2.

Love One Another: The Johannine Love Command in the Farewell Discourse

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A cursory reading of the Johannine literature makes it immediately clear that love is an abiding theme across the entire corpus. The various terms for love (*agapaō*, *phileō*, and their cognates) appear over one hundred times in the Fourth Gospel and Johannine Epistles.[1] Though there is little dispute among scholars as to the importance of this theme for appreciating the message(s) of the Johannine literature, there is significant debate over how John's vision of love is to be understood. In the opening chapter, I presented the various scholarly approaches to the question of John's ethics, and there I discussed the dispute over whether John's ethics are to be understood as sectarian and exclusive or having universal implications. Nowhere is that debate more important than in an examination of John's love command.

Amid the sea of voices that have dismissed the Johannine love command as of little concern for the broadest of Christian audiences, Ernst Käsemann has written that "there is no indication in John that love for one's brother would also include love toward

1. The noun *agapē* appears seven times in the Gospel and twenty-one times in the Epistles, while the verbal form appears thirty-seven times in the Gospel and thirty-one times in the Epistles. The noun *philos* appears six times in the Gospel and three times in the Epistles, while the verbal form appears thirteen times in the Gospel.

one's neighbour."[2] Rather, he avers, love in the Fourth Gospel is directed only to members of the inward-looking group. Such assertions require that we either ignore seemingly universal statements about God's love for the world (e.g., John 3:16–17), or that we reinterpret such statements in light of form- and redaction-critical speculations about the development of the text. For his part, Käsemann engages in the latter approach, insisting that such universal statements belong to an earlier stratum of the tradition and fail to reflect authentic Johannine thinking. The current chapter proceeds under the assumption that the text of the Fourth Gospel reached its final form at a point in time for numerous reasons—among them is certainly the belief that the text had a coherent and unified message to relay to early Christians.[3] Thus Käsemann's approach requires some refutation, though it is neither my aim to provide, nor is there space here to discuss, each instance in which the love command arises in the Fourth Gospel.[4] Instead, I wish to undertake a more particular task with a more specific focus. While I grant that sectarian elements are present within the Fourth Gospel, the evangelist also uses cosmic language throughout to speak of Jesus and the implications of his descent, mission, vocation, and glorification. We will focus here on the narrative rhetoric that arises from an analysis of the *final form* of text rather than assigning certain statements within the Gospel to other strata or stages in the development of the Johannine tradition.[5] This will allow us to consider everything within the Gospel as an expression of genuine Johannine thought (contra Käsemann). Before we begin, it is also important to note that a great deal has been written about the role of love in the Johannine literature. This chapter

2. Ernst Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John in the Light of Chapter 17*, trans. Gerhard Krodel (London: SCM, 1968), 59.

3. My concern in critiquing Käsemann, and those who accept his argument, is one of methodology. Like the early narrative critics who rejected the endless speculations of redaction criticism, I prefer to start with what we have (the final form of the text) rather than what we do not have (various hypothetical editions with differing theological assumptions). An approach that engages in such speculation necessarily engages in a type of special pleading that erases or, at the very least, ignores all the evidence that does not seem to fit the theory of composition. This is exactly the sort of move Käsemann makes when considering seemingly universal texts like John 3:16–17.

4. For a recent, comprehensive treatment of the subject, see Francis J. Moloney, *Love in the Gospel of John: An Exegetical, Theological, and Literary Study* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013).

5. I do not intend this comment as a rejection of the valuable insights provided by form and redaction criticism; I merely want to highlight the differences involved in treating the text as a complete utterance vis-à-vis treating only specific passages in isolation.

does not purport to be the final word on the subject, but rather an interaction with the text of the Fourth Gospel in light of the history of reception. In what follows, I will consider Jesus's words and actions throughout the so-called Farewell Discourse (John 13–17); this includes a consideration of the footwashing in John 13, Jesus's directions to his disciples in John 15, and the "high priestly prayer" of John 17. Understanding John as a narrative Christology, we will read these passages with a view to examining the unfolding narrative rhetoric to demonstrate the universality and normativity of John's love command.[6]

THE EXTENT OF THE FAREWELL DISCOURSE (13:1–17:26)

Before I begin my analysis of three passages from the Gospel's Farewell Discourse, it will prove important to establish briefly the literary parameters of this section of the narrative, since I will contend that the unit makes important contributions to our understanding of Jesus's love command in John. There is no little debate about the extent of the Farewell Discourse,[7] though it is widely recognized that some or all of John 13–17 constitutes a coherent farewell address meant to prepare the disciples for Jesus's departure.[8] This sort of

6. This term was first used by Robert Tannehill, "The Gospel of Mark as Narrative Christology," *Semeia* 16 (1979): 57–95. Understanding the Gospels as narrative Christologies forces us to engage the text as a whole utterance with greater attention to narrative dynamics; only through the unfolding story are we able to understand how major themes are developed and presented from beginning to end.

