

“The Thoughts of Christ” John 13:1-4

Introduction

Nobody really knows you – not on a certain level, anyway. That is, there are things deep in your heart – some thoughts and attitudes and reactions, maybe some priorities, some loves or even some beliefs, that are only known by you. Have you ever had the thought that if people really knew everything about you, they wouldn't like you? That's not such a far-fetched thought, of course, because at least apart from the grace and sanctifying work of God, we are not very lovely. Our battles against the flesh are real, and every day we find that our corrupt nature remains and we break the commands of God in thought, word and deeds. What *would* happen if someone had so much information, so much knowledge, and so much insight, that they knew everything there was to be known about us? Well, that would depend on the nature of the person with the knowledge.

There is such a person. Happily that Person is full of compassion, grace and mercy. Instead of the knowledge of Jesus Christ moving Him to hatred and vengeance toward His children, it moves Him to unthinkable acts of kindness, sacrifice and love. It is because Jesus knows you. He died for you.

[John 13:1-4]

Today we move into a new section of the Gospel of John. Jesus is done with his public

ministry. The cross and His death are imminent. In His final hours on earth He invests solely in the life of His disciples. From chapter 13 through 17 we will find some of the most intimate, personal, and practical help that Jesus gives directly to those who are committed disciples of His. These teachings have long been favorites of God's children because they direct us into deep fellowship and warm union with Christ.

Chapter 13 opens with the John's account of the Last Supper. It's different from the other three accounts. John chose to tell us things the other gospels writers did not. And the beginning of this chapter sets the tone for all that is to follow. In it we find that Jesus is not about to be surprised by the events of the coming hours. As our text makes abundantly clear to us, He knew what was going on. And that knowledge drove Him to complete the work which the Father sent Him to do. This morning we are going to see Seven Things that Jesus knew as He faced the cross – all of which prepared Him for His death. What did Jesus know? What did He think about? How could He continue down a path that we know would bring Him great agony?

1. He Knew His Purpose.

Verse 1 begins with these words: *Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus **knowing that His hour had come***. It's interesting to think about summarizing and reducing all of Jesus' work down to an hour – or more literally this particular time period. There is an important sense in which everything Jesus accomplished is summarized in those few hours on the cross. We in no way want to minimize everything else Jesus accomplished while on earth – His teachings, His miracles, His demonstration of the heart and compassion and love of God, His perfect life. But when all is said and done the testimony of

the gospel is that we *preach Christ and Him crucified*. As Jesus pulled away from the crowds and drew His disciples in close to Himself, He knew His hour had come. His death on the cross was the consummation of all that He came to do to redeem His people.

And this is exactly how we need to view our relationship with Christ. We need to see everything through the cross. Without the cross we are nothing. Without the cross we remain dead in our sins. That's why the Lord's Supper which we will celebrate next week is so important to the Christian. It points us to the cross, to the centrality of the atonement. It is a meal of remembering and of eating where we receive grace from God. Jesus knew that His hour had come. Jesus, as He sat with His disciples at the Passover meal, was thinking about the purpose for which He became a man – death on a cross.

2. He Knew He Was Nearly Finished.

*Jesus knowing that His hour had come and **that He would depart out of this world***. Jesus' work was nearly complete. His mission was almost accomplished and He was about to depart from the world. Sometimes we ask ourselves what we would do if we knew we only had a few months to live. For most of us that is knowledge that we are not privileged to have. But the question is worth asking. Are you living in the light of eternity? Certainly Jesus was. Why was He about to depart of this world? Because He'd accomplished everything the Father had sent Him to do. When will you go to heaven and leave this world? When you have accomplished everything the Father has for you to do. If that is true, then we need to be about that work – not to expedite our departure, but because

we are here for a reason. Don't waste your life with trivial things. Invest your life in the work of your Father's kingdom. Can you honestly say you are living your life that way?

3. He Knew He was driven by love.

*Knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, **having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.*** Is it possible to overemphasize the priority of love? I know we get frustrated sometimes with the general thought and sometimes modern evangelical's focus on the love of God. It seems like it's the only attribute of God that people want to talk about. We can tire of it because that opinion is often expressed to the exclusion of God's justice and holiness and anger and judgment and righteousness. *God would never judge anyone because He is a God of love. God wouldn't get angry with anyone because He is so loving.* And so we are tempted to think we talk too much about the love of God. But the answer is not to see the love of God as less significant. Quite the opposite should be true. Because God is a God of holiness and justice, because we are sinful creatures who have violated His holy standards and law who deserve judgment, we ought to be all the more amazed that God would love us. But, you see, the love of God is not a love that turns the other cheek and makes obedience meaningless. His love drove Him to die for our sins. His love demands holiness and righteousness and justice. It's just that His love led Him to give us His righteousness and to pay the penalty for our sinfulness.

