

# A Great New Love

By Jeff Noblit

sermonaudio.com

**Bible Text:** John 13:34-35  
**Preached on:** Sunday, May 7, 2017

## **Anchored in Truth Ministries**

1915 Avalon Ave.  
Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

**Website:** [www.anchoredintruth.org](http://www.anchoredintruth.org)  
**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/anchoredintruth](http://www.sermonaudio.com/anchoredintruth)

Grab your Bibles and let's go to John 13 this morning. John 13. You know, when you've been in a church 37 years like I have here, some of you, a very very few of you about that long here, you wonder about things. You wonder, "Lord, are my children going to desire the things of God? Are they going to love the church? And now my grandchildren are going to love you and love the truth and love the church?" And the pressure is to keep doing new and different stuff to hopefully reach the next generation. Brothers and sisters, the thing that will reach the next generation is the same thing that reached the last generation and the generation before that and the generation before that because anything else you reach them with will not last. So we desperately throw ourselves in dependence on God's ordained means to convert the heart. That's the key, the true regeneration of the heart in man so that man then begins to love Christ, the things of God, the truths revealed in Scripture. Now, it may ebb and fall and rise and fall, but it's going to be there if the heart has been changed.

I want to talk to you this morning about "A Great New Love." A great new love. Notice what the Lord says in John 13, talking to his disciples, verses 34 and 35. He says,

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.

Three things about this. This is a great new love. First of all, it's a great new love because it comes from, I. A new source. A new source. Jesus says here this is a new commandment I'm giving you, to love one another. You say, "Now wait a minute, that's really an old commandment. That was under the Mosaic law. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves." Well, you're right but Christ takes the old law and he makes it new. Revelation 21:5, he says, "Behold, I am making all things new." Now, the things he'll bring to completion at the new creation at the end of the age, it'll all be new and – listen – he's already started the seeds and the cultivation of all the new stuff that will come into fruition at the end of the age. He's already doing some new stuff. Christ takes the Old Testament law, you see, and he fulfills it. He brings it to its full intent or potential. You might view it this way: he brings it to full bloom. We're seeing little sprigs and sprouts and grass and flower stems come up and not many of them, perhaps, have flowers yet but wait until, you know, later in May, the first of June, and then the flower comes on and

then you say, "Ah, that's what it really is." That's what Jesus did to the old commandment to love one another, he brought it into full bloom. He enabled us to see and experience what it really is. Christ takes the law of loving one another and produces, if you will, a new edition of it.

My first automobile was a 65 Ford Mustang. You couldn't have had a simpler automobile. It was a straight 6. There was nothing under the hood but the motor and a carburetor on top of it. It was a 3 speed manual and it wasn't much different than a lawnmower. I mean, you put it in gear, you pressed the gas or pressed the clutch or pressed the brake. I mean, it was just a simple automobile. I could have never envisioned the 2017 edition of the Ford Mustang. Have you seen some of those lately? Nothing like what I started out with. Man, it was used when I bought it.

Well, that's what Jesus does to love. It's the same love from God but he takes it and he's bringing a new edition of it out and he's the source of that new edition. So through Christ, the love of the brethren explodes into a greater, more glorious form. Now, how is this? Well, a subpoint here: it's because the Spirit is now within us. The Spirit is within us. I can't explain to you all the different dimensions of the Spirit's work from the Old Testament through to the New Testament, but I do know something unique happened at Pentecost, the giving of the Spirit to anoint the church age, and I do know there seems to be a difference in the teaching about how the Spirit is indwelt in men on this side of Calvary when we believe on Jesus Christ. The Bible says the Spirit now lives in us and, in fact, Christ lives in us in the person of the Spirit – now listen – to live out this new love. He's the source of it. We have a great new love God has given us to live out together as the saints of God and he is the source. You don't come into a church and grit your teeth and gird up the loins of your heart and mind and say, "I'm gonna really love these people." It's really not like that. No, you come in there and you let loose what God's put in there. If you're producing, it is not going to last. You're going to get burned out and washed out and irritable and become a knuckle-head if you do it in your strength. It's got to be of the new birth. He's the source of it. Romans 5:5 reminds us, "because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." There is now in every truly born again child of God a new capacity to both desire the fellowship of other believers, to love them and be devoted to them, and this new capacity is put into us by Christ.