7. Some see the entirety of 13:1–17:26 as constituting John's Farewell Discourse; see, e.g., Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 542; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 2 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 1:893; Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, SP (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 370. Among those who see the discourse beginning at 13:31, see Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Gospel of John*, NCB (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 240; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, 3 vols. (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 3:6–89; and D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 476; see also Bruce Woll, "The Departure of 'The Way': The First Farwell Discourse in the Gospel of John," *JBL* 99 (1980): 225–39. Both Robert Kysar, *John*, ACNT (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986), 219; and Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 481; see the discourse beginning in 14:1 and extending through v. 17. Other proposals include 13:31–16:33; see Scott E. Kellum, *The Unity of the Farewell Discourse: The Literary Integrity of John 13:31–16:33*, JSNTSup 256 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2004).

8. "Readers of John 13–17 quickly learn that this seemingly disorganized assemblage of materials makes excellent sense when viewed as a farewell address" (Neyrey, *Gospel of John*, 238).

farewell address is not uncommon in ancient literature.[9] Jerome Neyrey outlines the nine elements of a typical farewell address, all of which are present in John 13–17: (1) announcement of death or departure, (2) review of the patriarch's life, (3) relationships to be maintained, (4) revelations of beneficial things to come, (5) predictions of future hard times, (6) exhortation to practice a group-specific virtue and to avoid a group-specific vice, (7) successor named, (8) legacy bestowed, and (9) occasionally a final prayer or blessing.[10] It is also critical to note Neyrey's clarification that these nine elements *do not follow a specific chronology* in any given farewell address. In fact, his reconstruction of Jesus's farewell address locates these common elements in a very different order from what is listed above.

We need to acknowledge that some commentators exclude the first two units of chapter 13 (vv. 1–17; vv. 18–30) from the Farewell Discourse, insisting that they do not represent true *discourse material*. This essay will treat all of chapters 13–17 (with specific emphasis on 13:1–17; 15:1–17; 17:1–26) as part of the same literary unit; I will argue that this choice makes sense, especially in light of the common elements from Neyrey's list. In particular—and since some exclude the unit from the Farewell Discourse—Jesus's behavior in 13:1–17 amounts to both an exhortation to practice a group-specific virtue (number 6) and the bestowal of a legacy (number 8). Thus I will argue that 13:1–17 is an integral part of the wider unit, consisting of 13:1–17:26.[11]

JESUS'S "EXAMPLE" (*HYPODEIGMA*) IN JOHN 13:1–17

Those who have been dismissive of the Fourth Gospel's value for constructing normative Christian ethics have consistently pointed to the absence of clear imperatives like those we see in the Pauline literature. However, at the outset of Jesus's Farewell Discourse, the narrator describes a scene in which Jesus is said to love his disciples "to the end" (*eis telos*, v. 1) and provides for them an enduring example

9. There are two examples of such discourses in the Pentateuch—the farewell addresses of Jacob in Genesis 49 and Moses in Deuteronomy 32. The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs is a helpful example of this type of farewell speech, and may be an ideal paradigm for understanding the genre.

10. Neyrey, *Gospel of John*, 239.

11. On the literary unit of 13:1–38, see Francis J. Moloney, "The Literary Unity of John 13,1–38," *ETL* 91 (2015): 33–53.

(*hypodeigma*, v. 15). In this section of the discourse, we will see that this *hypodeigma*, though not an imperative in the purest sense, functions within the narrative as an implicit command to Jesus's disciples, and one that extends beyond the particular behaviors associated with footwashing.[12]

The scene is set just before the Passover (v. 1a), when Jesus knows his hour (*hōra*) is approaching.[13] We read that Jesus loved his own who were in the world "to the end" (*eis telos*, v. 1d). This phrase, like many throughout the Gospel, likely carries several different shades of meaning.[14] It can be used to suggest that Jesus's love endures to the very end (viz., his crucifixion). However, *eis telos* can also indicate the ultimate "goal" or "aim" of an activity and can thus be understood to describe Jesus loving his own "fully" or "completely." Taken in this way, the phrase indicates that the proleptic activity this statement anticipates—Jesus's washing of his disciples' feet—is an embodiment of the fullest or most complete expression of his love for them. This is an important point insofar as it lays the groundwork for our appreciation of the overarching christological and ethical significance of the footwashing.

Knowing that his departure is near, Jesus demonstrates the extent of his love toward the disciples while providing them with a model on which to base their future service of others in his name. The narrator provides an internal view here, particularly by providing details related to the thoughts and perceptions of both Judas and Jesus, and thus looking forward to the impending battle between light and darkness as the events of the evening move forward.[15] First, the narrator reports that the devil (*diabolos*) has already put it in mind that Judas Iscariot should betray Jesus. This statement is meant to recall Jesus's earlier comment to his disciples: "Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? But one of you is a devil" (*kai ex hymōn heis diabolos estin*,

12. In my discussion of John 17, I will connect the claim that the *hypodeigma* is an implicit imperative for Jesus's disciples to the claim that all disciples of all future time periods are in view.

