

GOSPEL OF JOHN
JESUS' LOVE
JOHN 13:31-38

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Introduction

The central verses in what we just read are *Verses 34-35*.

JESUS gave HIS DISCIPLES here a NEW COMMANDMENT just prior to going to the CROSS! But we need to understand that it is also intended for EVERY BELIEVER by way of the GREAT COMMISSION!

Matthew 28:19–20—“19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

Now in what way was this COMMAND a “NEW COMMANDMENT?”

Well, remember that **JESUS** said that the entire **OLD TESTAMENT LAW** is summed up by the two **COMMANDMENTS** that involve our **LOVING GOD** and **LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR!**

Matthew 22:37–40—“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

So how is **JESUS' COMMAND** here new? Well, it elevates our **LOVE** toward the **BRETHREN** to a whole new level. Before this **COMMAND** our **LOVE** toward our fellow **BELIEVERS** would have fallen under the love for our **NEIGHBOR** rule—**LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR AS OURSELVES**.

However, the newness of **JESUS' COMMAND** is in the new **STANDARD** that He gave—**“AS I HAVE LOVED YOU!”** (*i.e. As BRETHREN, we are to LOVE EACH OTHER, as CHRIST has LOVED us!*)

Of course **JESUS' LOVE** for us is a **SACRIFICIAL LOVE** that took **HIM** to the **CROSS** for us! Many times it is referred to by the **GREEK** word **“AGAPE”** or **“AGAPAO”** that is translated as **“LOVE”** in many places and as **“CHARITY”** in **“THE LOVE CHAPTER”** (*1 Corinthians 13*).

It is a **LOVE** that **SEEKS THE HIGHEST GOOD FOR ANOTHER!**

Now, that is simple to state, but it is **IMPOSSIBLE** to live out consistently apart from the **POWER** of **GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT** within the **BELIEVER!** That phrase, **“as I have loved you”** bumps **CHRIST'S COMMAND** up to an **IMPOSSIBLE** level for us **apart from HIS LOVE working in us and through us!** It is **HIS SUPERNATURAL LOVE** that comes from **HIS DIVINE NATURE** within us!

(*i.e. We can never attain that level of LOVE walking according to our flesh!*)

It's the same level as **PAUL'S COMMAND** to husbands in *Ephesians 5:25: Ephesians 5:25—“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*

Now listen close: We never reach a point where we can say, **“I've got that one down! Let's move on to other things!”** This **COMMAND TO LOVE** is one that we've got to keep working on **because of the tendency of our flesh to resist it!**

So, one of the keys to this **COMMAND** is to come to a greater understanding of **JESUS' LOVE FOR US! Our text reveals five aspects of this love:**

I. JESUS' LOVE WAS A COSTLY LOVE! (Vs 31-32)

This statement takes us back to *John 12:23*, where after hearing that some Greeks were seeking **HIM**, **JESUS** said, **“The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified.”** The context there makes it clear, **JESUS** was referring to the time for **HIS DEATH, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION**.

On one level, the **CROSS** was the ultimate in **HUMILIATION** and **SHAME**. There was **no worse way to die** than to be stripped naked, flogged, beaten up, and then nailed to a rugged **CROSS** that you were forced to carry and then hung up to suffer a slow, agonizing death as a public spectacle all while being **MOCKED** repeatedly!

But in another superior way, the **CROSS** was the ultimate of glory both for the **HEAVENLY FATHER** and **HIS SON**. To **GLORIFY GOD** is to both **DISPLAY** and **MAGNIFY HIS ATTRIBUTES!**

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At the **CROSS**, **GOD'S LOVE**, **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, **JUSTICE**, **MERCY**, and **GRACE** were magnified as never before in history!

At the **CROSS**, **GOD'S JUSTICE** was upheld as **HIS SINLESSLY PERFECT SON** bore the awful penalty that **HIS JUSTICE** demanded for all sinners. But at the same time **GOD'S LOVE** and **GRACE** were on display as **GOD** offered and still offers eternal life to all who will repent of their sin and trust in **JESUS** provision alone!

In *John 13:32*, **JESUS** referred to **HIS RESURRECTION** and **ASCENSION!** The **RESURRECTION** was **GOD'S** stamp of approval on **JESUS'** accomplishment by **HIS DEATH!** **JESUS'** **ASCENSION** into heaven exalted **HIM** again to **HIS HEAVENLY FATHER'S** right hand as **PAUL** stated this way in *Ephesians 1:21*–
“*Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:*”

And **PAUL** stated it this way in *Philippians 2:9-11*–“*Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*”

But the point is, **JESUS' LOVE** as seen at the **CROSS** was a **COSTLY LOVE!** That theme is repeated over and over again in the **WORD OF GOD!**

John 3:16–17–“*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*”

1 John 3:16–“*Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us:...*”

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Ephesians 5:1–2– “*1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.*”

For **JESUS** to go to the **CROSS** was an act of supreme **SELF-SACRIFICE**, which **HE** willingly endured on our behalf, but...**IT WAS COSTLY!**

II. JESUS' LOVE WAS A CARING LOVE! (Vs 33)
We see here **JESUS' TENDER CARING LOVE** for **HIS DISCIPLES** here expressed in two ways.

