

The Communion of Saints

Delighting in God Together in 2025

5- The “New” Commandment to Love One Another

Church March 2, 2025

John 13:34&35

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

35 By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Thirteen Centuries after the Resurrection- God the Holy Spirit gave to the Christian Church- one of the most brilliant Teachers who ever lived. His name was Thomas Aquinas. And during his Life- Aquinas so influenced the visible Church that they almost completely *abandoned* the “*Augustinian Understanding*” of Salvation (from what Augustin taught back in the 4th Century) and fully embraced “*Aquinian Theory*”. This was a tragic Mistake- that led to the Protestant Reformation some 300 years later.

And so, in the 16th Century- the Reformers issued their “*Protests*” against what the visible Church was teaching- most notably about both “*Final (Supreme) Authority*” and “*How lost people are Forgiven and made Righteous (Justification)*”.¹ And, after the Hierarchy of the visible Church *refused* to even discuss the Issues and, instead, *excommunicated* the Reformers- their Teachings formed what is now called, “*Protestantism*” or the “*Protestant Church*”.

But what is seldom discussed today- is that “*Protestantism*” as a theological Construct DID NOT invent a single new Teaching- concerning how lost people are born again; justified; and adopted. What the Reformers did- was to simply lead the Church AWAY from the Error of Aquinas and go BACK into the Truth that God used Augustine to articulate twelve Centuries earlier. So, as it pertains to the Miracle of the New Birth; Justification; and Adoption- those Issues that pertain to Salvation- we should *categorically* REJECT Aquinian Teaching and eagerly embrace Augustinian Teaching.

¹ The Protestant Reformation dealt with many Issues where the visible Church had *abandoned* the Authority of Scripture and had simply *fabricated* many of their Teachings. But the Issue of “*Final (Supreme) Authority*” was the “*Formal Cause*” and “*Justification by Faith alone*” was the “*Material Cause*” of the entire Reformation.

But as it pertains to almost every other Subject- Aquinas was head and shoulders more biblical than practically every other Leader of the Church- before or since. And so, we need to understand what Aquinas taught about a whole range of other Subjects- if we are to rightly and fully understand what the Bible says; and what the Bible *means* by what it says about a whole lot of Issues.

And one of those Issues that Aquinas taught about is just HOW we, as Believers, are to obey Jesus' Command to love. And that attaches to *why*, in verse 34, Jesus said that for His Disciples to "love one another" was a "NEW" Commandment.

You see, way back in **Deuteronomy 6:5**- just before the people of God entered the Promised Land- God, through Moses articulated the foundational Truth from which EVERYTHING ELSE flows:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

... which simply means that we are to love God- *perfectly*.

So, our Love for God must be the HIGHEST and BEST expression of Love- full and complete and without ANY Reservation.

And then in **Leviticus 19:18**- God added another Layer to the Issue of Love when He said,

You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.

So, around 1500 years BEFORE Jesus was born- God had *already* commanded His people to love in two Ways:

1. Love God
2. Love each other

... so, the Command for us to love both God and our Neighbor is NOT "New". It is ancient and was given in the Beginning. So, why did Jesus say that "loving one another" was "NEW"?

Now Scripture teaches that the Way we are to love God- is TOTALLY and FULLY; while the Standard as to *how* our Love for our Neighbor is to be measured- is that it MUST be the SAME as the Way we love *ourselves*! But our Love for both God and Others is to be "CONSTANT"! So, for every second; of every minute; of every hour; of every day; of every week; of every month; of every

year- we are to love like this! In other words, there is NEVER to be a single moment where we *should not* love like this.

But the Reality is that NOBODY loves like this. Nobody! Not a single person. And that is because nobody CAN love like this. We simply do NOT have that kind of Ability. The ONLY Person, who ever loved God perfectly and loved His neighbor as Himself- was Jesus.

Our Love for God is very shallow; very haphazard; and very inconsistent- if it exists at all. And our Love for our Neighbor is generally manifested in the Fact that we usually leave them alone (if we even know their name); wish them no Harm; and wave to them when we see them.

And so, the Command for us to love- was designed to prove two things to us:

1. How sinful we are
2. How desperately we NEED a Savior

So, our *greatest* SIN; our *greatest* LACK; and therefore, our *greatest* NEED- is that we do NOT Love. And, many times, we simply don't know HOW to Love. And so, ALL of the Commandments found in the Bible are there to show us what loving God *perfectly*; and loving our Neighbor *as ourselves*- looks like.