13. Jesus's "hour" (*hōra*) is a particularly important theme in John. It is often a proleptic reference to his crucifixion and resurrection. Jesus has previously spoken about his "hour" in 2:4; 4:21, 23; 5:25, 28; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27.

14. See Christopher W. Skinner, "An Alien Tongue: The Foreign Language of the Johannine Jesus," in *Reading John*, Cascade Companions (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2015), 68–95.

15. For more on light/darkness, see the chapter titled "Light and Darkness" in Craig Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 2003), 141–74.

6:70).[16] Commentators recognize a Semitic idiom in verse 2 ("to put in mind"),[17] which is best expressed in C. K. Barrett's translation: "the devil had already *made up his mind* that Judas should betray him."[18] R. Alan Culpepper points out that the heart of the devil rather than the heart of Judas is the object of "put it into" (*ballō eis*).[19] At the same time, the audience learns that Jesus knows "everything has been handed over to him by the Father," and that just as he has come from the Father (see 1:1–2) he will soon return to him. This sets up a critical contrast between the heart/mind of the devil (v. 2) and the heart/mind of Jesus (vv. 1, 3).[20] Later, in verse 20, Satan will enter into Judas and the two worlds will clash. God's design is being worked out in Jesus while Satan's design is worked out in the actions of Judas.

In verse 4 Jesus rises from the meal, removes his outer garments (*tithēsin ta himatia*), and takes a towel (*labōn lention*) to wrap around his waist. The narrator's use of *tithēmi* and *lambanō* (here and in v. 12) calls attention back to the image of the Good Shepherd in 10:11–18. There, Jesus announced that the Good Shepherd lays down his life (*tēn psychēn autou tithēsin*, 10:11, 15, 17, 18) in order to take it back up again (*hina palin labō autēn*, 10:17, 18). The use of *tithēmi* also recalls the words of Jesus in 11:34, when he inquires about the burial place of Lazarus: "Where have they put him?" (*pou tetheikate auton*). These linguistic cues here in verse 4 link to the Good Shepherd discourse (where there is veiled reference to the "laying down" and "taking up" of life) and the encounter with Lazarus (where death and burial are explicit) and looks forward to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, thus signaling his actions here as *symbolic and prophetic*, and

16. All translations of ancient texts in this chapter are mine unless otherwise specified.

17. We see this construction in Job 22:22 (LXX): *kai analabe ta rhēmata autou en kardia sou* (and lay up these words in your heart); the corresponding Hebrew phrase in the MT is *wəśîm bilbābekā*. Another example from the LXX that does not have a counterpart in the MT is 1 Sam 29:10: *kai logon loimon mē these en kardia sou* (and do not put an evil word in your heart).

18. C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 439. See also Schnackenburg, *Gospel according to St. John*, 3:6–17; Morris, *Gospel according to John*, 614; Francis J. Moloney, *Glory Not Dishonor: Reading John 13–21* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 1n39; See also R. Alan Culpepper, "The Johannine *hypodeigma*: A Reading of John 13," *Semeia* 53 (1991): 136. Brown translates the idiom as "*The devil had already induced Judas*, son of Simon, the Iscariot, to betray Jesus" (Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John XIII–XXI*, AB 29a (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), 548) (emphasis added).

19. Culpepper, "Johannine *hypodeigma*," 136.

20. Here I take the terms "to know," *eidōn* (used in reference to Jesus in vv. 1, 3) and "heart," *kardia* (used in reference to the devil in v. 2) to imply perception or cognition.

highlighting the ultimate extent of his service. On this point, Barrett comments, "When Jesus lays aside his garments in preparation for his act of humility and cleansing he foreshadows the laying down of his life."[21] This is a point which must be emphasized. The footwashing is *symbolic* in that it provides a depiction of sacrificial self-giving, and *prophetic* in that it anticipates *Jesus's ultimate act* of sacrificial self-giving—his death on behalf of the world.

Jesus begins in earnest to wash and dry the disciples' feet (v. 5), which leads to a brief exchange with an incredulous and uncomprehending Peter (vv. 6–9). In the course of their conversation, Jesus comments that though Peter fails to understand now, he will understand in the future. This present-future schema appears in numerous passages throughout the Gospel, where the audience is invited to reflect on the narrated events from two perspectives: one related to the real-time narration of events and one from a distinctly post-resurrection perspective. When Jesus tells Peter that he will understand *in the future*, he is pointing forward to a time when all that has happened will be explained by and interpreted through the lens of resurrection. Peter's misplaced literalism, and in fact initial rejection of the footwashing (see vv. 6, 8a), misses the larger point that this symbolic and prophetic action has consequences beyond a particular time and a particular type of service. Emphasis should not be placed on the "here and now" but on the future; likewise, emphasis should not be placed on a particular type of service (viz., the literal practice of footwashing), but rather on various forms of sacrificial self-giving. This will become clearer only in a future, post-resurrection perspective.