A. JESUS Addressed HIS DISCIPLES As “Little Children.”
This is the only time that this word is used in the **GOSPELS**. It is only used elsewhere in the **EPISTLE** of *1 John*, where the **APOSTLE JOHN** uses it seven times!
(*1 John 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21*)

It is a word of **tender feelings**, much as a father or mother has toward their little children who need their help and protection.

B. JESUS Explained To HIS DISCIPLES That HE Would Be Leaving Them Soon.

1. The DISCIPLES Would Seek JESUS!

2. The DISCIPLES Would Not Be Able To Go With JESUS! (At least not for now!)
PETER questioned the **LORD** about this in *Vs 36*. **PETER** didn't like the answer, but **JESUS** knew what **HE** was talking about just as **HE** always does!

In the next Chapter, **JESUS** explains that **they would go to where HE was going later, but not at this time.**

The picture here again is of a caring parent explaining to **HIS** children that **HE** has to go away for a while, and they can't accompany **HIM** for now!

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The point is, **JESUS' LOVE** was filled with tender feelings for **HIS OWN** here!

PAUL'S LOVE for the **THESSALONIAN CHURCH** emulated the **LOVE OF JESUS** that we see here!

1 Thessalonians 2:7–8–“7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: 8 So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.”

JESUS' LOVE WAS A COSTLY LOVE...A CARING LOVE...

III. JESUS' LOVE WAS A COMMANDED LOVE! (Vs 34)

In going to the **CROSS**, **JESUS** was obeying the **FATHER'S COMMANDMENT (John 10:18)**. Here **JESUS COMMANDED HIS** followers to **LOVE** one another, even as **HE** has **LOVED** us.

The fact that **JESUS COMMANDS** us to **LOVE** one another as **BELIEVERS** means that we **CAN** do it. Understand that there are no acceptable excuses if we fail as **BELIEVERS** to **LOVE** other **BELIEVERS**.

None of us can do it in our own strength, of course. **LOVE** is a fruit of the **HOLY SPIRIT**, that **HE** produces in us when we walk in dependence on the **HOLY SPIRIT** and **HIS POWER!**

Galatians 5:16–“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

Galatians 5:22–26–“22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.”

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Just as **JESUS OBEDIENTLY SACRIFICED HIMSELF** to go to the **CROSS** for our **SALVATION**, so we are to **OBEDIENTLY SACRIFICE** ourselves for the ultimate good of others!

If we as **BROTHERS** and **SISTERS** in **CHRIST** don't **LOVE** our **BROTHERS** and **SISTERS** in **CHRIST** in the way **CHRIST LOVED US**, we're being **DISOBEDIENT CHILDREN!**

JESUS' LOVE was not a **FEELING**, but an **ACTION OF OBEDIENCE TO HIS HEAVENLY FATHER!**

So, we should **NOT** look to have **FEELINGS** of **LOVE** before we **SHOW LOVE** by our **ACTIONS!**

Would you have wanted **JESUS** to follow **HIS FEELINGS**, or are you glad that **HE WAS OBEDIENT TO HIS HEAVENLY FATHER?**

JESUS' LOVE WAS A COSTLY LOVE...A CARING LOVE...A COMMANDED LOVE...

IV. JESUS' LOVE WAS A CONSPICUOUS LOVE! (John 13:35)

JESUS was **NOT** talking about just having **nice thoughts toward others... no one else can see that**. **HE** was talking about **having genuine LOVE from our HEART that manifests itself in our ACTIONS that others can see**. (And not that we do it to be seen!)

It's the sort of **LOVE** that stands out **CONSPICUOUSLY** in this self-centered world. This world should see the way that **BELIEVERS LOVE** one another and say, **“They must be followers of JESUS!”**

Sadly, many **CHURCHES** are known more for their **infighting** and **divisions** than they are for their **LOVE**. **JESUS** wants us to be known to others by the **LOVE that we have one toward another as BROTHERS** and **SISTERS** in **CHRIST!**

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A **CHURCH** family can sometimes have great **DIVERSITY** in it!
Think about just the **DIVERSITY** among **JESUS' DISCIPLES**.

Luke 6:15 records that **JESUS** chose **SIMON** called **ZEALOTES** (or **THE ZEALOT**). **SIMON ZEALOTES** is one of the obscure **APOSTLES** of whom we know very little about as none of his words are recorded in the **SCRIPTURES**.

