

The Hour Has Come

John 13.1

John's Gospel turns a corner in John 13.1. Until now, John's focus is on believing in Jesus for eternal life. That was evangelism! But now, in the hours before His death, Jesus addresses those who have *already* believed in Him. This is all about fellowship, and Jesus loves them to the end.

Identity and Evangelism: Themes in John 1-12

- Jesus is God (the Son of God, the Creator, Messiah)
- Jesus' message and miracles display His deity
- All who believe in Jesus receive eternal life
- People from all backgrounds believe in Jesus!
- Jesus words and actions point to His coming death

Intimacy and Fellowship: Themes in John 13-21

What we will learn about Jesus' love...

- It is for all people (even those who will betray Him!)
- It is demonstrated most completely in life's hard times
- It is unending – nothing can defeat it
- It is life-changing – the Holy Spirit comes
- It is the guarantee of our assurance of eternal life

“Relationship puts us into the family of God, but fellowship permits the life of that family to shine through us. That is what marks the difference between Christians.”

1. John 13 is a significant ‘hinge’ in the narrative of John's Gospel. Up to this point, John has given a purposeful account of Jesus' life and ministry, telling of Him travelling throughout the land, teaching and performing miracles to display His deity and get people to believe in Him. Think over the first twelve chapters of John: What events stand out in your mind? What encounters are most memorable? How does Jesus make His *identity* – who He is – unavoidable to His audience? How does He get people to believe in Him?
2. While the focus is on Jesus' identity and getting people to believe in Him in John 1-12, there are a few ‘hints’ at the difference between being in a relationship with God – having eternal life by believing in Jesus, and being in intimate fellowship with the Lord. Two of these occur in John 12: In verses 23-26, what does Jesus say will result in a believer being honored by God? In verses 42-43, what did some believing Pharisees show by their behavior? For discussion: Could this fear of reprisal and refusal to confess Jesus publicly explain why Jesus “was not entrusting Himself” to the believers in John 2.23-25?
3. Now it's time to look ahead. John 13-16, commonly called the Upper Room Discourse, provides rich instruction on the Christian life. John introduces his account of this time in John 13.1. We read that Jesus knew “His hour had come.” Compare this statement with John 2.4; 7.6, 30; 8:20; and 12.23. What does the repetition of this phrase suggest about God's sovereign plan, and Jesus' intentional management of His ministry?
4. Love is a major subject in John 13-21, but is only rarely referenced in John 1-12. Why do you suppose this is? Who was Jesus speaking with *exclusively* in John 13-16? Did they believe in Him? What brings a person into a *relationship* with God? What is the distinction between being in a *relationship* with God, and being in *fellowship* with Him? Which is Jesus addressing in John 13-16?