Jesus's explanation and instruction at the close of the footwashing reinforce our understanding of this event as both symbolic and prophetic (vv. 12–17). It is somewhat ironic that Jesus asks his disciples—who are often represented by the voice of Peter—if they understand what he has just done for them. It seems unlikely that they have understood, given Peter's protestations and requests during his dialogue with Jesus in verses 6–9. Jesus, their Lord (*kyrios*) and Teacher (*didaskolos*), instructs them to continue washing one another's feet (v. 14b),[22] but if we stop there in our interpretation of Jesus's actions

21. Barrett, *Gospel according to St. John*, 439. Brown (*Gospel according to John XIII–XXI*, 551) also sees potential parallels between the present text and 10:11, 15, 17, 18.

22. On the suggestion that this *hypodeigma* is to be regarded as a literal command to continue the footwashing, see the discussion in J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 735–36.

we will be guilty of the same type of misplaced literalism displayed by characters throughout the Fourth Gospel.[23] An agenda of outward behavior that is characterized by sacrificial self-giving—beyond the simple behavioral parameters associated with footwashing—is at the heart of this command. "Jesus' instruction is a call to his disciples to repeat in their lives what he has done for them. He has given them the example of a loving gift of self in love, symbolized by the footwashing, which they must now repeat."[24] This point becomes clearer in verse 15: "I have given you an example [*hypodeigma*], in order that, just as I have done for you, you should also do."

The term *hypodeigma*, translated variously as "example" and "model," appears in several contexts associated with noble death and righteous behavior, and provides for the disciples and the audience a link between the sacrificial self-giving of the footwashing and that of the death of Jesus.[25] That Jesus's death should be connected to the example of footwashing as the premier display of sacrificial self-giving is not a new suggestion, and it fits neatly within the cumulative narrative rhetoric of the Gospel to this point. Having learned of Jesus's "arrival" through incarnation (see 1:14), the audience is now being systematically prepared for the departure of Jesus in his return to the Father. This departure is the telos of Jesus's ministry, which will result in the sending of the Paraclete, who will further prepare the disciples to live as Jesus instructed and as the Father commands. The footwashing is not to be regarded as an end unto itself but as a prophetic and symbolic event that anticipates and invites the disciples into the mode of sacrificial self-giving realized in the crucifixion. Barrett's comment here is instructive:

> There stands first a symbolic narrative, the washing of the disciples' feet, which prefigures the crucifixion itself, and in doing so points the way to

23. On this and other elements of distinctly Johannine speech, see the classic work Paul D. Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985); see also my chapter, "An Alien Tongue: The Foreign Language of the Johannine Jesus," in *Reading John*, 68–95.

24. Moloney, *Glory Not Dishonor*, 16.

25. 2 Macc 6:28: "I will leave the young with a noble example [*hypodeigma*] of how to die willingly and nobly for the revered and holy laws"; 4 Macc 17:22–23: "And through the blood of the devout ones and their death as an atonement, divine providence preserved Israel, which has previously been afflicted. For the tyrant Antiochus, when he saw the courage of their virtue and their endurance under torture, proclaimed them to his soldiers as an example [*hypodeigma*] for their own endurance"; Sir 44:16: "Enoch pleased the Lord, and was translated, since he was an example [*hypodeigma*] of repentance to all generations." For more on these parallels, see Culpepper, "Johannine *hypodeigma*," 142–43.

> the interpretation of the crucifixion. The public acts of Jesus on Calvary, and his private act in the presence of his disciples, are alike in that each is an act of humility and service, and that each proceeds from the love of Jesus for his own.[26]

While I will not examine the remainder of John 13 here, I do want to highlight several verses that help to reinforce the interpretation advanced above. Having both provided an example for his disciples (vv. 1–17) and celebrated a final meal with them (vv. 18–30), Jesus will begin to speak in detail about his departure. In verses 34–35 he says, "I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love another. By this everyone will know you are my disciples, if you love one another." Three times in the span of these two verses Jesus instructs his disciples to love another, and in that same context he notes, "as I have loved you." There can be little doubt that this hearkens back to the image of 13:1, where Jesus loves his disciples *eis telos*. By imitating the manner in which he has demonstrated his own love toward them—what I have termed sacrificial self-giving—the disciples will be a light to all humanity. Their outward displays of love will have potentially universal implications, causing all to take notice. This is the first indication in the Farewell Discourse that the implications of such love extend beyond the insider group of the Twelve. We will see this emphasis again in John 17. For now, I will close this section with a brief summary of my argument:

1. The footwashing symbolizes a service to others and points forward to the crucifixion, Jesus's definitive act of sacrificial service.
2. Against that backdrop, Jesus's command that his disciples "do as I have done for you" (v. 15) extends beyond the literal act of footwashing and implies ongoing service and sacrifice.
3. Thus the love Jesus displays and commands his disciples to display—what I have consistently termed "sacrificial self-giving"—is the foundational expression of the oneness he shares with the Father and wishes to share with them (see 15:1–5).