Now here's an insight that I think we need to remember: it's something that you grow into. You don't quite get it all the moment you're converted but the germ is there, the seed is there, and then you grow in Christ, you grow in sanctification, and you know you're growing in Christ and in true sanctification because the love for the brethren grows in you. There is an increasing part of your heart that says, "I just can't get by without those folks. I've got to have a good Grace Life Church hit. I need to be around them again. I need to pray with them again. I need to hear the preaching again. I need to fellowship with them again." I was just so enriched at our men's fellowship because that was probably the first time in a long time that I literally just spent hours just talking to the men of our church and I came away from that saying, "I love these guys." It's just so real

and so genuine. There is no pretense, just brothers in Christ hanging out together. It's part of the reason why I felt led to preach on this.

But it is something that grows in you. As a matter of fact, in John 7:7 Jesus said, "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil." Now, in John 15:18 Jesus said, "If the world hates you, it hated Me first." Now wait a minute, Jesus first says, "The world can't hate you but it's going to hate Me because I testify that its deeds are evil." Then later he says, "The world is going to hate you," in essence. Well, which one is it? Well, it's both. I think what he's saying in John 7:7 is, "Right now there is not enough of me in you to trouble the world. There is not enough light and truth matured up in you yet to cause the lost around you to be convicted by you and confronted by the fruit of your life." He said, "But that's not the way it is about me. When I walked on the scene," Jesus is speaking now, he says, "When I walked on the scene, I brought the full noon light of holy light and truth to bear on people's hearts, minds and conscience and they don't like it. I'm an instant conviction," Jesus says, "everywhere I go." And as you grow in Christ, you know I've told you many times, don't go out there in the world and try to be a holy rolling Bible thumper, you just go out there and be real and love Jesus. You'll get in enough trouble. You just be what you are and you'll find people really don't like you for it, but it doesn't happen instantly. At first he says, "The world doesn't hate you but it hates Me." The point is: you haven't matured enough to have enough Jesus in you for it to have any impact on a lost world yet.

You know, Jesus was kind of like we had a fellow in our church years ago who before he became a Christian was a bouncer in one of the local clubs and the law in that time was that at 2 o'clock they had to turn the lights off and shut the club down. He said, "It's amazing. There would be people everywhere carousing and dancing and talking and drinking, having a big time," he said, "We'd cut those lights on and they'd scurry like roaches on a kitchen floor, running from that light." And Jesus said, "That's the way it is when I come on the scene, and as you mature in Christ, more and more that's going to be seen in you."

Now, what's the parallel I'm making? The parallel I'm making is this: Christ as he matures in you, as he grows in you, as he controls more of you, then more of the love he's placed in you – now listen – for other Christians is evidenced and felt and realized in your life. Friend, if you can just take the church or leave it, there's something badly missing in your soul or maybe you just haven't grown at all. I don't know. So Jesus said, "This is a brand new, a great new love because I'm the source of it. When I transform a man's heart, I live in him in the person of the Spirit and I put in him the same love that I have and I love my sheep. I love my church."

II. The course. It's a new course. He says, "Now, I want you to love one another," verse 34, "even as I have loved you." Now, first of all, he says, "I loved you." Now at this point he's not talking about the world in general. That's not the context. Don't interpret the verses out of context. He's talking about genuine believers. He said, "I have a special love for you."

So who does Jesus love? Well, we certainly want to teach and we do believe and teach that Jesus loves all men. There is a sense in which Jesus gives his universal call to all men everywhere and if anyone anywhere will repent and believe, Christ will take him. Amen? That's a truth but that's a limited love. Do you know why that's a limited love? Because if they don't repent and believe, they will only know Christ in his wrath and judgment, they will no longer know him in love. There is a limited nature to that broad love for all men.

But for those who believe, those who are his church, his love is a limitless love. So it's especially true for the church. Christ has a special love. The length of his love is for time and eternity for his church. The depth of his love is that he has a personal, particular and special heart devotion to those who are his and believe on him. He died for them and he will actually redeem them, or rather he did actually redeem them when he died for them, and he reclaimed them for his own.

