



THE DISTINGUISHING MARK OF A DISCIPLE

If you have a pattern of having someone share their *Story of Faith* (life before Jesus, encountering Jesus, life since/lately with Jesus) and/or sharing *Evidences of God's grace*, begin with that, followed by a time of thankful prayer for Christ's work in the individual's life and/or the grace in your lives.

OPENING COMMENT

Jesus said that the distinguishing mark of His disciples would be their Christ-like love for one another. Where Christians love each other as Christ loves us the gospel is displayed and confirmed to the watching world.

What stood out to you from Sunday's text and sermon?

READ THE TEXT: John 13.18-35

¹⁸I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' ¹⁹I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he. ²⁰Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."

²¹After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." ²²The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. ²³One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side, ²⁴so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. ²⁵So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, "Lord, who is it?" ²⁶Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." ²⁸Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. ²⁹Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling



him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

³¹When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. ³²If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once.

³³Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' ³⁴A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Judas' hardness of heart and rejection of Jesus had grown so great that he came to the point of being possessed by Satan. Even the loving final gesture Jesus showed him by serving him a morsel of bread (as the honoured guest) was met not with a softened heart towards the Lord but further hardening.
Does your heart remain soft towards the Lord and are you repentant? Would you characterize the state of your heart as hardening, disengaged, or softening?
2. In verse 21 Jesus said, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me."* We all betray Jesus in some ways. Though not to the extent of Judas, we all rebel against the will and ways of Jesus. What are the areas of your life that you are rejecting Jesus these days? He wants that area of your life too!
3. The Mission of Jesus was to bring glory to God by coming to us so that we could be brought to God. Whoever receives Jesus receives God. And as disciples of Jesus we have received the same mission to make Jesus known (John 20:21; Matthew 28:19-20). How does your life reflect your mission? How might you grow in it? How does our church reflect the mission? How might new campuses in new areas help us in this?
4. Last week we talked about serving one another in the church and serving the world as a means of evangelism. This week we are looking at the more over-arching theme of loving one another, which, the text explains, is a distinguishing mark of a disciple of Jesus. Share some examples of love for one another that you have experienced in the church.
5. Loving one another as Christians is easy until it involves someone hard to love or when it really costs us. What are the situations in your life that are making it the most difficult to live this out? What could you do to redeem the situation?

CONCLUSION

Lets conclude this study with words from Francis Schaeffer from his book, *The Mark of a Christian*:



“Let us be careful, indeed, to spend a lifetime studying to give honest answers...But after we have done our best to communicate to a lost world, still we must never forget that the final apologetic which Jesus gave is the observable love of true Christians for true Christians... This means showing love to our brother in the midst of our differences—great or small—loving our brothers when it costs us something, loving them even under times of tremendous emotional tension, loving them in a way the world can see... Only with this mark may the world know that Christians are indeed Christians and Jesus was sent by the Father.”

SHARE & PRAY

- Share how you can pray for each other in light of what this text has impressed upon you.
- The Lead Team sense the Lord calling Central to plant two local campuses this year (Lake Errock and Promontory). They want your involvement in this exploration by inviting your participation at a Vision Night on Sunday, April 23. Between now and then, we ask for you to commit this to prayer as individuals and as a Life Group.
- Conclude by spending some time praying for one another, for the areas of growth and grace you are seeking, and the needs among you.

