

A Love That Lasts

He loved them to the end"

John 13:1

I recall as if it was yesterday. Our professor of Greek was working with us students on translating John 13:1. His name appears in the list of translators for the NIV Bible. He was an internationally known scholar. He was trying to get us to understand the emphasis John was placing on the tenacious love of Jesus for the disciples.

"Gentlemen" he said, "Jesus loved them straight through to the end!" His arm shot forward until it was fully extended as he said those words. His finger pointing at us.

Years later, as I have reflected on Jesus' love in that context, I have seen a number of interesting facts that happened that night to prove the strength of His love. Remember that these words of John about Jesus' love are couched in the context of the Last Supper just before Jesus' trials and execution.

As the meal progressed the disciples broke out in an argument about which one of them should be considered the greatest. Pride had filled their hearts as they realised they were the closest followers of the One sent from God. Jesus humbled them somewhat when He said that one of them was a traitor and each in turn asked Jesus, Mark 14:19 "not I?". The meaning is that the one speaking expected a "No" answer to the question. Yet they asked a question so there was some concern they might be the one.

Then, when Jesus told them He was leaving and they could not

come, Peter began the chorus that they would follow Him to the death. Jesus, of course, knew that they would all abandon Him later that evening in the garden.

He also knew that Peter would deny Him and told Peter so. Then, in the garden Jesus asked them to watch and pray three times. Instead of responding to Jesus' request properly, they fell asleep. Jesus had been teaching the disciples for a year that He had to go to Jerusalem and suffer and die and then be raised the third day and they did not get it. All they saw was glory and privilege for them in reigning with Jesus. They did not pay attention to His teaching in its full extent. They only heard what they wanted to hear.

So we see that the disciples failed Jesus most miserably right at the time John tells us that Jesus loved the disciples to the uttermost or to the end. In other words the many failures and sins of the followers that night did nothing to deflect or stop Jesus from loving them. Having placed His love upon them He stayed in love with them forever.

If you are a child of God, has it impressed you that there is nothing you can do to stop Jesus from loving you? You may have denied Him like Peter, or not prayed as you ought. Possibly you have had the sin of pride in your life and thought yourself a wonderful Christian and how blessed God was to have you as His child. Or perhaps you have not read your Bible very faithfully and have only heard certain things Jesus taught.

Whatever your sin, however you have failed your Lord and Saviour, He still loves you and will never stop loving you for any reason.

Does not such eternal love break your heart as you think of how you might have failed your Saviour? Well, take heart, be encouraged, you can never lose this blessed Saviour. He loves His own to the end regardless of their failures. Come back to Him and ask for that love to be poured out in your heart again. Tell this loving Jesus that in spite of your failures, you still love Him and desire to be what He wants you to be. Confess your sins and experience the joy of forgiveness and be happy in His love. He waits to hear from you right now.

If you are not certain that you are one of Jesus' disciples you need to turn from your own way and turn into the way of Jesus. He invites everyone to come to Him and experience forgiveness for confessed sins. He will show you His love and you will delight in following Him. Jesus has no pleasure in you continuing to walk away from Him. Come to Him humbly and you will be received and know His eternal love for you. But you must come.

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