

## 3-22-26 His Hour: Love to the End... Even When They Don't Deserve It

### Week 3

**Text: John 13:1–20**

**Topics:** Love, Endurance, Unconditional, Identity, Service, Enemies, Salvation

**Big Idea of the Message:** Jesus' "hour" (v. 1) was an opportunity to model unconditional love, especially toward one's enemies.

**Application Point:** Following the example of Christ, Christians are called to love and serve all people - especially those who don't deserve it.

**Introduction:** Love Has a Breaking Point... Unless It's Divine

There are moments when love should quit. Not just when it gets hard. Not just when it gets awkward. But when it gets ugly.

When trust is broken. When respect disappears. When someone smiles at you... while secretly stabbing you in the back.

That's where most of us draw the line.

We say things like:

- "I'll forgive... but I'm done."
- "I'll love... from a distance."
- "I'm not letting them hurt me again."

And if we're honest... that feels reasonable. It feels right.

But **John 13** drops us into a moment where love has every reason to walk out the door... and instead, it picks up a towel.

Jesus knows everything in this room.

He knows:

- Peter is about to deny Him.
- The disciples are about to scatter.
- Judas is about to betray Him.

And what does He do with that knowledge? He doesn't distance Himself. He doesn't defend Himself. He doesn't expose them or shame them. He kneels.

And **John 13:1** tells us why: "... having loved His own... He loved them to the end."

Not halfway. Not until it hurt. Not until they disappointed Him. To the end. See, most love has a breaking point. Jesus' love... doesn't. And if we're going to follow Him...we're going to have to learn how to love people who make it really, really hard.

### **I. "He Loved Them to the End" - Love That Doesn't Quit**

- **Read John 13:1-2**
- John sets the tone before anything happens: "... **having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.**"
- The phrase "**to the end**" is eis telos (εἰς τέλος) It means completely, fully, to the uttermost, without limit.
- This is not love that fades when people fail.

#### **What didn't stop Jesus' love?**

- Ignorance
- Pride
- Fear
- Weak faith
- Betrayal
- Denial

Jesus knew everything about His disciples... and loved them anyway.

If Jesus didn't stop loving them... He's not going to stop loving you.

Your failures don't surprise Him. They were already factored into the cross.

### **II. Unconditional Love Looks a Lot Like Perseverance**

- Think about Forrest Gump.
- Forrest loved: Lieutenant Dan at his worst. Jenny through rejection, pain, and absence. He doesn't fix them. He doesn't lecture them. He stays. And Forrest was still flawed.
- Jesus isn't flawed. He is perfect.
- What Forrest does imperfectly, Jesus does perfectly.

Unconditional love isn't loud. It's present. Sometimes the most Christlike thing you can do is:

- stay faithful, keep serving, and keep loving... even when nothing changes.

### **III. Secure Identity Produces Selfless Service**

- **Read verse 3.**
- Jesus knew that the Father had put all things into His hands...

- Jesus serves because He knows who He is.
- Insecure people protect status. Secure people give it away.
- Jesus wasn't confused about His identity... so He wasn't threatened by humility.

If serving others makes you feel “less than,” your identity may be misplaced.

Our worth comes from: being created in God's image, being redeemed by Christ and being adopted into God's family.

#### **IV. When in Doubt, Grab a Towel (vv. 5–11)**

- **Read verses 5-11.**
- Foot-washing was dirty, degrading, and reserved for the lowest servant
- And Jesus does it knowingly.
- Key Detail That Should STOP US COLD.... Judas is still in the room.
- Jesus washes: Peter's impulsive feet. Thomas's doubting feet. Judas's betraying feet.
- Loving your enemy isn't theoretical here, it's tactile, you can touch it, you can feel the weight of it. You can smell it.
- **Matthew 5** comes alive... **“Love your enemies.”**
- Jesus doesn't just teach it. He kneels into it.

If Jesus served Judas, who are we allowed to withhold love from?

Loving your enemy doesn't mean:

- **approving sin**
- **ignoring truth**

It means refusing to let hatred dictate our behavior.