He loved them to the end. It was His love that took Him to the cross for you. Do you know how much Jesus loves you? As He sat around the upper

room about to eat the first communion with His disciples; as He looked into the eyes of Peter, (who was about to deny Him), and James and John (who were often thinking about which one of them was the greatest), and Thomas who was filled with doubts – as He saw these men, it was love that drove Him on.

And as He looks at you today, and as He sees your struggle with anger, as He knows your propensity to worry, as He thinks about your struggles with purity, as He listens to your biting tongue or sees your critical spirit – it is love that motivates Him in His dealings with you. It's that same love that caused Him to lay down His life for you and that now leads Him to sanctify you. If He brings trials into your life, it's because He loves you. If He disciplines you, it's because He loves you. When He speaks to you from the Word, it's out of love.

It says that He loved them *to the end*. The word end means to the point where its purpose is fulfilled. The idea is not that His love has an ending point, but that He loved them to the fullest – until they couldn't be loved any better or any more. In other words, the love Christ has for you is limitless, boundless and timeless. As He saw the disciples that day, His thoughts were filled with love; as He looks at you, if you are in Christ, if you are His, His heart is filled with love.

4. He knew His enemies.

During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him . . . There is no doubt that Jesus knew all about Judas. Back in John 6:70, 71 we read "*Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil? Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.* And again here in 13:11. *For He knew*

the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean.

Jesus knew the battle He was in. He knew His enemies. He'd faced the devil on the mountain. He'd been tempted in all things as we are yet without sin. Why did Satan incite Judas to betray Jesus? He thought he could destroy Christ.

The world hates Christ. And the world hates you for loving Christ. You will have opponents if you live for Jesus. You will have scoffers and tempters and detractors and persecutors, and accusers, and critics, and enemies, and antagonists. But Jesus has overcome them. None of them are greater than Christ. Your goal is not to eliminate all of your enemies. If you do that, you will spend your entire life in doing nothing but fighting people and movements and opponents. Christ has cast them down and will bring about their ultimate judgment. Sometimes you will be called to fight. But some people live simply to battle everyone and everything. Your call is to live for the gospel. It is to live for Christ.

Your goal is to win your enemies to Christ through the gospel or to overcome them through faith in Christ. John wrote about it in his first letter. I John 5:4,5 says *For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?* Your call is to live by faith. That will take you everywhere you need to go.

5. He knew His authority.

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands. Just as surely as Christ was about to suffer and die, Jesus also knew that He was about to be exalted as the Mediatorial King. By virtue of

His death and resurrection the following things were about to be given into His hands.

- All the elect – John 6:37-40
- All of His enemies – Phil 2:9-11 and I Cor. 15:25
- All the kingdoms of the world – Eph. 1:20-23
- Death – I Cor. 15:26, 52-57

He knew the Father had given all things into His hands.

6. He knew His identity.

Knowing He had come forth from God. We've just spent the last few weeks studying the burning question being asked in Jerusalem in these days; *who is this Jesus.* The people were divided. But here John makes a point of telling us that Jesus knew who He was. In fact one of the most delightful things about studying the Gospel of John is studying the identity of Christ. Remember John's purpose in writing this gospel? It was to reveal who Jesus is so that we might believe and have life. And so we have seen Jesus declare that He is the Word, the Light, the Bread, the Truth, the Shepherd, the Door, the Life, the Resurrection and the Judge. In chapter after chapter He has claimed to be the Messiah and announced that He is God. His claims have been so clear that the Pharisees on more than one occasion declared that He was making Himself out to be God and they responded by seeking His death.

Only God Himself could do for us what we needed. Only God Himself could pay for our sin and satisfy His own demands for justice. Only God could give us eternal life and abolish all of our sins. Jesus knew He was God and that knowledge and that reality made all of His decisions clear and purposeful even as He made ready to lay down His life.

7. He knew where He was going.

Knowing that He was going back to God.

Philippians 2 tells us that when He became a man even though He remained God *He did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, so He emptied Himself.* Jesus had laid aside the privileges of Heaven. He laid aside His glory to become a man. But now His work was almost done. Now, He was going to the right hand of His Father. The writer of Hebrews tells us that it was *for the joy set before Him that He endured the cross, despising the shame, so that He might sit down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Jesus is in heaven now where He rules. But not only is He ruling, as we will see soon, He is also preparing a place for us. His loving eye is forever on us. All things He does He does for His glory and for the redemption of His own. One day you will be with Him in heaven. One day you will see Him face to face and you will be like Him.

Because Jesus knew where He was going, He persevered. Because you know where you are going, you too should persevere. Hebrews 12:3, *For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

So these are the things Jesus knew – these are the things He was thinking as the time of His death drew near.

1. He knew His purpose
2. He knew He was almost finished
3. He knew His love for you
4. He knew His enemies
5. He knew His authority
6. He knew His identity
7. He knew His destination.

Because Jesus knew these things, you can know and live for Him. Is there anything in your life more important than Christ? Is there any great purpose than the gospel? Live your life – every moment, every day, every decision and purpose in the light of Christ and His death. For this reason He died for you