Now sadly, many times, Christianity is portrayed as the Enemy of Pleasure. For some reason, we see Delight as something that is contrary to; and that actually fights against- Holiness. And so, many times, we cry out AGAINST Pleasure; and Delight; and even Happiness; and Joy- as though those things take away from our Obedience to God.

I disagree. As we have already seen- we do NOT love enough. And, likewise, I would further suggest that God wants us to be *more* Happy than we want to be! But I would suggest to you that us- *delighting ourselves in God*- is the very epitome of what "spirit and truth" Worship is all about. Because us being Happy in our Worship of God- glorifies Him MORE than anything else we do!

Dear Friends, the Bible declares that it is God's Will for us to, not merely be Happy- but for us to experience the FULLNESS of Joy! And that is why Jesus said this in **John 17:13**:

But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves.

Now that verse has been in the Bible for over 2,000 years! And yet- I have NEVER met the first person who could honestly tell me that they have reached the

Fullness of Joy! I've met many people, who I would consider to be very Happy people- even joyful people. But the FULLNESS of Joy? Not one. And when questioned- most would tell me that what brings them the MOST Joy; the MOST Pleasure; the MOST Happiness; and the MOST Contentment- was something (anything) EXCEPT God! And I wonder why that's true.

Now some would argue and say, "*But Brother Blair, the Bible says that Jesus came to 'save His [God's] people from their Sins'*" (Matthew 1:21). So, God is NOT really interested in my Happiness. What He is concerned about is my Obedience!"

Okay, but Jesus said my Obedience TO Him flows out from my Love FOR Him (John 14:15). So, I DO NOT obey God- in fact, I CANNOT obey God (long-term) unless I love Him- first! So, my Obedience to God does NOT come first. What comes *first*- is me *loving* God. In fact, it is my Love FOR God that *fuels* and *empowers* my Obedience. So, if I desire to *obey* God- I must FIRST *love* God.

But now I want to examine the word, "Love" for a moment. We can define Love a lot of different Ways- but one Way in which we CANNOT define Love is by using Concepts like "Fear" or "Duty" or "Obligation". So, by Definition, my Love for God MUST be "*Free*". It CANNOT be "*Coerced*" or "*Forced*". You CANNOT *force* me to love you. You can *want* me to love you- but you can't "MAKE" me love you. Coerced Love is NOT Love at all.

Yet all through the Bible- God has COMMANDED us to love Him. In fact, God has promised horrific Punishment if we do NOT love Him. So, what goes here? If "*genuine*" Love is "*free*" Love- why does God *command* us to love Him? Isn't that defeating the whole thing?

The missing Ingredient here is the Fact that I am a fallen and sinful being. And in that fallen and sinful State- I CANNOT love God. So, unless I am saved- I cannot love God at all. And so, God *commanded* us to love Him- so that we would look to Him to supply to us- that great Love for God.

500 years ago- the Protestant Reformers wrote down the "*Westminster Confession of Faith*"- which is a series of 196 Questions with 196 Answers given from the Bible. And the very first Question is:

Q: What is the chief Duty of Man?

A: The chief Duty of Man is to know God; love God; and to enjoy God forever

... so, Christians 500 years ago did NOT believe we should obey God out of "Duty"; or "Obligation"; or even "Fear". They taught what the Scriptures teach and said that Believers should strive to obey God out of Delight and Joy- that flows from Love!

But Sin is what stops us from realizing this Joy. And Sin *prohibits* God from being glorified. And Sin is also what stops Believers from loving God and loving each other the Way the New Covenant teaches. So, in order to accomplish two things:

1. God ALONE is glorified
2. Our Joy is made FULL because God alone is glorified

... God had to take on Flesh and become Man.

And then this God/Man (Jesus) had to fulfill ALL of God's Law by living a perfectly sinless Life. And then God the Father imputed ALL of the Sins of ALL of God's elect onto Jesus. And then God had to pour out the full Fury of His Wrath against our Sins that were now on Jesus. And Jesus had to literally die in His Flesh because of our Sins. And then Jesus had to physically and literally rise from the Dead- in the SAME Body in which He died. And then resurrected God/Man had to ascend to Heaven and "Sit Down" at the "Right Hand of the Majesty on High- where He makes continual Intercession for those God chose to save- so they will STAY saved.