One key illustration is Paul's exhortation to husbands in Ephesians 5 where Paul says, "Husbands, love your wives like Christ loves the church." I think we've made this very complicated and difficult. That may mean a lot of things but one of the primary meanings of that phrase is: Jesus doesn't love everybody the same way. He has a particular, special devotion to his church. Now, husbands, you may care for a lot of people and you may love a lot of people and Christians should try to love everyone they can, but there are too many people to love all the time, but you're to have a special particular love, husbands, for your own wife. You bring home the check so that you can pay the mortgage where she lives. You bring home the money so you can buy groceries where she lives. You make sure the light bill is paid where she keeps house. You are devoted to her. Now, here's what Jesus says: the parallel of that is, "I love all men but I have a special heart devotion for my church, those who believe on me."

That's the course we're to follow. Who are we to love? All men as best we can, the Bible tells us that, but especially for the church. Now how are we to love? He says in verse 34, "even as I have loved you. You're the special object of my love but even as I loved you." Now, how did he love his church or how does he love his church? Well, certainly he loves his church sacrificially but I think another point here is he loves his church without exception and without distinction. He loves everybody the same. He loves all of us. That's why I think small groups are such a powerful picture of the transforming power of God because in your small group there are folks that you kind of would naturally be drawn to and hang with and in your small group there are folks who you would not naturally be drawn to or hang with. I mean, you just don't fit. But when you love Jesus and you just view yourselves as wretched humbled sinners before a cross, you can just love everybody who knows the Lord. You just get over the worldly distinctions and the worldly classifications and you just love the brethren. You say, "Well, pastor, but that guy's hard to love!" No harder than it was for Jesus to love you. He loved you sacrificially, he loved you without exception and that's the way we are to love.

So we're to follow this new course, loving everyone the best we can, the Bible says, "As far as it is possible, do good to all men but especially to those of the household of the

faith." So we have a special love for those of the household of the faith and we want to love one another with a sacrificial love that makes no distinction among us, period. In John 15:17-19 Jesus said, "This I command you, that you love one another. If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you." So there's a love/hate thing that's going on in the world right now. We follow Jesus' course to love him and love his truth and therefore love his church and we love the church, other brothers and sisters, with a particular and with a special love and we try to be kind-hearted and sweet-spirited as we walk in his light and his truth in this world, but yet as we walk in his light in the world, Jesus said don't be surprised if this world will hate you.

So we love others outside of the church but – listen – others love others. So while we do love all, we especially love those that the others hate. Are you with me, church? You hear about this guy and this lady and this man, because of their faith in Christ they are ostracized or they're ridiculed or students are laughed at in school or whatever it is, and instead of joining with the world, we find ourselves saying, "No. The others hate them but I'll tell you what about me: I love them. They're trying to live for Christ. They're trying to honor the Lord. They love the Lord that I love." We love others but others love others. We love those that the others hate. That's the course we're on as we have this great new love in our lives. It makes us, as the Bible says – are you listening – a peculiar people. People who are not born of the Spirit look at us and think, "Why do they believe what they believe? Why do they value what they value? And why do they love each other the way they love each other?" Because God has done something in us.

He's the source and he's the pattern or the course, and then lastly, the new force. The new force. This new love that God's put in us is a powerful thing. It has a powerful force in it. Two main points here. First of all, it's a powerful force as a witness to ourselves of our own Sonship. It's a powerful way. One of God's primary means – listen to me – one of God's primary means whereby you can be assured you're one of God's children. He makes it very clear in the word of God. 1 John 3:14, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the," world? No. Because we love humanity? No. Now let the liberal progressive pervert the Bible. That's not what he's saying. We know that we have passed out of death into life, truly saved, truly born again, because we find a love for other Christians in our hearts.

I remember that so clearly as an 18 year old kid driving back to college and coming to faith in Christ in my car listening to a Presbyterian preacher, and as the weeks went on, I found myself being drawn to a brand new group of people and I found myself dying in relationships to the old groups of people I used to run with. Have you had that experience? Now if you grew up in church it would not be as drastic as mine, but do you find something in you that says, "I love to be around those who love Christ"? A lasting, enduring love for true believers is a true assurance that you are saved. We know, John says. Here's one of the key ways to know.

