

- ***John 13:31-35*** This conversation between Jesus and the 11 remaining Apostles takes place just after Judas leaves their midst in order to go carry out the betrayal of his Teacher. Jesus recognizes that the wheels of His betrayal and death have been set in motion, and He begins to deliver His final great lessons to those that remain. He reveals that He and His Father will shortly be gloried though the events that will soon take place, and then He lays down what He terms as a "new commandment." The Great Teacher goes on to say that His Apostles...and beyond them...all His disciples are to love one another.
- This portion of Scripture has caused many to scratch their heads because this new commandment really just doesn't seem like a new commandment. Surely, this isn't the first divine commandment concerning loving others, right? So then is Jesus commanding a new kind of love? What's really the deal with this "new" commandment? These are questions that I think will help us to understand exactly what Jesus is talking about here in **John 13:34,35** and also what He is talking about later on in this same discussion a couple chapters over. This morning, let's consider this new commandment that Jesus hands down to His disciples shortly before He is betrayed.

I. God has always commanded for His people to love.

- A. Some might think that this truly is a brand new commandment in the simplest understanding of the word, and that God is just now demanding love to be shown among His people.
1. Some might hold to the thought that prior to Jesus love wasn't demanded.
 2. They might look to the Law and see it as being void of love because it was so stringent in how it was to be followed. They might say that the Law was all about rule following and love isn't a necessary factor when it comes to simply following rules.
 3. Or they might point towards the wrath and severity of God and conclude that love wasn't important to the God of the Old Testament.
- B. This just simply is not the case. Love has always been demanded by God.
1. This is true from the beginning. Cain was punished because he failed to love his brother and that led to murder. **(Gen. 4:3-8)**
 2. A lack of love that is shown through vengeance was denounced by God in the Law of Moses. **(Lev. 19:18 "You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.")**
 3. Love for others was certainly to be a part of the character of any person who claimed to follow Jehovah in their walk in this life.

II. The new commandment of Christ is that we love others as Jesus loved us.

- A. This love is different than the love that was expected up to this point.
1. As we just read, "Love your neighbor as yourself" was the divine command that was handed down from God in the Law.
 2. We understand this to mean that we should only treat others as we would want them to treat us. We wouldn't punch someone in the face out of nowhere because we wouldn't want that to be done to us.
 3. The thing about this, though, is the fact this command is based upon self-love. However much I love myself will dictate how I treat others. If I don't mind being punched in the face then I won't see a big deal punching someone else in the face.
 4. This leads us to understand that this "new commandment" is new because it changes the measuring stick of how we love others. Its not longer based upon how we love, but how Jesus loves.
- B. As with other things, Jesus is raising the bar for loving others for the type of people that will bear His Holy Name.
1. The sermon on the mountain is a great example of Jesus raising the bar for his people.
 2. "You have heard..." Jesus repeats a few times in **Matthew 5**. His point...you have heard these things taught and they are true. However, there had been a minimalist approach to these things.
 3. They were taught not to commit adultery, but they didn't have much problem with coveting the body of another and fantasizing about them. **(Matt. 5:27,28)**
 4. They were taught they could break vows made upon silly things, but Jesus says that your "yes" needs to simply be "yes" and the same for your "no"s. **(Matt. 5:34-37)**
 5. They were taught eye for an eye, but Jesus was demanding they rise above that and not seek retaliation or revenge. **(Matt. 5:38,39)**

- C. Jesus expects for His people to love according to and in the likeness of the love that He has shown for each and every one of us. **(John 15:8-14)**
1. Later on in this discussion, Jesus expounds upon this love that His followers are to have for one another, and specifically for His Apostles. They were to prove their love for Him and their discipleship based upon how they loved one another. **(vv.7,8)**
 2. Their love was to imitate that love of Jesus. Jesus loved through obedience to the Father and through His sacrificial love for others. **(vv.9-13)**
 3. Our love for Jesus will be shown not just through our obedience, but it will be shown through how we love those around us...especially our brethren.
 4. Whereas the love of the Law was based upon our love, this love that Christians are to possess is dependent upon Jesus's love for us. We are to love sacrificially. **(I John 4:10,11)**

III. Embracing this new commandment will help us to grow to be more like Jesus.

- A. This is counter intuitive to our "dog eat dog" & "I'ma get mine" culture.
1. So many in this world are so quick to step upon the head of another person if that means that they will benefit from it. It doesn't matter what I do or who I hurt...just so long as I get mine then I'll be sufficed.
 2. This world does everything it can to create within each of us an attitude of focus solely on our own desires and well being.
 3. Sadly, to see someone focused on others and giving of themselves sacrificially will catch people's attention because it is not the norm for our world and society. Those who love like Jesus loves will be a bright and shining light in this dark world.
- B. The love that we show for one another will scream that we are disciples of King Jesus, and people will take notice.
1. The song "Let the Beauty of Jesus Be Seen" (454 Hymns For Worship) comes to my mind when we discuss a subject such as this. The words of this fit well into the ideas that we are trying to get across.
 - a) **V.1** "Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me, all His wonderful passion and purity, May His Spirit divine all my being refine, let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me."
 - b) **V.2** "When somebody has been so unkind to you, Some word spoken that pierces you thru and thru, think how He was beguiled, spat upon and reviled, Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in you."
 - c) **V.3** "From the dawn of the morning to close of day, in example in deeds and in all you say, lay your gifts at His feet, ever strive to keep sweet, let the beauty of Jesus be seen in you."
 2. V.2 is the way of the world. To be unkind, cruel, and rude is the way of Satan and this world. Yet, Jesus commands that we rise above this. He commands that we be better than the status quo of this world and the way that it operates.
 3. Where the world bears a grudge...we forgive. Where the world says a rude word...we bless. Where the world seeks to destroy...we build up. Where the world turns it head away from a need...we give of ourselves to assist.
 4. Doing these things will not only bring joy to our Lord **(John 15:11)**, it will not only show that we are His disciples, but it will also be noticed and desired by those in the world, because many are longing for that sense of love, care, and belonging that is a staple of God's people. We do not turn people away from the love of Jesus based upon any sort of physical or social-economic characteristic. For Jesus calls all people to Himself, and in Him all people are made equal though His shed blood **(Rom. 1:16; Gal. 3:27)**, and they can come to know this love that is commanded by Jesus in **John 13:34**.
 5. This new commandment doesn't just fulfill the need for the strengthening of Jesus's people, but it also fulfills the need for growth of this body from those on the outside.

A new command? Yes and no.....No because God's people have always been required to love one another, but yes because it is a new kind of love that originates from a new source. This command is massive in its importance because many things are accomplished through our obedience to it. 1) Jesus is gloried and obeyed. 2) We abide in God. 3) Others are served well. 4) Others will know Whom it is that we serve. May God help us to embrace this new command of Jesus and serve Him faithfully all of our days as we love others just as He first loved them.