

## Gospel of John Chapter 13 - John Karmelich

I admit that as I'm going through this book, I've become obsessed with the question of, "Am I saved?" I guess after years of "walking with Jesus," daily devotional time, and weekly church service, I realize that I still have faults and it makes me question that. I suspect most of us have gone through moments where we have our doubts for different reasons. Maybe it's due to someone who's a devout member of another religion and is a nice person. Maybe it's a sin we've struggled with all our lives. Remember, if our salvation were just up to us, we'd all fail. We can never get into heaven by pleasing God just based on how we live! It's our trust in who Jesus is and belief that He's Lord of our lives. If you also struggle with this issue, pray for God to help with your struggle. God wants a close relationship with us and He will do what He can to draw us to closer to Him. Obviously, if it's a sin issue, we must turn from it, and realize He has forgiven us no matter how bad it is. We got to deal with the consequences of sin, but we must realize that forgiveness already occurred. The only unforgiveable sin's a lifetime denial that Jesus is God! More on the unforgiveable sin in the next lesson, as it's mentioned in Chapter 14 (Verse 17).

With that statement out of my system, Chapter 13 is in effect, a set of circumstances and examples that Jesus lays out for us about who is and who isn't saved. We are now in the final week of Jesus' life. It's important to remember that John the Gospel-writer was there for all of this. He wrote this gospel near the end of his life. Sometimes we have things so engrained in our minds that are so memorable we can recall in detail what occurred long after that event occurred. That's the case of John here. He wrote this close to 60 years after it took place, but recalled the details as if it just occurred. Our memories work that way as well!

With that said, time to study Chapter 13. As we go through the many little stories here, I'll point out how they affect one's salvation, and what Jesus calls us to do as witnesses for Him. Let us begin:

First, the setting: The disciples are together eating a relaxing dinner. This wasn't a normal meal eaten at a dining room table, but a popular type of dining at that time was to sit at a low coffee table leaning on your left elbow and eating with your right hand (assuming one's right-handed). The feet were turned away from the table. When they were sitting around this table, Jesus stood up, took off His outer cloak and began to wash all the disciples' feet. Peter, as the spokesman, and I'm paraphrasing, "Lord, you are above this task so please stop." Jesus of course stuck to His plan! Peter then said, "Okay, do my whole body!" Jesus then says, "Whoever is clean only needs his feet washed." The implication is that we are saved, but we still sin because we're in the world. Jesus said this to Peter soon before his famous triple denial. Consider that Jesus washed Judas' feet as well, despite his upcoming betrayal. This foot "thing" is a reminder that, as believers, we don't have to worry about our salvation, but only about dealing with sin that's part of living in this world!

Speaking of Judas, it was time for him to realize "the jig was up," since God knows all things, even the betrayal of Jesus at this point. He tells the disciples that one of them will betray Him. All of them said they would never do that, but, again, God knows all things! Just so everyone would know who it was, we read Peter asking John, who was sitting next to Jesus, "Who is it"? Jesus then dips a piece of bread in a bowl of sauce and handing it to Judas. I know most of us know this story well. Keep in mind that God knows all things, and, unless we deny Jesus is God, even when we mess up we don't worry about losing our salvation. We just must deal with the consequences of sin. Notice even when the "jig was up" it didn't stop Judas from leaving to go betray Jesus. Why? He realized Jesus only wanted to die for sins and there was no financial benefit in this life for following Jesus. Despite all those miracles Judas

saw, there is a "too late" when one is more interested in other things other than serving Jesus. That is when Judas left to get the 30 pieces of silver, the biblical price of a slave, to betray Him.

A quick side note: John the writer never refers to himself in the first person in this book. He just refers to himself "as the disciple Jesus loved," and he uses that expression four times in this Gospel. I suspect all the disciples felt they were the one Jesus loved the most. I've only met a few people who have a gift to make everyone they're with at that moment feel loved and special. My "hat's off" to them!

Speaking of feeling loved, Jesus wanted to make that point to the disciples after Judas left the scene. It is here where Jesus said the new command for believers is to love each other. It simply means that one way people know we believe in Jesus is we develop, through His power, a great ability to show love to a person who is also a believer, as well as to be witnesses to all people. In fact, John (the writer) late in his life was famous for visiting different churches proclaiming that they love one another! Yes, I know we all have people we struggle with. We must rely on God's power to deal with such people, as that's what He desires for each of us.

The chapter ends, of all things, on a "downer note." Here is where Jesus predicts Peter will deny Him three times in the near future. (Later that night most likely). The reason that story is here is to remind us, again, that Jesus is God and knows all things, even the future. It also reminds us that, despite that famous event, Peter never lost his salvation. A good reminder to us when we mess up!

I realize most of us know this story well. I also realize John wrote this Gospel for non-believers to see that Jesus is God (and stated as such later in the book). The lesson for us believers is when (not if, but when) we mess up, we don't lose our salvation, but we still must deal with the consequences of sin. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus told Judas that He (Jesus) loved Him right before the "handing him the piece of bread." Jesus still loves all people and won't violate our free will even when we turn against Him.

If you liked this little study, I wrote a more detailed account about twenty years ago! To read the other one, click on one of the two links on this page. Thanks again for reading this. John