

23. John 13:18-38

Getting started

How do you feel when someone let's you down? Think of an example and how you have dealt with it.

Observations

1. Who are 'those I have chosen'? *[Probably just the 12 apostles]*
2. Who might be the disciple Jesus loved? *[Probably the disciple who wrote this gospel. He adopts anonymity to ensure the focus is on Jesus. Views differ on whether this is John the son of Zebedee, another 'John' or someone else.]*
3. Verse 30: What is the effect of John mentioning that 'it was night'? *[John has been working with the contrasting imagery of light and dark since chapter 1. Remember that Nicodemus went to Jesus at night.]*
4. Verses 37-38 set up the wonderful story of the forgiveness and special commissioning of Peter in John 21:15-25. We know that Peter betrayed Jesus three times (see 18:15-27). However, in what way did Peter fulfil his promise to lay down his life for Jesus? *[He worked as a missionary for many years (see Acts and 1 Peter) and tradition has it that he was executed by the Romans in Rome.]*

Interpretation

1. Verse 19: In what way does Jesus' prediction that someone would betray him help his disciples to believe Jesus is 'He'? *[Jesus knew he had to die. This helps the disciples deal with Jesus' death. The death and resurrection were not accidents, but part of God's plan. Jesus both knew and consented to this plan.]*
2. Who are the ones Jesus will send? What does this mean about their authority? *[The 'sent ones' are probably just the apostles, but it does mean the apostles have special authority directly from Jesus. This is significant given their role in the formation of the New Testament and the early church.]*
3. Verse 31: How is Jesus glorified and God glorified in him?
4. Verse 33: Where did Jesus go that his disciples could not go? Why would they go there later? (See verses 36-38).

Implications

1. What are the possible implications of Jesus being troubled in spirit? *[He does not like a close follower to betray him. He does not want to die, i.e. he experiences the challenges of life as a human would, not as a 'superman'.]*
2. Verses 34 and 35 are John's way of conveying the great commandment (c.f. Matthew 22:34-40). How must we love each other? *[By passionate, sacrificial action.]*
3. If you are ever tempted to betray Jesus, what hope is there for you?

Prayer suggestions

1. Praise that God was and is glorified in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.
2. Ask that God may be glorified in all that we do.
3. Ask that we may never deny Jesus.