



# *Devotional Study Guide Journal*

March 27<sup>th</sup>

## ***The Disciple Jesus Loved***

Several have written on this topic, and I would like to affirm this truth:

~ YOU are the disciple Jesus loves. ~

When I would read that John was the disciple Jesus loved, it didn't really bother me. I figured that for some reason, the two of them really hit it off on a personal level. Consider the honor that Jesus bestowed upon him when He asked him to care for His mother and His mother for John.

### ***John 19:25-27***

*Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup> When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" <sup>27</sup> Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.*

So, at least their relationship was such that Jesus completely trusted John to care for Mary. As to whether it was John or some other disciple that John wrote about when he spoke of "the disciple whom Jesus loved", we know this was John from his own writing of John 21:20-24.

So, who that disciple was, is not in dispute. What is interesting is that only John ever refers to himself as "the disciple Jesus loved." The authors of Matthew, Mark, and Luke do not call him "the disciple Jesus loved." You won't find this expression in any other book of the New Testament, not even in the letters John wrote. Also curiously, we never heard Jesus Himself call John "the disciple I love."

Why might this be important? For me, it was fine if Jesus had a bestie, but for many, this meant that Jesus had favorites, and we each needed to do what we could to get on His special disciples' list. Added to that, it was often inferred that certain leaders were closer to God than others—those who demonstrated deep devotion or dedication, perhaps—maybe those who had visions and dreams or spiritual gifts. This led many people to

conclude that not only was there a list of those whom Jesus loved in a special way, but that obviously, **they** were not on the list.

But when John wrote that he was the disciple Jesus loved, might it be that he was not referring to something unique about himself that caused Jesus to love him more than the others, but that he was uniquely aware of Jesus love *for him* and not at the exclusion of the others? Indeed. Consider this scripture also written by John.

**John 13:1**

*Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, **having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.***

John affirms that Jesus loved all of His disciples. So, perhaps there is some weight to the argument that John knew Jesus loved *him*. We don't see at the last supper that Jesus asked John to sit next to Him. He didn't invite him to lean on his chest. The only very clear evidence that John was beloved by Jesus in some special way is that Jesus entrusted His mother to John.

Consider also these passages in which John himself records who was loved by Jesus.

**John 3:16**

*Because in this way, **God loved the world** that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

- God loves the whole world, even His enemies.

**John 11:1-3**

*Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup> It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. <sup>3</sup> Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, **he whom You love** is sick."*

- John referred to Lazarus as the one Jesus loved.

**John 11:5**

*Now **Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.***

- Here are three more people John mentions whom Jesus loved.

**John 13:34**

*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as **I have loved you**, that you also love one another.*

- As far as we know, Jesus did not single John out as the disciple He loved (thought surely he loved him). But He did repeatedly tell the disciples that He loved them (all).

**John 15:9**

*“As the Father loved Me, **I also have loved you**; abide in My love.*

- He was addressing His disciples. Consider how much God loved Jesus. That is how much He loved them.

**John 15:12**

*This is My commandment, that you love one another **as I have loved you**.*

- Jesus commanded His disciples to love each other in the same way He loved them.

**John 16:26-27**

*In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; <sup>27</sup> for **the Father Himself loves you**, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.*

- God the Father Himself loves us.

**John 17:23**

*I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and **have loved them as You have loved Me**.*

- Jesus loved them ALL just as the Father loved Him. How greatly God loves His Son. He loves us in the same way. How could he love anyone more than that?

**John 17:26**

*And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, **that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.**”*

- Again, the love with which God loved Jesus is in us.

All of the New Testament writers affirm that God loves us all. In his own letters, John speaks of God’s love for all of us. Notable among these is this one in which John encourages us to look intently and contemplate the astonishing love of God for **us**, a love that is unlike any love on earth.

**1 John 3:1**

*Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on **us**, that **we should be called children of God!***

So, let us be confident to affirm: I am the disciple Jesus loves. Go ahead, try saying it out loud.

*I am the disciple Jesus loves.*

*Jesus loves ME.*

*I do not need to earn His love.*

*His love was given to me when I was His enemy.*

*How much more does He love me*

*Now that I am His child!*