The **ZEALOTS** were a **radical political group** that used intrigue, violence, force, and deception to try to achieve its goal of liberating the **JEWS** from **ROMAN** rule. They were **PATRIOTIC JEWS** to say the least! Many of them refused to pay taxes to **ROME!** The group was known for attacking and sometimes even murdering government officials, especially the hated **TAX COLLECTORS**.

And we know **JESUS** chose **MATTHEW (LEVI)** who was a **TAX COLLECTOR!** The **TAX COLLECTORS** were hated because they were viewed by their countrymen as having sold their souls to **ROME**. They were known for collecting unjust amounts from the **JEWISH** people in order to line their own pockets.

You could not have put two men of more **DIVERSE** backgrounds into the same group if you had tried! And these were just two of the men that **JESUS** was telling to **LOVE ONE ANOTHER!** That kind of **LOVE** would be **CONSPICUOUS!**

But don't think for one minute that there wasn't **DIVERSITY** among the **FISHERMEN** in the group that **JESUS** called! **NONE of us are really the same...We are all INDIVIDUALS with our LIKES and DISLIKES and even sometimes with PREJUDICES we grew up with...We all have our own idiosyncrasies...and the more differences there are between us and others, the more difficult it can be sometimes for us to LOVE as we are called to do!**

In the CHURCHES in the ACTS of the APOSTLES and in the EPISTLES you had JEWS and GENTILES in ONE BODY!

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LOVE for those who may be different from us has never been easy, but we are called to LOVE them anyway!

JESUS' LOVE WAS A COSTLY LOVE...A CARING LOVE...A COMMANDED LOVE...A CONSPICUOUS LOVE... and lastly...

V. JESUS' LOVE WAS A COMMITTED LOVE! (Vs. 36-38)

I have preached other messages that focus on **PETER'S failure and restoration**, so I'm not going to focus here on the many lessons that can be gleaned from that story!

Just understand that while **PETER** thought that he was **FULLY COMMITTED** to **JESUS** (and in many ways, he was), his **FAILURE** stemmed from **not recognizing his own weakness**. His trusting in his own loyalty rather than in the **LORD** set him up for this **FAILURE**.

Let's not focus on **PETER'S COMMITMENT** to **JESUS**, but rather let's focus on **JESUS' COMMITMENT** to **PETER** and to the other **TEN DISCIPLES** in spite of their failure.

JESUS knew that **PETER** would follow **HIM** afar off and would **DENY HIM** and **HE** predicts it here. **HE** also knew that all the **DISCIPLES** would **FORSAKE HIM** and **FLEE** for their lives when **HE** would be arrested later that night, in spite of their protests to the contrary that are recorded in *Matthew 26:31, 35, 56*.

But, **JESUS** didn't cast them off because of their **FAILURES**. **HE** loved them to the *end* (or *conclusion; John 13:1*) and **HE** showed that **LOVE** by restoring them and using them after **HIS RESURRECTION**.

LOVE means being committed to the other person's highest good. The highest good for every **BELIEVER** is that they would become more like **JESUS CHRIST** by growing in holiness and living to glorify **HIM**.

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If we are all **COMMITTED** to **LOVE** each other as **BROTHERS and SISTERS** in **CHRIST**, then that should cause us to be able to work through any conflicts that arise *“endeavoring to keep the unity of the SPIRIT in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:3)*

So this **LOVE** that **CHRIST** calls us to have in our midst here as a **CHURCH** is a **SELF-SACRIFICING, CARING COMMITMENT** which, in **OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST** and the help of **HIS HOLY SPIRIT**, shows itself in **SEEKING THE HIGHEST GOOD** of each other as **BELIEVERS** so that the world can know that we are **CHRIST'S DISCIPLES!**

Conclusion

Now listen, this kind of **LOVE** is the **IDEAL** and we live in a sinful world that presents us with many difficult situations that require **PRAYERFUL WISDOM** for us to obey **JESUS' COMMAND**.

Does loving someone require that I like that person? You know that we can show love for people that we don't particularly like. Yes, it is possible!

Does it mean that I must become a close friend with a difficult person? That's not what **JESUS** called us to at all!

Also, since **BIBLICAL LOVE** seeks the highest good for the other person, namely, that he becomes more like **CHRIST**, sometimes it requires **TOUGH LOVE!** Confronting a person with their sin or letting them experience the consequences of their sin so that they learn to hate it! *(Acts 8:18-24; 13:6-12)*

BIBLICAL LOVE does not enable a person to continue in sinful or irresponsible ways. **LOVE** tries to help a person learn to be obedient to **GOD** and be responsible to *“bear his own burden” (Galatians 6:5).*