

These notes suggest ways you can prepare for the sermon that will be preached on Sept. 5, 2021 at First Evan. Feel free to use them for class or small group discussion. Feel free to pick just one or use them all.

1. At the Last Supper, Jesus had much to say to His disciples. Almost 40 years after this last meal together, John (with help from the Holy Spirit) recalled what Jesus said and did. He wrote it down in John 13-17. Scan through these chapters for clues as to why Jesus said what He did. If you are in a group, maybe divide up chapters to scan, and then compare notes. Here is the first clue: *Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end* (John 13:1).

One of these “clue statements” is found in this verse: *“These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling”* (John 16:1). What is Jesus referring to? In what way do you think that content from John 13-17 could keep a disciple from “stumbling?” Are there people in your circle who are “stumbling?” What from the Upper Room Discourse would help them to get back on their feet?

2. Jim will especially focus today’s sermon on one section from the Upper Room Discourse: *“He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”* Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?” Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me. These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you” (John 14:21–25).

What observations would you make about what this passage teaches? How might principles from this passage keep someone from stumbling?

3. When you read about the church of Ephesus in Revelation 2:1-7, in what ways does Jesus commend this church? What does he warn them? What does it mean for a church to leave its first love?”
4. What have you found helpful as a way to grow your love for God and the Lord? Are there specific practices you might recommend to others who want to go deeper in their love for the Lord? Is there a particular incident or chapter in your history where you were especially drawn toward the Lord? Do tell!

5. Paul explained to Timothy one of his core ministry goals: *“But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith”* (1 Timothy 1:5). How is love bolstered by *a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith*?

6. This passage suggests that love of the Lord and love of the world are opposites. Is this correct? *Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him* (1 John 2:15). In what way are these two “loves” opposed to each other? How would someone, practically, apply this verse? In what way does this verse challenge you personally?

Principle One: One Heart – Love (for the Lord) propels our obedience.