

Readings

Scripture

¹Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ²During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God...

- John 13:1-3 (*English Standard Version*)

Reflection

As you see more clearly that your vocation is to be a witness to God's love in this world, and as you become more determined to live out that vocation, the attacks of the enemy will increase. You will hear voices saying, "You are worthless, you have nothing to offer, you are unattractive, undesirable, unlovable." The more you sense God's call, the more you will discover in your own soul the cosmic battle between God and Satan. Do not be afraid. Keep deepening your conviction that God's love for you is enough, that you are in safe hands, and that you are being guided every step of the way. Don't be surprised by the demonic attacks. They will increase, but as you face them without fear, you will discover that they are powerless.

What is important is to keep clinging to the real, lasting, and unambiguous love of Jesus. Whenever you doubt that love, return to your inner spiritual home and listen there to love's voice. Only when you know in your deepest being that you are intimately loved can you face the dark voices of the enemy without being seduced by them. The love of Jesus will give you an ever-clearer vision of your call as well as of the many attempts to pull you away from that call. The more you are called to speak for God's love, the more you will need to deepen the knowledge of that love in your own heart. The farther the outward journey takes you, the deeper the inward journey must be. Only when your roots are deep can your fruits be abundant. The enemy is there, waiting to destroy you, but you can face the enemy without fear when you know that you are held safe in the love of Jesus.

- Henri Nouwen, *The Inner Voice of Love* (p. 93-94)

Sermon Outline

Now Is the Time

John 13:1-3

Table Talk in an Upper Room

Brad Anderson

Now is the time to learn how to serve... (John 13:1-3)

How is Jesus calling us to serve in this hour?

To serve with words... (John 13:1-3)

To serve with deeds... (John 13:1-3)

To serve in the presence of an enemy... (John 13:1-3)

To serve in the context of a meal... (John 13:1-3)

Reflection Questions (taken in part from the Serendipity Study Bible for Groups)

- Who in your family or friend groups has the best sense of timing? (Think of timing in a variety of contexts: humor, care, encouragement, service, etc.)
- Read John 2:1-11. As a "sign" of deeper significance (John 2:11), what is going on beneath this simple surface story: To what "time" is Jesus referring (Read also again John 2:4 and then read John 7:6-8, John 12:23, John 13:1-3, John 17:1)?
- From John 13:1, 3 and 11, what things did Jesus know? In light of that knowledge, what is especially impressive about verses 4-5?
- How has Jesus served you with his words, with his deeds, in the presence of an enemy, and in the context of a meal?
- If you knew it was the last night with those you dearly loved, how would you spend it? Who would you nominate for the Mother Teresa Award in your family or church for selfless Christ-like love?
- In your early spiritual life, who was one of the people that demonstrated and defined what service means to you? How have those memories been replayed in your life as you seek to serve others?