And this God/Man- Jesus Christ- will return to this earth to purify it from all Evil along with all the evil people as well as the Tares. And then He will gather the genuine Believer together in a new Earth where they will rule and reign with Him- as Kings and Priests- FOREVER!

So, Salvation is actually the "Means" by which wicked Rebels are so radically changed (by what God alone does for them) that they may have the Privilege and Honor and Delight of loving God! We must remember, dear friends, that lost people DO NOT love God- at all! And they DO NOT love God because they CANNOT love God. And they CANNOT love God- because they don't WANT to!

Ever since the Fall- it is NOT "Normal" or Natural" for *anyone* to love and enjoy God. It takes a supernatural, miraculous, and sovereign Miracle from God (the New Birth) for any of us to *normally and naturally* love and enjoy God! The Apostle John put it this Way in **1John 4:19**:

We love [God], because He first loved us.

... which means our Love FOR God is a Gift FROM God.

Human beings DO NOT already possess a Love for God in their lost Condition. And unregenerate people CANNOT "work up" or "create" or "manufacture" or "initiate" this kind of Love for God. Loving God is the "bottom-line" Fruit that the Individual has *already* experienced the Miracle of the New

Birth and has a new Nature that is both Able and Willing to love God. And the Fruit or the Unmistakable Proof that we are loving God- is the Degree to which we strive to obey God.

So, loving God is the Proof that we have been born again; while obeying God is the Proof that we love Him. Jesus said this in **John 14:15**:

If you love Me, you will keep My Commandments

So, yes, my Love for God MUST be “Genuine”; and “Real”; and “Free”. And that is why we need God to give us this amazing Gift of Love- because the Gift of Love that God gives to us- is absolutely Genuine; it is very Real; and it is completely Free!

And I would suggest to you that a genuine, real, and free Love- is also a *happy* Love; a *joyful* Love; a *delightful* Love; and a Love that can be *enjoyed*! I’ve NEVER seen anyone- who is genuinely in love with someone else- who doesn’t truly *enjoy* that other person. Being in love causes us to *delight* to be with the other person; to *celebrate* them; to *relish* them; to *desire* to spend time with them; to *talk* to them; and *listen* to them; to *touch* them; and to *be touched* by them.

And that is why Jesus said we MUST be born again! Because it is in the Miracle of the New Birth that God sovereignly gives us new Eyes; new Ears; a new Heart and a new Nature! So, by giving us new, spiritual Life- we are given this Gift of Love for God- that is both *different and better* than any other type of Love found on this earth. And this is why two things are true:

1. We MUST be born again
2. The New Birth MUST be a sovereign Act of God alone

... and many people would agree with that.

But then we must go one step further and ask, **“TO WHAT END?”** To what End do we experience the Miracle of the New Birth? To what CONCLUSION; for what GOAL; for what PURPOSE did God the Holy Spirit come to us- while we were yet Lost- and open our eyes; unstop our ears; take the stony heart out of us and give us a heart of Flesh; give us a new Nature; give us the Gift of “saving Faith” and give us the Gift of this Love for God?

And, sadly, many will reply, *“So, we can go to Heaven!”* To which I would say, **“NO! NO! NO!”** That is NOT what the Bible teaches at all. The Goal of Salvation is NOT simply that we get to go to Heaven. Now listen, ALL saved people WILL go to Heaven- I’m NOT denying that at all. But that is NOT the *ultimate* Goal of Salvation. The *ultimate* Goal of Salvation is two things:

1. God ALONE is glorified
2. Our Joy is made FULL because God alone is glorified

You see, God has decreed that NOTHING brings Him more Glory- than when sinful people are so utterly transformed (in, by, and through the finished Work of Jesus Christ) that we realize the Fullness of our own Joy- when God alone is glorified!

Another Way of looking at this is to say that the Goal of Salvation is “*Righteousness*”. And right now- I’m NOT talking about the “*Righteousness of Jesus Christ*” that is imputed to us by Faith alone. That is what allows us entrance into Heaven. And that Righteousness CANNOT be improved. It is already perfect and spotless. Right now- I’m talking about our own, personal, intrinsic “*Righteousness*” that is developed and made BETTER through the Life-long Process of Sanctification.

