

IN THE JETSTREAM

February 2024



LOVING TO THE END

by Stephen Watts



Something that really hit me today was the extent to which Jesus continued to show His love to Judas even to the bitter end. In John 13:21-30, the one who Jesus loves describes this contrast of faithfulness and faithlessness.

The Washing of Feet

The first example of Jesus showing love to Judas has already occurred in previous verses. He has just washed His enemy's feet, no doubt carefully and lovingly. In verse 21, Jesus announces to His disciples that He will be betrayed by one of them. I can imagine this must have been like a shockwave in the upper room followed by silence. Then shortly after there was murmuring among them as they tried to find out more information. John was leaning against Jesus on one side and quietly whispering to Jesus asking him who it was.

No Public Accusation

We see the second example of Jesus extending love to Judas by Jesus not accusing him among the other disciples. No one else must have heard this question because later in the passage we see that the disciples still don't have a clue that it is Judas who is going to betray Jesus when he leaves abruptly. Jesus tells John that the one who is going to betray Him is the one to whom He will give a morsel of bread that had been dipped. This is probably the same bread the disciples will soon have commemorating Passover. During this period giving someone the first food at a banquet or event was customarily reserved for a guest of honor. Here Jesus reserves this honor for the one who will betray Him. Most likely this guest would be seated next to the host of the event, so Judas was seated at a position of honor.

It really is amazing the grace and love that Jesus shows Judas. He washed his feet, did not call him out publicly, gave him a seat of honor at the last

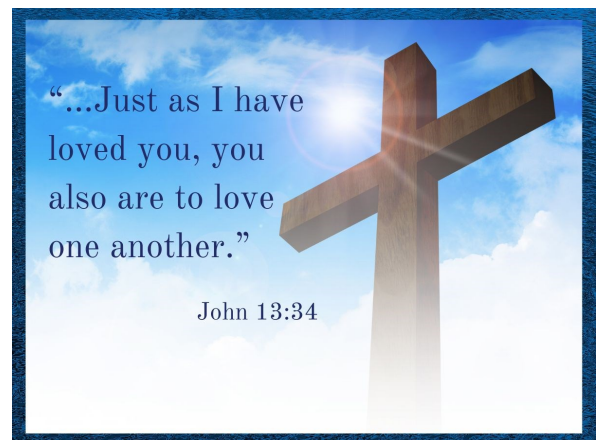
supper, and gave him the ceremonial blessing of the meal by giving him the first serving. Jesus loved Judas to the end and His love grows greater while Judas's sin grew greater.

After coming to this realization, it reminded me how poorly I love my enemies. And let's be honest, I don't have enemies like Jesus did and thankfully don't know anyone trying to kill me. I wish I could say that I love my enemies the way that Jesus has, but I fall woefully short.

Our Example to Follow

Jesus tells us if we follow Him, we will be hated as He was hated. This story reminds me of how to respond in those situations. Unfortunately, it didn't end well for Judas, but there are countless stories in the Bible and in the world today where this does happen. Jesus has shown us what that practically looks like if we rely on His Holy Spirit. We serve our enemies. We don't speak poorly of them. We honor them. And we love them to the end, even when we know they might not change.

Jesus loved Judas to the end ... and so should I.



This article was written by Stephen Watts. Stephen is a pilot with Delta Air Lines and also serves on our Board of Directors.



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Psalm 139:9-10



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