You know, the evangelists and the pastors of our past would say things to us like, "Maybe you didn't pray it right. You didn't believe it right. You didn't walk down the aisle right." And I'm not saying there's not something to some of that, but the Bible doesn't say hardly anything about that. What the Bible says: do you see and sense a difference in your affections? A new love for the Scriptures? A new love for the preaching of the word? That is, true Bible preaching? A new love for the church? A new love for the Gospel to go to the ends of the earth? There's just something in me. It's not all that it ought to be, but there's at least the germ in me that says, "Yes, that's what I want to be a part of and I can't get away." Listen, friend, it holds me. Sometimes I get tired of you. Go ahead, you get tired of me too. But I can't get away from you. I love you. As your pastor, I can tell you with all of my heart, "I love you." Do you know why? I love what you love and you love what your pastor loves. That's what keeps us together in love.

Do you remember in Matthew 28, Jesus says of the end times, "I'm going to come in judgment. I'm going to put the goats over here and the sheep over here and I'm going to judge them." And he said, "About these sheep, now, when I was hungry, they fed me. When I was thirsty, they gave me something to drink. When I was in prison, they visited me. When I was sick, they cared for me." They say, "Well, Lord, we didn't see you. When did that happen?" He said, "When you did it unto the least of these," not the world, not a common cause of helping humanity, that's not the text, "When you did it for these brothers of mine." Your love for true Christians in the midst of persecution, you see, persecution is going to come on the world on a global scale by the federal authorities and by the false harlot church who claim to be Christians and they're going to persecute the church and it's going to be a very difficult day and Jesus says, "You'll know my true children because they'll care for one another when other counterfeit Christians run and hide and find their safe places. Love," he says, "shows who has true saving faith. Not just any love but a special love for other Christians."

In James 2:15-17, "If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food." Now, who? The world? No. Humanity at large? No. The church, a brother or sister. This is very clear in the text. "If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,' and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself." James says if a person has a cold heart to a brother or sister in genuine need, now again the context is persecution so it's highly likely the genuine need is simply the result of their faith in Christ. It's not because they were foolish and lazy and didn't work and couldn't pay the bills. There are different Scriptures for those kind of brothers. This is a brother or sister who has dire physical need because they love Jesus and he says you'll know true Christians who have been really saved, they'll help that brother. Because it would be a lot easier from a worldly perspective just to go and kind of say, "Well, I believe in Jesus but I don't believe like they believe. Don't put me in jail too." The point though is: love for the church, love for the brethren, love for other Christians is a key witness to yourself that you belong to Christ.

Now, can I say something frank to you and honest as your pastor? Some of you have it but you need to stir it up a little bit. You need to stir it up a little bit. You need to decide

this morning, "I'm getting back in my small group and I'm gonna love my brothers and sisters in there. Our church is organized so I don't have to worry about 1,000 different people. That's impossible, but I can at least love my small group." You need to stir it up a little bit. Stir it up a little bit. It's there, you've just got to stir it up. You see, you come to church to repent. Say, "God, help me get back on track a little better." Now look, I understand, there is a season. We have people who have been small group leaders for 30 years and say, "Pastor, I need a year off." I understand that. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about some of you have been drifting on us for too long. You need to stir up. The Bible says, "Let the love of the brethren increase." Let it increase. Stir it up in you. Keep it going. It's what matters. It's what goes to last. It's what's of real value.

One last thing: it's a witness to the world of our Sonship. Not only does this love for the brethren in our hearts remind us, "I belong to God. That's why I love these people, these unique, peculiar people that the world hates." But also he says here, verse 35, "all men will know." All men. Now it's not just brothers. We've been seeing all those Scriptures we've been talking about just loving the brethren, loving brothers, now he says all the world will know that you are my disciples by the love you have one for another. He said the world will look on you, now this takes some time but they will see a type of devotion and commitment and love and care in the body of Christ that will cause them to come to a conclusion of something like this: that's not natural. Just regular folks don't quite love that way. They must belong to God. God must have done a work in their lives.

Now we're going to receive new members here in just a second and we're going to have the Lord's Table and do you know what the Lord's Table is? The Lord's Table is a love feast. We're just reuniting again in our hearts and minds that we're all in love with our Christ and we hold to him and his death, burial and resurrection for us – now listen – and we're all in love with each other. As a matter of fact, if you're here this morning and you're out of kilter with a brother or sister in your church, you need to right now repent of it and say, "God, I forgive that brother or sister. I will not hold anything against them. If you can forgive me, I can forgive them. It's over." Because this is a love communion with our Lord and with each other. Amen?