Now our own Righteousness will NEVER be developed to the Point that we can earn or deserve Heaven. That false Teaching came from Rome and is NOT taught anywhere in the Bible. The Righteousness I am talking about right now- is the Result of our “*Obedience*”. So, as we are born again; justified; and adopted- we now love God. And that Love for God *compels us* to strive to obey God.

So, our Obedience is the “*by-Product*” of this Gift of Love for God that has been given to us in the New Birth. And, by default- that Obedience is a *glad* Obedience- a *joyful* Obedience- precisely because it flows out from that Gift of Love for God- which is also a *glad* and *joyful* and *happy* Love.

So, while both “*fearful Obedience*” and “*dutiful Obedience*” is better than Disobedience- ONLY a *glad* and *joyful* Obedience- an Obedience that is birthed and carried out- through the Gift of Love that God gave us- brings the *highest* and the *best* degree of Glory to God!

Here is why this matters. We are told to obey after we have been born again. True. But even then- our Obedience is NOT perfect. It is NOT without Flaw and even Sin. And we don’t ALWAYS obey. Sometimes we *disobey*- even though we have a new Nature. So, at best- our Obedience is haphazard; and flawed; and filled with Sin. And that means that the Righteousness that flows out from this type of flawed Obedience is also flawed. And that is why our own personal, intrinsic Righteousness will NEVER cause us to earn Heaven.

Okay- but if that is true- then why does God command us to obey? Because our Obedience flows out from Love and NOT Duty or Fear- God is glorified- even when our Obedience is NOT perfect. If our Effort to obey flowed out from anything other than Love- our Obedience would have to be Perfect for God to be glorified. But because our Effort to obey flows out from Love and NOT Duty or Fear- the Fact that we are willing to strive to obey- brings Glory to God.

So, the Reason we strive to obey- is NOT so we can earn any Favor with God. It is NOT so we can deserve God's Mercy or Grace. We do NOT obey so God will heal us; or bless us; or give us stuff. We obey because we love God; and we desire to please Him- so that He alone is glorified and our Joy is made Full.

People, who have genuinely experienced the Miracle of the New Birth have judged God to be worthy and deserving of WHATEVER we can do to bring Him Glory. That is what we live for. And that is what brings to us the *greatest* Degree of Joy. You see, God has sovereignly unveiled our eyes and minds and hearts. And we have been blessed with being able to **“behold the Glory of God in the Face [Person] of Jesus Christ” (2Corinthians 4:6).**

And the 1st Response to that- is that we are able to see the great Contrast between ourselves and God in His Glory- and we are devastated by our Sin. That is what brings about our desperate Plea for God to forgive us (Repentance). The 2nd Response is that we then begin to love what we see (God- glorified in Jesus). And the 3rd Response is that we begin to be changed into what we see (our Effort to obey God in Sanctification). Our personal Righteousness flows out from that. And that is what the Bible means when it says that we are transformed into the Image and Likeness of Jesus.

Now the Reason I am emphasizing how our Desire to obey God flows out from the Gift of Love that God gave to us- in a Sermon about loving each other- is because our Failure to love each other is a direct Result of us either NOT *understanding* these things; or of us *refusing* to do these things; or of us still be Lost and being deceived about having already experienced the New Birth. One of those three.

Loving those whom God has chosen to save- is nothing more nor less than taking this amazing Gift of Love for God that God gave to us in the New Birth- and “bending it outward” to all of the others to whom God has chosen to give this Love. So, we take the “vertical Gift” of Love for God that God has graced to us- and we turn it *outward*; and display it *horizontally*- to our Brothers and Sisters.

We must understand that we don't always act in a godly Way. Sometimes we act in a carnal and earthly and sinful Way. And that isn't because we are Lost- it is because we are human. And so, we may find it difficult or even impossible to love each other as the Bible commands. So, what do we do when this happens?

Like all Sin- when we fail in ANY area of our Christian Life- we MUST first-rehearse the Gospel. ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS rehearse the Elements of the Gospel- as the first thing you do after you sin against God. That will remind you of all that God has done for you

in saving you and forgiving you of all your Sins. And that will empower you to repent and turn away from your Sin. But the freshly rehearsed Gospel will also empower you to forgive those who have wronged you. So, two things will be true:

1. Your Union with Jesus Christ is renewed and strengthened
2. Your Union with “one another” is also renewed and strengthened

... so, our “*Union with Christ*” is what *creates and sustains* our “*Union with one another*”.

