

## **The Gospel of John - #50 - 01/09/2022 - "God Has It ALL Under Control!" John 13: 21-38**

**Introduction:** IL- J. Vernon McGee used to say, *"This is God's universe and God does things HIS way. You may have a better way, but you don't have a universe!"* God is in total control of this universe and that can be such a comforting, foundational truth for God's people!

In today's text we can learn so much about God's sovereignty because we clearly see:

**Sin personified-** verses 21-30 The setting is in the upper room with His twelve disciples. Jesus was troubled by the fact that in a few hours one of His own would betray Him to the Jewish authorities who were looking for a chance to arrest Him on false charges and see Him put to death. In verse 18 in our previous section Jesus quoted Psalm 41: 9 about betrayal by one of His own and now He declares it very plainly. The fact that one of Christ's disciples would do something so awful and so unlike a true disciple was prophesied in the Old Testament. God knew, just as Jesus knew that night, that Judas would give Him over to the authorities and that burdened the Savior because He loved Judas. Judas was known as Judas Iscariot or Judas from Kerioth, a village way on the south end of Judea. Jesus knew him well and loved him to the end! [13:1] When Jesus announced that one of the twelve would betray Him the other eleven began looking around and wondering and even fearing that maybe it was one of those eleven. They each must have questioned, as Matthew 26: 22 tells us, "Surely not I, Lord?" Here in John 13 it is Peter who motions to John, sitting next to Jesus, to ask Him in quiet tones who the betrayer would be. Jesus tell John that it is the person to whom He gives a morsel of bread dipped in a sauce. It clearly must be that Judas was on the other side of Jesus at the table in order to receive that bread from Jesus- a position of honor in that day when guests were in your home to share a meal. The text says, in verse 27, that as soon as Judas took the bread Satan entered into him. Satan had been motivating Judas to work out a deal with the Jewish leaders to pay him for disclosing where Jesus was. But now Satan took possession of Judas. Jesus told him to carry out his wicked plan quickly. The other disciples didn't understand what that was referring to but Judas certainly knew! And Jesus knew when He would be arrested, beaten and nailed to a cross to bring salvation to all who come to Him in faith, recognising they are sinners in need of salvation's free gift. I believe it is a picture of the awfulness of Judas' sin that our text says that when he left the upper room it was night. For him it was really the blackness of darkness forever! Satan thought, no doubt, that he had won a battle against Jesus but the truth that follows a careful look at God's sovereignty is, "sin can't win!" Jesus knew all that would occur that night, but was still troubled about the open betrayal to come. He loved Judas despite that betrayal. Remember, He washed the feet of ALL twelve of those disciples! IL- William Barclay says of Judas- "He had the behavior of a saint and the heart of a devil." The Gospel accounts remind us that there came a point when Judas felt remorse and gave back his thirty pieces of silver and committed suicide. It is important to remember that remorse is not the same as true repentance. Had there been true repentance in his heart he would no doubt have come to Jesus and asked for His forgiveness. His act of betrayal set in motion all that occurred in the Garden of Gethsemane when the soldiers arrived and put Jesus under arrest following that unloving kiss by Judas to identify the Lord Jesus. The betrayal led to the glorification of Jesus!

**Jesus glorified-** verses 31-33 As soon as Judas went out into the cold, dark night Jesus told the eleven that NOW He was glorified. The whole plan of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit regarding the provision of eternal life through Christ's shed blood was set in motion. Glorification from the Father because of the obedience of the Son, and glorification of the Son because the plan of the Triune Godhead would come to completion through the willing surrender of Jesus to the sovereign will of God. Christ on the cross glorified God the Father on His throne in Heaven. In John 17 as Jesus prayed one last time with and for His disciples, He said, "Father, the time has come. Glorify Your Son that Your Son may glorify You. For You granted Him authority over all people that He might give eternal life to all those You have given to Him." (17: 1, 2) To 'glorify' means to magnify or display and live out His perfect attributes or His majestic character. He deserves all our praise, all our devotion, all our dedicated service, just like those eleven would do, starting in just a couple of months after the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. They devoted themselves to the leading of the Holy Spirit from the Day of Pentecost until their martyrdom or exile years later. If I believe that God is sovereign I too will devote myself to doing the Father's will and giving Him the glory, the praise He deserves! Jesus told His disciples, in verse 33- "My little children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now, 'Where I am going you cannot come'." What a blessing to be called His "little children"! John uses that expression a number of times in his 1 John letter. It is only used here by Jesus in the Gospels. He was referring to His resurrection and ascension back to Heaven. There would come a day, because of Calvary, when those men would die and go to Heaven and their lives would leave a remarkable legacy of living in the power and control of the Holy Spirit residing in them. You and I, if we know Jesus as Savior, will also one day be caught up to Heaven by death or the rapture. The question for us is: will WE leave behind a legacy of submission to the Spirit and a life of prayer through faith in our Sovereign God? **IL-** Autonomous vehicles- free from external control, but the human factor will probably never be eliminated. God doesn't need a human factor from us to make His plans and purposes work, but He graciously chooses to use us- sinners saved by His grace! All glory to God! That gives us reason to love Him more each day and love others His way!