26. Barrett, *Gospel according to St. John*, 346.

BEARING FRUIT BY SHOWING LOVE IN JOHN 15

This section of the Farewell Discourse is largely concerned with the oneness of the Father and Son and the concomitant interconnectedness of Jesus's followers to both Father and Son. In my consideration of John 13:1–17 I placed particular emphasis on the term *hypodeigma* (example, v. 15) as a way of helping us come to terms with some of the ethical implications of the Farewell Discourse. Here in 15:1–17, I will again single out specialized Johannine vocabulary.

As this new section of the discourse begins, Jesus utters the first of his final two predicated "I am" statements, which is often rendered: "I am the true vine" (*egō eimi hē ampelos hē alēthinē*; similarly in v. 5, *egō eimi hē ampelos*).[27] Jesus uses the images of an *ampelos* (often rendered "vine"), *geōrgos* ("gardener"), and *klēmata* (usually rendered "branches") to explain further the relationship between himself and the Father as well his own oneness with his disciples. The Father is the gardener who prunes the tree. This image is clear. However, though almost universally rendered as "vine" and "branches" respectively, Chrys Caragounis makes a compelling argument that *ampelos* more properly denotes a "vineyard," while *klēma* denotes "vine" in pre-Christian Hellenistic Greek.[28] The image of Israel as vineyard is a common one in the related literature, and Caragounis's understanding likely comports better with what we know of ancient viticultural practices.[29] Irrespective of the specific nuance we apply to each term, the relationships are the same: the Father is the gardener, and Jesus is the entity in which his followers are rooted.

Perhaps the most important term in these first few verses is the distinctively Johannine verb *menō* (abide, remain).[30] This verb is the unifying element across verses 1–11, a unit that consists of three subsections: verses 1–5a (abiding in Jesus), verses 5b–8 (implications of abiding in Jesus), and verses 9–11 (abiding in Jesus's love). What does it mean to "abide" in Jesus? Craig Keener notes that the "image of

27. Previous statements have appeared in 6:35, 41, 48, 51 ("bread of life"/"living bread"), 8:12 ("light of the world"), 10:7, 9 ("the door"), 10:11, 14 ("good shepherd"), 11:25 ("resurrection and the life"), and 14:6 ("the way, the truth, and the life").

28. Chrys C. Caragounis, "Vine, Vineyard, Israel, and Jesus," *SEÅ* 65 (2000): 201–14.

29. See the helpful discussion of the conceptual background behind John 15 in Keener, *Gospel of John*, 2:988–98.

30. The term appears fifty-three times in the Johannine literature: thirty-three times in the Fourth Gospel, eighteen times in 1 John, and twice in 2 John. *Menō* appears only forty-nine times total across the remainder of the NT.

organic union works well for (and even goes beyond) the idea of intimate relationship. . . . As they continued in this union, [the disciples] would know Jesus better (15:15; 16:13–15) and hence begin to reflect the 'fruit' of his character (15:8–9)."[31] An organic oneness exists between Jesus and the Father. They "abide" in one another. This same relationship is being offered to the disciples, but they *must choose to abide* in order that they will bear fruit.

There is a shift from the indicative in verses 1–3 to the imperative in verses 4–17. Clear implications flow from the positional relationship the disciples have with Jesus. This is not a relationship of sheer privilege; there are responsibilities involved. Verses 4–8 are explicitly focused on the bearing of fruit. We see another reference to the manner in which Jesus has loved his disciples in verse 9: "as the Father has loved me, so have I loved you." The oneness shared by the Father and Son is offered to the disciples if they remain in his love. That "bearing fruit" in this context is ultimately about the expression of love becomes clearer in verses 12–17, where love is the primary emphasis, and the mode of expression is through sacrificial self-giving. It seems clear that verses 12–17 form a coherent subunit as the two framing verses form an *inclusio* with the explicit statement "love one another."

Jesus again instructs the disciples to "love one another as I have loved you" (v. 12). This immediately recalls the words of 13:1, 34–35. How has Jesus demonstrated love for them? He has loved them, *eis telos*—fully and completely. Above, I argued that in the footwashing we saw a symbolic and prophetic action that anticipates the crucifixion. Here, Jesus makes that teaching explicit: "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down [*thē*] his life for his friends." Notice again the use of *tithēmi*, as in 10:11–18, 11:34, and 13:4. Jesus calls directly for the sort of sacrificial self-giving that was previously only implied in the *hypodeigma* of 13:1–17.

