

## 051522 "Love One Another" John 13:31-35

According to the Gospel of John, Jesus has just washed the feet of his disciples in the upper room on the Thursday evening before he was crucified the next day. And He gives them a new commandment, Love One Another.

He says to Love, and He says it is a **New Commandment**. Strange, isn't it? Why is this a new commandment? Aside from the fact that love is the hottest subject in movies, books, and music in the world, we heard of loving each other numerous all through the scriptures.

For example, in Leviticus 19:18 it is written, "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD." Take a look at Mark 12:29-31 where Jesus answers the scholar who asks about the first commandment with the words, "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

Love one another and loving your neighbor is very similar. "To Love Your Neighbor" is very clearly an Old Testament commandment, so why does Jesus insist this is a new commandment?

Biblical scholar Hendrickson interprets this moment as such: The new commandment is referring to the continuous and sacrificial love of the Lord Jesus that willed Him to die on the cross for His followers. He didn't feel love

for a few moments while He was on the cross. His continuous love for his disciples went as far the cross. Lansky has also written, the new commandment is not the love of Mosaic Law, it refers to a new type of love never seen before: a sacrificial love. These two biblical scholars are talking about the lasting and sacrificial love of the Lord.

It's not all the same love because we call it so. This is a new commandment because of the phrase, "**as** Jesus has loved us," we are urged to love each other as He has loved us. This is new. Let's look closely on the word "as." It is translated from the Greek Kathos. This means, "as much as" or "exactly like." In other words, Jesus is requiring us to share with each other the deep, big love that He has shown towards us. So, we must look closely at what this Love of Jesus actually looks like.

First, the love of Jesus is a humble love, a love of service. Jesus had just washed the feet of his disciples' feet, just prior to this message – a menial task that were put to slaves or servants of the time. This is the life Jesus wants from us. He wants us to lower ourselves, to be compassionate and provide service to others. For life.

I used to serve as a youth minister at a church in New York. Maybe it happened about 17 years ago. My kids were still young, and I was still finishing up my grad school program which meant this was a part-time ministry. Finances were pretty tough as all student families experienced. There were these twins at that church, they weren't very well off and their parents were going through some health issues. I prayed together with them at church and came home discussed their situation with my wife. The spirit

worked within us, and my wife and I decided to give the family with two large packs of meat and some veggies to go with the barbeque, etc. Because it was Korean Thanksgiving, Chuseok.

To be honest, two packs of meat were a big deal for us back then. We were living on a budget of about sixty dollars a week. But we gathered up the week's budget, delivered our gifts and were returning home with a lightened heart/wallet. So we came home, and just then, the senior pastor's wife has brought us something as a Chuseok gift. And of course, we open up the package to discover, exactly two large packs of meat. God fills every need with love! So often we tell ourselves, "I'll start giving when I have something to give." So easily we fall into, "I'm barely coping myself, what am I supposed to share?" But Jesus commanded, "Love one another." In times of lack or abundance, He promises we will experience His hands move through our lives in sharing. We cannot forget that our faith continues to grow through when we trust and obey.

Second, the love of Jesus is a pre-existing love. 1 John 4:19 states, "We love because He first loved us." God has loved us way before we started to love God, and God still loves us with that same love. Pre-existing love means love that you give first and you start with, not love that you give as a reward or in return because someone loved you. Even if you don't get a chance to get it back, it's you who loves first. In Romans 5:8, it is written "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Jesus has loved us always. Even when we were weak, sinners, an enemy of God, Jesus loved us. He took our burdens of sin, took them up to the cross and He died there so that we might find peace with God. Look at John 10:17, “The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.”

Twice in our passage today, Jesus repeats, “Love one another.” Jesus has commanded a two-way love, between “one another.” Between spouses, family members, colleagues, neighbors, church groups, He says to love one another. When we speak of the church, we use the expression that the church is a community established at the price of the blood of Jesus. To love one another. This is our quest till the day we stand before God. No picking out just the people we like to hang out with, no picking out situations that are good for us. This includes people you do not know. That’s why we encourage you to talk to at least two people you don’t know with smile before you greet your best friends. This includes people you don’t like. We must love one another, with the love of Jesus on the cross.

Let’s look at verse 35, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” This is how we can tell who is a follower of Jesus Christ. During the First Churches, the world christened followers of Jesus with the label “Christians” because they were trying to be the image of Christ. Today we are losing that drive to love to be alike in His image. Crucifix, a hymnbook or bible in hand, these are not the things that show you are His follower. Jesus has said, through the fruits of Love will the world know we are true believers.

In his book *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis wrote, "Do not waste your time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbor act as if you did. As soon as we do this, we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him. If you injure someone you dislike, you will find yourself disliking him more. If you do him a good turn, you will find yourself disliking him less."

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, 1 John 4:12 says, "No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us." We have experienced firsthand, how deeply God loves us. We have experienced the Greatest love of Jesus on the cross. We must ask ourselves, so what can we do about it. We must ponder the new commandment, Love One Another as Jesus has loved us. Trust and obey God's promise. God promises real life, whole life, rich life, fulfilling life right here right now. Fairfield Grace, may God's grace, peace, goodness, and mercy be with you and your family, and your business, and your studies, and with the lives of your children. Amen.