**Love exemplified-** verses 34 and 35 Jesus issues a new command to these men- a command uniquely different from any previous command about love that honors our God of love. The Old Testament law in Leviticus 19: 18 stated- "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD." So, the LORD, the Sovereign God over Israel, commanded the Jews to love AS they love themselves. Here Jesus lays down a new law- "Love one another AS I have loved you!" That is an infinitely higher standard since the time of that Last Supper. Before it was "love your neighbor as yourself" and now, still today, it is "Love one another AS I have loved you!" HIS love includes even His enemies, like the Betrayer himself, sin personified. In Matthew 5: 44, early in His earthly ministry, Jesus said, "I tell you- love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you!" Loving those who love you is not hard at all! But to love all our brothers and sisters in Christ and then to love even those who despise Christians and would love to see them eliminated is quite another! Obeying this new commandment starts with loving our Sovereign God, and there is much in Him to motivate us to love Him. To know that He has a handle on everything that seems to trouble us in our world and

in the news here in our own country. Just as God the Father and Jesus were already aware of the Satanic plan for Judas to turn Jesus over to the authorities, God is in control of all that occurs, positive or negative, and that includes what He permits and what He decrees. Knowing that God is committed to blessing His children means I can have no fear about anything that comes my way and seeks to disrupt my life or that of my family or friends. "Love like I love" is a tall order but being a child of God means I can count on His help to love even the unlovely- the Judases i my life. **IL-** Tina Turner- "What's love got to do with it?" Answer- pretty much everything when it is God's kind of love, the love that sent Jesus willingly to the cross. Hebrews 12: 2 tells us: "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the JOY set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." And one day we can bow before that throne with saints of all ages and with the angelic hosts and thank Him for His demonstration of love. Looking at the account of Peter is our last stop on the road to understanding sovereignty...

**Hearts Identified-** verses 36-38 Simon Peter seemed set on asking questions and making strong statements of commitment to the Lord, like verse 8 earlier in the chapter- "You shall never wash my feet!" And here it starts with a question- "Lord, where are you going?" Yet another question in verse 37- "Lord, why can't I follow you?" And then a very bold statement- "I will lay down my life for You!" I am convinced that Peter's heart was in the right place. He meant well. I believe he knew Jesus was and is the Christ. He considered it an honor to be His disciple. He really did think he would go to the grave for his master. But Jesus knew the heart of Peter perfectly. Yes, he could SAY he would die for his master, but when push came to shove in the courtyard overlooking the part of the temple where they took Jesus, handcuffed, to be questioned by Pilate and the Jewish leaders, Peter would turn weak inside and would deny that he even knew Jesus. And the text of John 18 tells us that the thid time he claimed he didn't know Jesus the rooster crowed, just as Jesus said it would happen! Peter, when he heard that crowing, left the temple area and went out and "wept bitterly". It is certainly sad that Peter denied knowing Jesus, but it is wonderful to realize that Jesus knew Peter and loved him despite the denials. Jesus said to him, in Luke 22: 31- "Simon, Simon, Satan has desired to sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." Yes, Jesus knew Peter would deny Him, but He also knew Peter would become the leader among the brethren when the church began in Acts 2. If we are honest about it, we know that in some ways we deny the Lord too: we fail to pray to the Sovereign Lord and in so doing we deny that God hears and answers prayer; we don't read our Bibles and deny that the Bible's precepts are more powerful than my own concepts; we worry about anything and everything and in effect deny the Bible's claim that "nothing is impossible with God!" **IL-** Someone has illustrated sovereignty with icebergs small and large. The small ones are often moved in one direction by the surface winds. The larger ones move often in the opposite direction because of powerful undercurrents. Those undercurrents represent the deep flow of God's love and His total control over His universe! God has a plan for your life- pray to know what that plan is and thank Him for it, then live it out and magnify His sovereignty!