

Sermon Growth Guide

March 7, 2021

To Give His Life – Jesus Knew

John 13:1-14

Key Verse: John 13:1

“It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.”

Big Idea: We extend the light and life of Jesus by giving ourselves away in love.

Foundations

Who am I? Where did I come from? What am I here for? Where am I going?

Jesus not only knew the answers to life's big questions of identity, origin, purpose and destiny, He lived perfectly in direct response to those questions.

Jesus knew that He was the way, the truth, and the life. Jesus knew He came from the Father. Jesus knew His mission, to give His life away. Jesus knew He was returning home to the Father.

What about you?

Do you know the answer to your identity, origin, purpose and destiny? Do you know that you are a child of God saved by grace? Do you know that you were knit together in your mother's womb, known by God before the foundations of the world? Do you know that as a child of God you have an eternal purpose to declare the praises of your Father? And do you know that your only comfort in life and in death is that you belong to God and that no one and nothing can separate you from God's love for all eternity?

When you know who you are and to whom you belong, it changes the way you live each and every moment of your life.

Understanding God's Word

Clarify the context in which Jesus states John 13:14-15. Openly discuss this week's passage.

Applying God's Word

Walking in His identity as the Creator and Savior of all, Jesus “took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him,” (verses 4, 5). Jesus then commands His disciples, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another,” (verses 34, 35). Spend time helping one another apply the love of Christ in each person's context, knowing that we extend the light and life of Jesus by giving ourselves away in love.

Witnessing God's Word

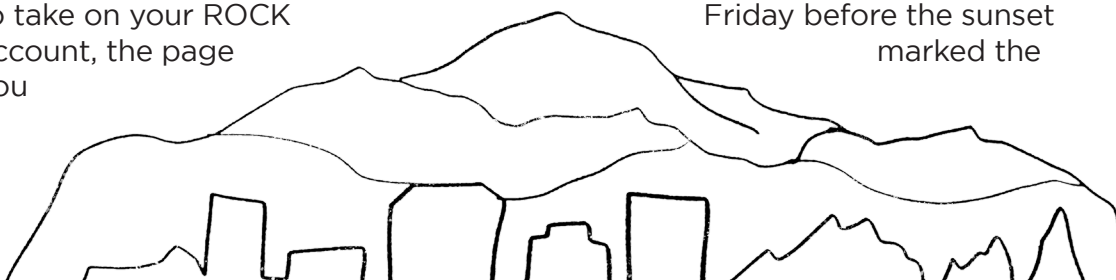
Identify one person that you desire to sacrificially “give yourself away in love” that they might know and believe in Jesus. Pray for this person with your circle and identify one key way in which you will step toward them this week.

We are living in this space of what Jesus knew. John seems to have had some special, intimate access to the interior life of Jesus, what Jesus was thinking when He did the things He did or said the things He said. All along the way in Jesus' ministry, whatever promises He made, whatever healing He performed, whatever teaching or hope of a life made right with God Jesus talked about, all along the way Jesus knew what it would cost to make those things so. It would cost His life. He came to give His life. And He knew that. Today we come to what we call the Last Supper. We are in the Upper Room with Jesus and His disciples watching them have a final meal together. It's called Maundy Thursday by the church because Jesus issues a new commandment, a mandatum, to love one another. But it starts with this amazing moment when Jesus bends down to wash His disciples' feet. What did Jesus do with what Jesus knew? It's because Jesus knew who He was that Jesus did what He did.

Socrates said, "Know thyself." There has never been a time in history like ours to take that to the absolute limit! We know ourselves. We do. More than we want to. I can tell you my Myers-Briggs. An outside researcher wanted to assess my Enneagram number, whatever you think about that. I'm on Strengths Finder, Core Clarity Index, DiSC, Change Strength Indicator, FIRO-B Leadership Style. We regularly perform 360-degree staff reviews, so I can answer the question "What's it like to be on the other side of me" as a leader. We even have a Spiritual Gifts Assessment we'd love for you to take on your ROCK account, the page you

have to update your own info with our church. I've taken it. There's a lot I know about myself. Somehow I still get confused, but I've got a lot of reports. Know thyself is a pretty important challenge. There are questions you need answers to. Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? These are questions that need an answer, and you need your answer from Jesus. Jesus knew Himself. And what we learn today is that this, this knowing thyself, this was a source of strength for Jesus that enabled Him to do what He did. It enabled Him to become a servant and give Himself away. **To Give His Life.**

"It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end" (John 13:1). We think of this as a Passover meal, but, remember, the Passover meal would actually be on Friday night. This is the day before that meal. It's like having Thanksgiving dinner on Wednesday. My first job was with Peter Piper Pizza at Southgate when I was 16. I got scheduled for Thanksgiving night! I was sure there was some error. I asked my manager. "Yeah, we're open. If you want to change, you have to find a replacement." I had to explain my availability to my family! Maybe Jesus arranged to have this meal with His friends on Thursday night. There's some evidence to support this. But if that's what they did, then they had Passover meal a day early and they had it without the lamb. Passover lambs were slaughtered on Thursday to be prepared on Friday before the sunset marked the



Sabbath. There was no lamb at this meal, you see. Or was there?

“Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end” (John 13:1). Note that phrase: Jesus knew. Here’s the first of three things Jesus knew in this passage. Jesus knew the hour had come. Back in John 2, Jesus was at a wedding with His mother, likely for some distant relatives in Cana of Galilee. The wine ran out. Mary pulled Jesus aside. We have a problem. No more wine. Mary was not a party animal. The problem would be the shame and embarrassment that could mar the celebration and the memories this family would have of this joyous day. Do you know what Jesus said? “So what, mom!” Actually it was more like, “Woman, why do you involve me?” Jesus replied. ‘My hour has not yet come’” (John 2:4). “My hour” was something Jesus thought about a lot. We will come back to that.

“The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus” (John 13:2). Judas had given the devil a foothold. Ephesians 4:27 says “and do not give the devil a foothold.” If you allow the devil to get a foothold, he will establish a beachhead. He can’t take what you don’t give him. The devil’s power over you is based on lies and deception. Believe the lies, act on the lies, and the diabolical, demonic impulse begins to work on your thoughts. That’s why we are told not to fiddle around. “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). Judas allowed a foothold. The foothold became a stronghold. By the end of the night the battle was lost, as John tells us in verse 27 that Satan entered

into Judas. This is the second thing Jesus knew. “For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean” (John 13:11). That’s Judas. Serving himself. Here’s Jesus becoming a servant to others.

“Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him” (John 13:3-5). Jesus knew. What did Jesus know? He knew that He was free. The Father had put all things under His power. He knew the range and scope of His power, which was and is over all things. Jesus knew that. And He knew something else, something so critical I wish I could spend the whole sermon or even a whole series living into it. What did Jesus know? Jesus knew, “that he had come from God and was returning to God.” Who am I? Jesus knew who He was. Where did I come from? Jesus knew He came from the Father. What am I here for? Jesus knew His mission. Where am I going? Jesus knew He was returning home to the Father.

When you know all this, when you understand all this, you are postured to be exactly who God made you to be, you are prepared to do just what God wants you to do, you are empowered to do outstanding, remarkable, world-altering things! Like serving and loving others selflessly. See, Jesus knew all this, “so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist” (John 13:4). So, He got up and made Himself the servant in the room. There was no one else

to wash the feet. They had just come from the street to the dining room. It was a quiet, private dinner; secret even. No outsiders. The disciples had just been arguing on the way about who among them was greatest. None of them were about to grab the towel. Jesus got up, took off His outer garments, stripped Himself down to servant status, wrapped a towel around His waist, and started to wash.

Peter's resistance is understandable. You're my Lord not my servant. But when Jesus explains it's critical, well, Peter wants nothing more than to be with Jesus! "'No,' said Peter, 'you shall never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.' 'Then, Lord,' Simon Peter replied, 'not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!'" (John 13:8-9). By the way, don't say "you shall never" to Jesus. Pro tip. "Jesus, I want to be with you. I'm yours. I'm yours. I want all that you have for me." Interestingly, what Peter never says, nor do any of the others, is "Let me do that. Let me take over for you Jesus." Jesus had to lay that on them quite directly by the end. "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet" (John 13:14).

It isn't just for show that Jesus took on the role of the servant. That's exactly what Jesus did. That's what Jesus came to do. Jesus didn't act as a servant; Jesus became a servant. What did Jesus do with what Jesus knew? Jesus became a servant in order to be a Savior. Paul wrote in Philippians, "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made

in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!" (Philippians 2:5-8).

Jesus knew His hour had come. "Jesus replied, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified'" (John 12:23). Glory is like light. The glory of the Lord shone all around them, it says. Glory shines like light. Light comes from burning. It takes something burning to produce light. The sun is a giant burning ball of gas. A candle produces light by burning the wick and the wax. Even a lightbulb is a controlled burning, the filament between two poles. New lights, LED and all, they're amazing! But it's still a degradation, a giving away, a burning to produce light. Glory comes from giving away. You can think of Jesus' life as a filament suspended between two poles. "I have come from the Father. I return to the Father." He was born miraculously of the Virgin Mary; He leaves miraculously, resurrected and ascended. Between these poles, what did Jesus do with what Jesus knew? He gave Himself away in perfect love. In giving His life away, His glory became light. So it is with you and me, His children. True of Jesus. True for us. We light up by giving ourselves away as Christ did, by giving ourselves away in love.

