

Bible Studies for Life: March 13

A Life of Loyalty • John 13:21-27; 31-35

By Lee Faler



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Jesus commands loyalty from His followers. If Jesus is who the Bible says He is, and if He has done what the Bible says He has done, then what possible response can we give other than unwavering loyalty?

The problem is that our hearts are “prone to wander,” leading us to offer Christ less than our unwavering loyalty. Because of indwelling sin, we will always have a need to grow in our loyalty. So how can we cultivate loyalty to Jesus in our lives?

First, we should think about Jesus’ humanity. In verse 21, we see that “Jesus was troubled in spirit (ESV).” This simple phrase gently reminds us that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ felt human emotions. He was 100 % God, yet 100% man, and He was troubled as He considered the events leading up to the cross.

The humanity of Jesus is a comfort to every Christian. The book of Hebrews reminds us that Jesus was “like us in every respect, yet without sin (Hebrews 2:17).” Every emotion that we’ve felt, every tear that we’ve cried, and every hurt we’ve

experienced was first felt, cried over, and experienced by Jesus.

Because of this, He is able to help us in our weaknesses. If we want to grow in loyalty to Jesus tomorrow, we should think on His humanity today.

Secondly, we should do a careful self-examination. In verses 21-30, Jesus informs the disciples that one of them will betray Him. The disciples immediately began to wonder who it could be. In fact, Matthew records for us that the disciples asked Him one after another, "Is it I (Matthew 26:22)." Judas leaves shortly after, in order to betray Jesus.

If we aren't careful, we can be quick to pass judgment on Judas for betraying Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. We should remember that on the night Jesus was betrayed, all of the disciples deserted Him so Judas wasn't the only one in the betrayal business.

We ourselves have likely traded loyalty to Jesus for much less than 30 pieces of silver. This should lead us to examine our own hearts to see if there are areas where we are entertaining sin instead of killing it. Every act of sin is an act of spiritual betrayal against God. May the Lord grant us sensitivity towards sin and give us the grace we need to repent because of our loyalty to Christ.

Finally, we should strive to love one another. In verses 31-33, Jesus informs the disciples once again of His inevitable death. Jesus is preparing to glorify the Father by submitting Himself to the cross and will soon be taken from them, so what are the disciples to do?

Jesus instructs them to "love one another" just as He has loved them. Their love for one another would be of such importance that Jesus went as far as to say that the way the world would know the disciples belonged to Him would be through their love for one another.

The love of Jesus that was made manifest in His disciples would serve to validate the message that they would proclaim. This has huge implications for us, doesn't it? We can preach with the fire of Peter at Pentecost but if we do not have love, we have nothing.

Our libraries can be filled with the finest theological works but if we do not have love, we have nothing. I often tell our church members that people may know we're a church by the signage out front, but they will know we belong to Jesus by the way we love.

As Christ has loved us with a loyal love, may we exhibit that love to one another.

What is our hope for doing any of this? Why would we want to form a life of loyalty to Jesus? Is it not that even when we are disloyal to Him, He remains loyal to us? He continually intercedes for us, pursues us, forgives us, and welcomes us back. He is a thousand times more loyal to us than we could ever hope to be to Him!

May the good news of the Gospel fuel our loyalty to Him. Let's serve Him until we see Him!

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