So, in the case of having a hard time loving each other- because someone offends you; or disappoints you; or fails you; or in some Way sins against you- the lost and pagan World teaches to get away from the person who is irritating you; ignore them; write them off; tell them off; get angry with them; and by all means hold a Grudge against them. But that doesn't require any Courage; or Strength; or the Power of the Holy Spirit. Every lost person on earth can do that- many times during their Lifetime. And they do. And that is because lost people do NOT have God the Holy Spirit living inside of them; they have NOT had their many Sins forgiven them; and they have NOT experienced the Miracle of the New Birth.

But the Holy Bible teaches something entirely different. The Bible tells us to take the Grace that God has been extended to every one of us in Salvation- and “bend it outward” to the one who has offended us; or hurt us; or sinned against us; or failed us.

So, as we rehearse the Majesty of the Gospel of Grace and remind ourselves of all the many Sins God has forgiven us for- it is then much *easier* to forgive those who have wronged us or who have sinned against us. The Reality is that the Sins we committed against God are infinitely *worse* than any Sin anyone could ever commit against us. And yet, God forgave us!

And so, Grace- NOT Judgment; Grace- NOT Vengeance; Grace- NOT Retribution *demands* that we love and NOT hate; that we forgive and NOT hold a grudge; that we pardon and NOT simply get away from them.

Let me say this another Way- NO Believer has the Right to separate from another Believer because of Unforgiveness. That is simply NOT allowed in the Body of Christ. We are NEVER more “spiritual; NEVER more holy; and NEVER more biblical; and NEVER more like God- than when we forgive others- *especially* those within the Body. Listen to Jesus when He said this in **John 13:35**:

By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

... and this kind of Love will forgive another Brother or Sister over and over and over again! Please look at **Matthew 18:21-35**:

21 Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"

22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

23 "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves.

24 When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him.

25 But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made.

26 So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.'

27 And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt.

28 But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.'

29 So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.'

30 But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed.

31 So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened.

32 Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.

33 Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?'

34 And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him.

35 My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

... and this kind of ongoing Forgiveness **MUST** be bathed in the Love of God. The Apostle John taught this in **1John 4:20&21**:

20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

Aquinas taught something called, the "*Ordo Amoris*"- which is Latin for the "*Order of Love*". And that gives us the "*Hierarchy of Love*". And in this Hierarchy- the HIGHEST and BEST Love- is a Love for God. Please listen to what Jesus taught about this from **Luke 14:26&27:**

26 "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.

27 Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

... and from **Matthew 22:34-38** that says,

34 But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together.

35 One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him,

36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"

37 And He said to him, "'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.'

38 This is the great and foremost commandment.

Now it is true that Jesus went on to say,

Matthew 22:39-40

39 The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'

40 On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

... but Jesus said that the "GREAT and FOREMOST" Commandment was to love God. And we are to love God to such an extent- that ALL OTHER LOVES look like "Hate" by comparison. So, our Hierarchy; our Priority MUST be to love God- FIRST and FOREMOST. And when we do that- ALL other Loves will flow out from that.

But in order to truly love God- we MUST also love what God loves and hate what God hates. And so, loving God requires that we also love what God has said; and what God has done. We CANNOT separate between God and His Word and Will. They are the same!

But loving God also requires that we learn what God hates- and hate that, too. So, we MUST hate Sin. And we MUST hate Hypocrisy. And we MUST hate all forms of false Teaching. Look what God Himself said in **Proverbs 6:16-19:**

16 There are six things which the Lord hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him:

17 Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood,

18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil,

19 A false witness who utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers.

So, the Way to be able to forgive and love each other- is for us to remind ourselves of how it is that we came to start loving God in the first Place. Of how *wonderful* it was to be forgiven and to have the Blood of Jesus wash us whiter than snow. Of how *miraculous* it was for God to take us out of Darkness and bring us into His marvelous Light. Of how *undeserving* we are of His great Grace and Mercy. And how *amazing* it is that we could love God. And that will make it much easier for us to bend that Grace outward toward others, who have wronged us- and we can be the people- who are both willing and able to forgive.