The relationship between the disciples and Jesus is one of friendship, but only insofar as they continue to do what he has commanded (v. 14). Such behavior is the expression of the oneness shared both by Father and Son and by the disciples and Jesus. By virtue of this behavior and their standing before the Father, the disciples are no longer to be called servants, but friends of God (v. 15). Jesus has revealed the Father to them, as was promised in the Prologue (see 1:18, *ho ōn eis ton kolpon tou patros ekeinos exegēsato*), and has chosen them to bear

31. Keener, *Gospel of John*, 2:999.

fruit (v. 16). That fruit, as I discussed above, is displaying love, and not just any type of love but an ultimate gift—a willingness to lay down one's life. Their fruit must be that of sacrificial self-giving. Jesus punctuates this section with a concise restatement of his overall point: "This is my commandment, that you love one another" (v. 17).

The following summary enumerates the highlights from my study of John 15:1–17:

1. The same oneness shared by the Father and Son is available to those who "abide" in Jesus.
2. This "abiding" in Jesus is the means by which the disciples bear fruit.
3. Bearing fruit is primarily actualized by showing love to one another (viz., "their friends"; *hoi philoi autou*).
4. And finally, love, as defined here by Jesus, is the willingness to lay down one's life for one's friends—a picture of the same sacrificial self-giving displayed by Jesus (in the *hypodeigma* of 13:1–7, and in the crucifixion).

JESUS'S PRAYER IN JOHN 17

Even a casual reading of the so-called high priestly prayer of John 17 leads to the recognition that the prayer is easily divided into three parts: (1) Jesus's prayer for himself (vv. 1–5), (2) Jesus's prayer for his disciples (vv. 6–19), and (3) Jesus's prayer for the disciples of all ages (vv. 20–26).[32] I am concerned here chiefly with the third part of the prayer insofar as it bears on my contention that there is an underlying universality in the love language used in the Fourth Gospel and specifically in the Farewell Discourse. I will look very briefly at verses 1–5 and verses 6–19 before moving on to a more in-depth consideration of verses 20–26.

The first two portions of Jesus's prayer rehearse themes that have already appeared in the rest of the Gospel and in the Farewell Discourse. These themes include the glorification of the Son, Jesus's return to the Father, the intimacy and oneness of Father and Son,

32. In his treatment, Moloney (*Love in the Gospel of John*, 122–33) departs from the more traditional structure: Jesus prays to the Father (17:1–8); Jesus prays to the "Holy Father" (17:9–19); Jesus prays to the Father (17:20–26).

and the potential for persecution. The first part of the prayer reflects Jesus's awareness that his hour—the time of his "glorification"—is approaching (v. 1). Armed with this knowledge, he prays that he would be granted glory in the presence of the Father in the same way he has glorified the Father by completing his work on earth (vv. 4–5).

The second part of the prayer is focused on the Twelve. While it is not possible here to be certain whether Jesus is referring to his immediate band of followers or all of those who are currently regarded as "disciples" in the story, I am more persuaded by the former.[33] Jesus "reminds" the Father that he has revealed God to the disciples and prays that the disciples be protected as they continue in the world after his departure. If the disciples are to remain in the world and continue abiding (15:1–5), they will need a special enablement from the Father. They have been sent by Jesus, just as Jesus was sent by the Father. After Jesus departs, the disciples will now be the revealers of Father and Son in the same way Jesus has been the revealer of the Father (see 1:18).

Before moving on to a consideration of the final part of Jesus's prayer, I want to pause briefly to focus on several statements in this middle section that may seem to contradict the larger point I have been advancing in this chapter—that there is an inherent and underlying universality in Jesus's love commands across the Farewell Discourse. While Jesus prays for his disciples he makes the following statements about "the world":

> 17:9: I am praying for them [the disciples]. I am not praying for the **world**, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.
>
> 17:14: I have given them [the disciples] your word and the **world** has hated them, because they are not of the world just as I am not of the **world**.
>
> 17:16: They [the disciples] are not of the **world**, even as I am not of the **world**.

33. For most of the Gospel, Jesus's followers are called *mathētai*. John appears to have no knowledge of a tradition of the "apostles" (*hoi apostoloi*), which is Luke's preferred term, and little concern for the tradition of "the Twelve" (*hoi dōdeka*), which is one of Mark's preferred terms. In John 6, however, many disciples (*polloi mathētai*) depart after Jesus's "hard word" (6:60), at which point Jesus turns to "the Twelve" (6:67). I am persuaded that the Twelve are in view here in 17:6–19.

These three statements seem to indicate Jesus's disdain for or hostility toward the world, but is this really the case? Perhaps the best-known verse in the Gospel of John announces God's love *for* and Jesus's role in bringing eternal life *to* the world (3:16–17). But there does seem to be some ambiguity in Jesus's various statements about "the world." For instance, in the context of this same prayer, Jesus references "the world" in the following verses:

> 17:11: And I am no longer in the **world**, but they are still in the **world**, and I am coming to you.
>
> 17:13: I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am in the **world**, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within themselves.
>
> 17:15: I do not ask that you take them out of the **world** but that you keep them from the evil one.

