of Jesus in not yet being totally cleansed from his ordeal in the world. Indeed, from his youth this had surely become habitual for Jesus.

14:31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

And later the apostles '**even so**' would '**do**' likewise, '**that the world may know that [they also] love the Father**'.

How will Jesus' Work be Worked?

Until now in the Discussion of the Ages, Jesus had focused 1) upon the essential need of the apostles and 2) upon some of heaven's things being given them. Number 1) was the needed *environment* of their walk in the world. Being with Jesus for three years, they had been exposed to a *heavenly presence*, having come to experience it under the tutelage and very presence of the Son of God. This *heavenly presence* was *the Holy Ghost*.

Now they have just been told that the Holy Ghost would still be on earth when Jesus goes to heaven. Moreover, the Father's assignment of the Holy Ghost would be to create for them an *environment* somewhat as they had experienced with Jesus, only that it would be specialized for them amid their part in Jesus' continuing work on earth for the Father.

Thus, they have been told 1) of the *environment* of the work and 2) about some of *heaven's things* needed to operate in the *environment*. Early, at their beginning of being taken into Jesus' *work-environment*, they had come to experience the Holy Ghost as something like a Spiritual Wind of heaven blowing about them and perhaps encircling them as they moved about in the world.

In chapter 15, then, Jesus will tell them 3) something of the *structure* within the *environment*. Note what he had said -

14:28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come *again* unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater [i.e. larger] than I..

So what will the '*coming again unto you*' be like, if in fact Jesus is going to the Father in heaven?

John 15:1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

15:2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Interesting is it not? The very first thing mentioned about the Vine's branches is a *warning* to each branch that if it '**beareth not fruit**' (i.e. beareth not God's fruit) it will be '**taken away**'. Immediately following is another warning, that fruiting branches shall be periodically '**purged**'. (The apostles, with help from the Holy Ghost, must look unto their own *cleansing of feet*, but the Father in heaven will look to their *pruning*.)

Moreover, the Vine's remaining branches will not be crowded in Jesus' work by non-bearing branches as the latter will have been '**taken away**'. Indeed, we know there are many useless and bad branches in the religious world and in the Church as a whole.

Therefore, if there will be no fruitless or useless branches left connected to the Vine to crowd or bother the good fruiting branches, then what is it in the religious world and in the Church as a whole that will *crowd in, persecute, and even kill the good branches of the Vine*?

Satan also has a vine in the religious world and in the Church as a whole. Its branches are designed to appeal to mankind, to the world's ways. The situation of these vines in the world is much like the '**wheat and the tares**'. God will make all things clear in the end and not before (Matthew 13:40). Christians have a difficult time with waiting until all things are brought to fulfillment. We want God to straighten out things now.

Ah, but the apostles would find that there would be (and are) God's sheep that butt each other, murmuring sheep, picky sheep, never-satisfied sheep, self-righteous sheep, and ... These also would (and still do) hinder Jesus' branches, *even as is recorded in the Epistles of the early Church*. These are not children of Satan; but as with Eve in the garden, Satan is the prince of this world and he has his methods. God will make all things clear in the end and not before. The apostles lived with this fact; the Church lives with it; the world lives

with it; Jesus and the Father in heaven puts up with it until the end.

Is every church leader a branch of Jesus the Vine? Jesus warned all God's people to take heed to a branch's fruit, for in the fruit can be determined the nature of its vine. Sadly, we Christians look more to what appeals to us than to God's fruit, which often convicts us, making us uncomfortable.

The wonderful part of this verse is that each true branch of the True Vine will bring forth God-fruit *in its fruiting season*, and more God-fruit *in future fruiting seasons*. (In every person's life, God has seasons. It was true of the apostles as well.) The Vine and its branches have some part in the fruit, but the fruit belongs to God alone.

Anyone proclaiming that they have a part of the ownership of fruit because of their labor, that person is not a branch of the True Vine who teaches that all true fruit belongs to the Father (i.e. the '**husbandman**'). Jesus made this very clear regarding himself and the apostles. Through the ages, no ministry or minister has ever owned God-produced fruit. For a ministry or minister or followers to place claims upon what alone belongs to God is very dangerous.

15:3-5 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing [i.e. another warning].

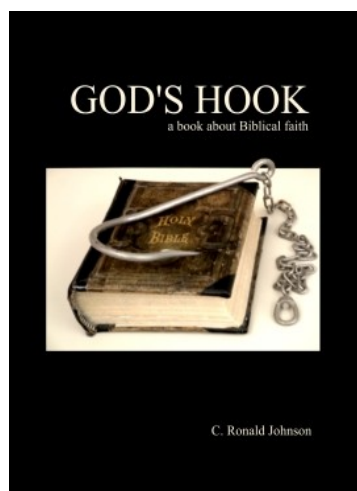


I leave the rest of chapter 15 to you. Note the continued *warnings* laced in among the wonderful teaching. Also note that Jesus said all these things to his apostles. All of it was for them and meant for them.

So then, were these particular teachings to be for others (i.e. at that time and down through the ages)? I would say, "Yes, and that is why the Apostle John wrote them." Even so, how much was meant for others and to whom (i.e. at that time, through the ages, and now). Such true branches are in Christ Jesus. Jesus is the True Vine rooted and growing in the Father's Vineyard. The Continuum of this Purpose of the Ages on the earth is in Christ (from Its beginning) and in Jesus Christ (unto Its end).

The first and final say regarding "how much and to whom" is up to the Father. Whatever possible "applications for the Church" may be in these chapters I leave to you.

- These are short Bible studies by C. Ronald Johnson at Christian Wilderness Press -



a book
about
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the life of
Moses
and the
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