But why did Jesus say this was a “New” Commandment? There are Commands after Commands in the Old Testament under the inferior Old Covenant- for God’s people to love. So, what was “New” about what Jesus said?

If you are a follower of Jesus, a Christian, a child of God through Faith in the Lord Christ- you are a person under Authority. You are not your own. You do not call the shots anymore. Jesus is MORE to you than Master of your Life- but He is certainly NOT LESS. He comes to you with MORE than Commandments- but NOT less. You are a person whose Life is defined by the Will of Jesus. What He wills- you want.

And what He wills and commands in this verse is that we love each other.

And the “Newness” of this Command is found in the phrase at the End of verse 34:

... even as I have loved you...

So, we are to first, “*live on*” the Love of Jesus. And we are to “*live out*” the Love of Jesus. The phrase, “**even as I have loved you**” contain an Example for our

Love for each other. But they also contain a *Power* for our Love for each other, as well.

So, while to Love is NOT “New”- what IS “New” is that Jesus is now the Pattern we *live by* as well as the Power we *live on*. And the Basis for the 1st kind of “Newness” (Jesus as our Example) is found earlier in **John 13: 1-15:**

1 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.

2 During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him,

3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God,

4 got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself.

5 Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

6 So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?"

7 Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter."

8 Peter said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

9 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head."

10 Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you."

11 For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean."

12 So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?"

13 You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am.

14 If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.

So here we have Jesus giving us an “acted out” Example of this Love. So, when we get to verse 34 and He says, “**even as I have loved you...**” we don’t have to go guessing what He means. And that is why He said this in verse 15:

For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.

... and this will involve at least two things.

One is that we lay aside Status and Rank and Prestige and Privilege and take the Form of a Servant—that's what **Philippians 2:7** says and that's what Jesus does here.

So, the first part of Jesus' Example is that it causes us to lay aside Rank and Privilege to serve others. The 2nd Part of the Example is that this Love involves practical Deeds of Helpfulness.

Back then- almost everyone walked. The roads and paths were dirt. There were probably no socks and no sidewalks. Everyone's feet were more or less caked with dirt. And so, Jesus laid down a Sense of Entitlement- and He washed their feet.

So, this new Commandment to love is that we look at this Example; that we watch our Lord and Teacher and Savior do this, and follow Him in it. We "live out" the Love that we see in Jesus.

When Jesus said that the new Commandment to love each other is a Commandment to love as He loved- Jesus draws attention not only to the Example of Love we are to follow, but the *Power* to love that we need. And this is why He said this in **John 15:9-11**:

9 Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.

10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

11 These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

... which is what I was preaching at the Beginning of this Sermon.

We **MUST** *first* have a real, genuine, and vibrant Love for God that He gave us- or we will simply NOT be able (or willing) to continue to love others the Way Jesus did.

Jesus said the key to *His* Love was His own Relationship with God the Father: "**I abide in his love**" (verse 10). Jesus lives in constant and perfect Union with the Father. And the Effect of this is that the Father's Love moves into Jesus and lives there as a divine Power to love others. Then Jesus said at the end of verse 9, "**Abide in My love.**" So, He abides in His Father's Love- SO THAT we will be able to abide in His Love!

And that's how we are able to love each other "*as He loves us.*" He loves us by abiding in the Love of the Father. And we love each other by abiding in the Love of the Son- which IS the Love of the Father.

So, the “newness” of Jesus’ Commandment is not only that Jesus has become our Example for Love by taking the Role of a Servant, but also that Jesus has become our *Power* for Love by Himself abiding in the Father- so that as we abide in Him- we are given the very Love of the Father with which to love each other!

Dear friends, our Problem is NOT mainly that we don’t love like we should. Our Problem is mainly that because of our Sin, God’s Wrath remains on us. How is it removed? Why does God cease to be angry with us and instead pours Love into our Lives through Jesus and empower us to love Him as well as others? The answer is **John 15:13**: Jesus laid down His Life for His “friends”. Jesus died in our Place. Jesus endured the Wrath of God that we deserved- so that God’s Justice would be satisfied. And that is what allows His Love to flow unhindered through Christ to us and through us to each other!

Amen. Let’s pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your Pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.