Within these two sets of verses, the term "world" (*kosmos*) appears to have at least two different meanings, one related to an outward disposition and the other related to a spatial sphere. Commentators have long recognized that multiple meanings for *kosmos* are operative within the Fourth Gospel, creating a complex picture of John's understanding of "the world."[34] As I have noted elsewhere,[35] *kosmos* carries a range of meanings, several of which the evangelist employs.[36] The term is used to refer to the material reality of the created world,[37] the physical realm into which Jesus has entered,[38] and the object of God's affection and salvific intentions.[39] In John, the world is both a place of beauty—a realm of human existence created and loved by God—and a metonymical term symbolizing humanity. Further, the *kosmos*, as a symbol of humanity, is characterized by its

34. See the very helpful coverage of the semantic range of the term in Stanley B. Marrow, "*Kosmos* in John," *CBQ* 64 (2002): 90–102.

35. See Christopher W. Skinner, "The World (Kosmos): Promised and Unfulfilled Hope," in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Approaches to Seventy Figures in John*, ed. Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmerman (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 61–70.

36. BDAG, s.v. *kosmos* (561–63).

37. Notably 1:10: "the world did not know him" (*ho kosmos di' autou egeneto*).

38. In John, Jesus has come "from above." He is constantly speaking of his departure in the Farewell Discourse. His descent from the Father represents his entrance into "the world," the realm of "below." His departure to the Father represents his exit from "the world" to the realm of the "above." On this, see 1:9, 10a; 3:17ab, 19; 6:14.

39. See, among others, 1:29; 3:16, 17c; 4:42; 6:51.

waywardness and recalcitrance; the world is fundamentally opposed to the things of God (see e.g., 1:10–11).[40] Both of these nuances are operative in John 17, and it is necessary for us to be precise when discussing Jesus's comments about the world in the middle section of the high priestly prayer; otherwise, we may be guilty of claiming that Jesus's disposition toward the *kosmos*—in the sense of wayward humanity—is negative or oppositional. These observations relate to a spatial dualism present within the Gospel. For the evangelist, there are two spheres—the realm above and the realm below. The realm above is the heavens, where the Father resides and from which the Son has been sent. That realm is characterized by the things of God. The realm below is the *kosmos*, which is characterized by opposition to and rejection of both Father and Son. When Jesus prays for his disciples in verses 6–19, he asks for their protection from those who oppose the things of God (*kosmos* as metonymy for humanity) while they remain on earth (*kosmos* as spatial realm). However, neither statement should be read, as some have suggested, as the Johannine Jesus's hatred for the world or insular perspective on love.

As we move to the final portion of Jesus's prayer, we see Jesus beginning to pray for the unity and protection of disciples of all future periods: "I do not pray concerning them [viz., the Twelve] only, but also *for all of those who will believe* in me through the word" (v. 20). Like earlier cosmic statements in the Gospel, this prayer clearly reveals an emphasis beyond the parochial realm of the Johannine sect. Verse 21 continues the idea from the previous verse, expressing a desire for all future disciples to experience the oneness that characterizes the relationships between the Father and Son, and between the Son and the Twelve.

Oneness between Father, Son, and disciples includes an impartation of glory (*doxa*, v. 22). *Doxa* is an incredibly important theme throughout the Fourth Gospel, making its first appearance in the Prologue. In 1:14 we read, "And we beheld his glory; glory as of the

40. The Prologue (1:1–18) is the interpretive lens through which to read the entire Gospel. Thus 1:10–11 presents foundational claims about the nature of the *kosmos* as both a place and a symbol for humanity, and the role of the world vis-à-vis Jesus, which inform our reading of the rest of the narrative. Jesus has come into the world (as place) and the world (as humanity) has not received him (v. 10). The substance of this claim is reiterated in v. 11, only with different terminology: "he came to his own place [*ta idia*] and his own people [*hoi idioi*] did not receive him." A close reading of the text yields an audience expectation that humans throughout the Gospel will resist and oppose Jesus, which is exactly what happens.

unique son of the Father." On this verse, Rudolf Bultmann helpfully comments that the *doxa*

> consists in what [Jesus] is as *Revealer* for men, and he possesses the *doxa* really—as becomes clear toward the end of the Gospel (12.28; 13.31f; 17.1ff.)—when that which he himself is has been *actualised* in the believer. Correspondingly it is those who, as believers, allow him to be for themselves what he *is*, who see his glory. The vision of faith takes place in the process of upturning of all man's natural aims in life, a process which is described in v. 12 as *tekna theou genesthai* [becoming children of God].[41]

What Bultmann calls "man's natural aims" correspond to my understanding of the world as a metonymy for recalcitrant humanity. By virtue of his status with and as God (1:1) and his descent from heaven (1:11, 14), Jesus is already conformed to the things above rather than the things of this world. He must now transform his followers into such a state by sharing with them his glory. Just as the Father gave glory to Jesus, he will impart glory to his followers, though this reality is stated here in the form of a prolepsis: "I have given them the glory that you gave to me, in order that they might be one as we are one" (v. 22).