#### **V. Service Is Love in Work Clothes**

- **Read verses 12-17**
- Jesus explains the lesson: **“I have given you an example.”**
- Christianity is not just believed...it is lived.
- A simple truth, serving others says: “You matter.” “You're seen.” “You're worth my time.”
- Servicing others isn't weakness. It's Christlike strength.
- Jesus didn't lose authority when He knelt, He revealed it.

You don't need a platform to serve. You need a towel.

#### **VI. Love That Foretells Betrayal Still Chooses the Cross**

- **Read verses 18-19.**
- Jesus predicts betrayal and denial before they happen.
- Why? **“So that you may believe that I am He.”**
- Jesus is not reacting to events. He is orchestrating redemption.
- Even betrayal becomes part of salvation’s story.
- The cross wasn’t forced. It was fore known and embraced.

### **Application:**

#### **1. Love Someone Who Can’t Pay You Back**

- Jesus washed feet knowing He’d get betrayal in return—not applause.
- Do something intentionally kind this week for someone who: doesn’t notice you, doesn’t appreciate you, or has nothing to offer you in return.
- **Luke 6:32–35 - “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?”**
- If your love only flows where it’s reciprocated, it’s not Christlike - it’s convenient.

#### **2. Stay When It Would Be Easier to Walk Away**

- Unconditional love doesn’t always fix things, but it refuses to abandon people.
- Who in your life are you tempted to emotionally “check out” on?
- A difficult spouse, a draining coworker, a frustrating church member.
- Stay engaged. Stay prayerful. Stay present.
- Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do... is not quit.

#### **3. Serve Quietly When No One Is Watching**

- Jesus didn’t livestream the foot washing.
- Do one hidden act of service this week where: no one knows, no one thank you, and no one posts about it.
- If you need recognition to serve, you’re not serving - you’re performing.

#### **4. Refuse to Let Someone Else’s Sin Define Your Love**

- Judas didn’t change Jesus’ posture.
- Identify someone who has hurt, offended, or disappointed you.
- Then choose- very intentionally - to speak kindly about them, pray for them daily, and refuse bitterness.
- **Matthew 5:44, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”**
- You don’t control how they act - but you are accountable for how you love.

#### **5. Let Your Identity Settle Your Insecurity**

- Jesus served because He knew who He was. He knew why He came.
- When you feel overlooked, disrespected, or “beneath” something - pause and preach truth to yourself: “I am created in God’s image.” “I am redeemed by Christ.” “I am adopted into God’s family.”
- Then serve anyway.
- Insecurity clings to position. Identity releases it.

## 6. Replace Criticism with a Towel

- It’s easy to point out what’s wrong. It’s harder to kneel and help.
- The next time you’re tempted to complain about: your church, your workplace, your home, your fill in the blank.... Ask: “What would it look like for me to serve here instead?”
- The church doesn’t need more critics - it needs more people with towels.

## 7. Love All the Way

- Jesus didn’t love them until they failed—He loved them \*through\* their failure.
- Where have you put conditions on your love? “I’ll forgive, but I won’t trust.” “I’ll help, but only once.” “I’ll love... if they change.”
- Ask God to stretch your love past your comfort.
- Halfway love is human. **“To the end”** love is divine.

## 8. Bring Your Failure into the Light Instead of Hiding It

- The same Jesus who washed dirty feet went to the cross for dirty hearts.
- Stop managing your image and start surrendering your reality.
- Confess that sin, drop that shame, Come honestly to Christ.
- **1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive...”**
- You are not loved because you’re clean. You’re cleaned because you’re loved.

If Jesus can kneel before His betrayer... we can bend toward the people in our lives.

You don’t need more time. You don’t need more talent. You don’t need a title. You need a towel.

### Invitation:

Some of you struggle to believe God loves you... because you know what you’ve done.

Here’s the good news: Jesus already knew too. And He still chose to the cross.

### Today:

- Receive that love
- Rest in that love
- Reflect that love

Come to Christ. Lay down the conditions. Pick up the towel.

Because when you've been loved to the end.... You're finally free to love others the same way.

**Prayer**