**Livin’ the Life**

**The Marks of a Disciple**

**John 13:31-38**

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David Taylor

We are in our sermon series in the gospel of John, Livin’ the Life, looking at the life of Jesus and the life he promises. We are in John 13, remember, chapters 13 -17, tell us what Jesus did, said and prayed on the night before his death. These chapters tell us what Jesus thought was important to tell his disciples to prepare them for life after Jesus’ earthly ministry. Today’s passage is John 13:31-38, and the sermon is entitled, The Marks of a Disciple, where will be looking what Jesus says are the distinguishing marks or characteristics of a disciple.

**Lives Centered on God’s glory (31-33)**

The disciples cannot see it now but Jesus will be glorified in his death on the cross. Jesus glorified the Father by becoming a man, living an obedient life, going to the cross for sin, then resurrected and exalted to God’s right hand. God the Father is glorified in the cross because he lovingly gave his Son to rescue sinners. The cross is the place where God’s justice against sin and mercy for sinners meet. Christs death on the cross is glorious because it defeated Satan, sin, and death. First, the cross defeated Satan (Col 2:13-15; 1 Jn 3:8-10). Satan had one weapon he wielded that was eternally destructive for us, that is, his accusation before God that you are guilty and should perish with him. When Christ died, that accusation was stripped from his hand and nullified. The cross disarmed and defeated Satan. This means that when you put your faith in Christ, you will never perish. Satan cannot separate you from the love of God in Christ (Rom 8:37-39). Secondly, the cross defeated sin (Rom 4:25; Col 2:14, 1 Pet 2:24). You cannot be good enough to overcome the guilt and debt of your sin. You cannot escape your sin because we are all sinful by nature. Jesus went to the cross as a substitute for you, taking the penalty of your sin upon himself. And third, the cross defeated death because death is the penalty for sin. The consequence of sin is human death, physical death but far more serious is spiritual death or eternal separation from God. The reason so many fear death is that they do not know what is on the other side, or they think that this is all there is so they hold onto this life because this is all there is. Maybe you have no idea what is on the other side but you are hoping it is better than this life but you have no solid reason for such a belief. When you put faith in Christ, death is no longer an enemy nor something fearful because it is the doorway to eternal life and joy. Last, the cross defeated the curse upon the earth. Life here and our relationship with the creation around us is difficult because of sin. There is disease, death, conflict, famine, war, and etc. The cross and the resurrection promises a New Creation. He will one day restore creation to its pristine beauty and perfection, the infection of sin permanently removed. It will be a redeemed and glorified creation filled with a redeemed and glorified people. The cross is glorious because it defeated Satan, sin and death. Only Jesus can overcome Satan, sin and death by the cross so he tells his disciples where I am going you cannot come (33). Jesus must go the cross alone, only he can bear the weight of human sin as the Son of God who is God the Son.

**Lives Lived Loving Each Other (34-35)**

Jesus draws a conclusion about his leaving and their not coming with him, so now I say to you, a new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have love you, you also are to love one another (34). When I leave, you are to love each other as I have loved you. The command to love others is given in the Old Testament (Lev 19:18; see also 1 Jn 2:7-8) so how is it new? It is new for three reasons. First, there is a new standard in Jesus’ example of sacrificial love by going to the cross for our sin. Second, the New Testament gives us a clearer picture of the love of God in sending his Son to save his enemies. Third, loving like Jesus requires the new birth (3:3-5). We can only love like Jesus by coming to faith in Jesus, receiving a new nature, and having the power of Jesus in us. That power is now available because of Jesus’ work on the cross and his resurrection.

Well, what does it mean to love like Jesus? Jesus lived as a man in reliance upon the Father and his life and ministry was the overflow of his life in God. I think this is why Jesus gave the summary to the question about the greatest commandment as summed up in loving God and loving others (Mat 22:36-40). The first command makes the second possible. To love like Jesus means to rely on God by faith in Jesus to strengthen us spiritually so that his love in us overflows in love toward others. Loving others is looking out for their best interests. Loving like Jesus is the work of the gospel in us.

But loving others requires us to be in relationship with one another. Jesus was speaking to the core community of disciples who knew each other well. If we do not know each other then we cannot love each other well. Life Groups are the place for fellowship and developing community that is foundational for loving one another. Life Groups help us get connected in relationship with others. So if you call CCC your home and are not in a Life Group, your next step is to find a Life Group. There are Life Group flyers in the foyer. Life Groups are the place to develop community, friendships and strive to live together as a family. We want our Life Groups to do life together, which requires more than just meet once a week. We have seen groups clean apartments for others, make meals, help them out financially, help each other out, pray for each other, and provide jobs. Not all our groups are there, but that is our goal.

Life Group Questions:

1. Why are John chapters 13-17 so important?
2. Why is the glory of God so important?
3. How do we live lives centered on the glory of God?
4. What three things did the cross defeat for us?
5. What does it mean to love like Jesus?
6. What is the relationship to the two great commandments, love God and love others?
7. How does the first commandment to love God empower the second to love others?
8. How is your life group doing in loving one another?
9. What are ways you can do a better job at loving one another?