Jesus goes on to express his desire for all disciples to be with him and the Father and to experience the oneness they share, about which the world is ignorant (vv. 23–24). The prayer concludes with a major theme that was originally introduced in the Gospel's Prologue: the role of Jesus in revealing the Father. In what is probably the most important role of Jesus unveiled in the Prologue, the audience learns that Jesus makes the Father known (*ekeinos exegēsato*, 1:18). In revealing "the Father," what has Jesus made manifest? Here in the Farewell Discourse we have seen him reveal a model for how to love—through sacrificial self-giving—as well as an abiding concern both for the oneness and protection of his disciples and the world. These concerns are at the very heart of the Father. Going forward, we will witness the full consummation of Jesus's glory and the fulfillment of each proleptic announcement given in the Farewell Discourse. Having completed our examination of the high priestly prayer, here is what we have learned

41. Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray, R. W. N. Hoare, and J. K. Riches (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 68–69 (italics in original).

1. Jesus's love for "his own" extends beyond the parochialism associated with "one another" (13:34–35) or "your friends" (15:13) to all those who will believe.
2. Thus Jesus demonstrates his love fully and completely through his sacrificial self-giving on the cross, and this love will be universally available.

THE NORMATIVE INTENT OF SACRIFICIAL SELF-GIVING

As we conclude this chapter, it is important to reiterate one common reason why we so often come to the Fourth Gospel with unrealistic expectations. When we look at the portraits of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels, we see remarkable similarities in those accounts that are missing in John. Jesus is more fully developed in *different ways* across the Synoptics than in the Fourth Gospel, and the Johannine Jesus often falls short in the eyes of those who prefer the conflated Jesus of the Synoptic tradition. As I pointed out in the first chapter of this book, if we look at (or for) Johannine ethics through a Pauline or Matthean or Lukan lens, we are bound to be disappointed. However, when we read the Fourth Gospel on its own terms, we find ethics—while underdeveloped in comparison with other early Christian treatments—that need to be taken seriously as an expression of unified and coherent thinking about the legacy of Jesus. John does not give us the fullest or most comprehensive expression of universal or normative Christian ethics, but this does not mean that John fails to show *any universality* in the ethics of the Johannine Jesus.

Readers commonly approach the four gospels in light of one another, in light of the rest of the New Testament, or even in light of certain theological systems or confessions. However, the Gospel of John is a story about Jesus with the power to stand on its own without the assistance of other interpretations of Jesus's life and vocation. Only after we have appreciated John's unique message about Jesus should we introduce other interpretive voices. Against that backdrop, we must keep in mind Francis Moloney's implicit admonition to readers excerpted in the opening chapter of this book: "The Gospel of John does say *something* about an understanding of Christian love,

even though it must not be claimed that it says *everything*."[42] We must therefore be cautious in examining the expectations we bring to the text, and we must let the authentic voice(s) of the Johannine literature speak on their own terms. When we approach the Fourth Gospel attempting to ask specific questions about its implications for normative Christian ethics, we run into several obstacles. At the end of the day we are left with a historically situated text that raises numerous problems for any system of ethics, the most notable of which are contentious interrelationships posited by contemporary reconstructions of the Johannine community.[43] Does this, however, necessitate our understanding of everything in the Gospel as sectarian? My answer here is no.

My examination of love imagery and love commands in the Farewell Discourse has attempted to show that John's vision of love is both local and universal. Throughout this chapter I have tried to make the point, through a close reading of crucial passages within the Farewell Discourse, that there is a trajectory from the more particular to the more universal across John 13–17, beginning with an emphasis on "one another," moving to an emphasis on "friends," and culminating in Jesus's prayer for all followers of all future time periods. Jesus says that true love—the love he commands his disciples to display—is most fully expressed in the willingness to lay down one's life for friends. By virtue of sharing oneness with Jesus and the Father, the disciples have become the friends of Jesus. His crucifixion on behalf of the world is the pathway by which *all can potentially become his friends*. What could be more universal, more normative than that?

42. Moloney, *Love in the Gospel of John*, 214 (emphasis original).

43. As mentioned in the first chapter of the book, see the various proposals set forth in the following works: J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968); Wayne A. Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," *JBL* 91 (1972): 44–72; D. Moody Smith, "Johannine Christianity: Some Reflections on Its Character and Delineation," *NTS* 21 (1975): 222–48; R. Alan Culpepper, *The Johannine School*, SBLDS 26 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975); and Raymond E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple: The Lives, Loves and Hates of an Individual Church in New Testament Times* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979). See also the recent work of Urban C. von Wahlde, *Gnosticism, Docetism, and the Judaisms of the First Century: The Search for the Wider Context of the Johannine Literature and Why It Matters*, LNTS 517 (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2015).