

I. Introduction

A. Mark 9:35 (Matthew 20:26; 23:11; Mark 10:43-44; Luke 22:26).

35 Sitting down, He called the twelve and *said to them, “If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.”

II. WHAT:

A. v.34 “(A new commandment) I give to you all in order that/that you love one another, just as/in the same manner I have loved you all, in order that also you all love one another.”

1. This commandment, which is simple and illustrative of the way Jesus lived while with the men on the earth, is the basis of the New Covenant.
2. This commandment as described last week, is the only commandment that we have as a church. All other instructions come as a result of this one commandment.
 - a) But, the question that comes from this verse is: “How did Jesus love these disciples?”
 - (1) Why is this the question we need to answer?
 - (2) 1) because His love for these men is the basis of our love for one another.
 - (3) 2) because His love for these men is indicative of the love between the Father and the Son.
 - (4) 3) because His love for these men is the basis of the rest of the instructions for the church.
 - b) How did Jesus love these men?
 3. John 13:1 = “to the end/uttermost...”
 - a) What does this mean?
 - b) It would seem that this is the heart of what Jesus meant in this greatest commandment.
 - (1) Matthew 10:2; 24:13; Mark 13:13 = “the one enduring to the end shall be saved.” = to the end time.
 - (2) Luke 18:5; 2 Thessalonians 2:16 = “utterly (completely/as much as possible)”
 - c) Which one do we choose?
 - d) Either one would fit.
 - (1) Jesus loved His disciples until the end.
 - (2) Jesus loved His disciples utterly/completely/as much as possible.

4. In order to help us, we need to look further into His discourse.
 - a) These men will hear this discourse in a matter of minutes, all spoken in one sitting.
 - b) We will have taken months to go through it, by the time we finish.
5. So, we need to look further into it in order to understand which He meant.

B. John 15:10

1. = Jesus kept the Father's commandments and remained in His love.
2. Which commandments did He keep?
3. What commandments did Jesus hear from the Father?

John 5:30

30 "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

John 8:28-29

28 So Jesus said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.

29 "And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him."

John 4:34

34 Jesus *said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.

John 17:4-5

4 "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.

5 "Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

- a) Jesus never said or did anything that was not a direct result of instructions from the Father.
- b) Jesus obeyed the Father and remained in loving relation to the Father.
- c) Jesus was loved by the Father in so far as Jesus obeyed Him.

III. WHY:

- A. The key, however, is this: the motivation for obedience was not blessing. It was not benefit. The motivation for obedience was love-love for the Father.

John 14:30–31

30 “I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me;

31 but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here.

1. Therefore, Jesus’ first motivating factor in loving these men was that He loved the Father in priority.
2. We can assume, then, that He was instructed by the Father to love these men.
 - a) John 17:6 = these men first belonged to the Father (since all things are subject to Him).
 - b) John 17:7-8 = Jesus’ words were given to the disciples as a result of the Father’s instructions to do so.
 - c) **John 17:14** “I have given them Your word;
3. Further, the Father gave Jesus words to give to these men, who, in turn, were to give to the others to follow who would believe in Christ through their word.
 - a) This pattern was all **motivated through love**.

John 17:20–24

20 “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;

21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, *are* in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

22 “The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;

23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.

24 “Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

- b) We see from this, then, that the Father loves the Son (John 5:20).
- c) The Son loves the Father (John 14:30).
- 4. We will even see that the Spirit loves the Son and the Father (John 16:13 = speaking in the exact same manner as Christ who did not speak of His own initiative either).
- B. But, there is a breakdown of this love relationship and it isn't the Father, Son, or the Holy Spirit.
- C. It is the disciples.

1. These men were failing to love Jesus Christ. We know this from the Lord Himself:

John 14:28

28 "You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' **If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced** because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

2. These men were also failing to love one another as none of them wanted to wash the other's feet (Luke 22:24).
 - a) These men were in regular argument over who would be greatest in the kingdom!
 - b) They were only thinking of themselves, their interests, and how to be above the other disciples.
3. But, Jesus came to them as a slave! A shameful slave!!
 - a) This must have been the Father's instruction.
 - b) If the disciples are going to be perfect (Matthew 5:48), then they must be perfect in love; love for God and love for the other disciples.
4. But, they weren't.
5. We have rehearsed their faults before.
 - a) Here is a short list:
 - b) Pride-Mark 9:33-34
 - c) Lack of faith-
 - d) One spoke for Satan-Mark 8:33
 - e) Exclusivity-Mark 9:38

38 John said to Him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to prevent him because he was not following us."
 - f) Eyes set on their own glory - Mark 10:35-37

35 James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, *came up to Jesus, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You."

36 And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

37 They said to Him, "Grant that we may sit, one on Your right and one on *Your* left, in Your glory."

- g) And, when Jesus had the most to teach them, they scattered - Matthew 26:56
56 “But all this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets.” Then all the disciples left Him and fled.
 - h) This behavior is a far cry from the consistent behavior we see from Christ: faithful, obedient, focused, submissive, humble, and loving.
6. Yet, to echo what the Apostle Paul would write decades later, the greatest of these is love.
 7. Therefore, what is needed is love, and they did not have it.
 - a) Jesus understood that.
 - b) Jesus experienced their lack of love for Him.
 - c) Very disappointing.
 - d) Very sad.
- D. Therefore, if these men were to lead the church, the bride of Christ, into her glory with blamelessness, they must become familiar with love.
1. Think about it:
 - a) They have to get past their familiarity with the Law of Moses.
 - b) They have to let go of their traditions and habits.
 - c) They must let go of their personal strife they might have toward one another.
 - d) They must actively, positively, obediently, now, walk in love.
 2. Remember, Jesus said, “love one another as I have loved you...”
 3. Therefore, we need to ask again, how did Jesus love them?
 - a) He was patient.
 - b) He was forbearing.
 - c) He would care for their needs.
 - d) He would give them ministry when they weren’t quite ready.
 - e) He would answer their questions.
 - f) He would pray for them.
- E. But all of this is really summed up in a single saying of Jesus back in John 15:12-17
- F. In the heart of that instruction, Jesus gives the parameters of love, the very parameters He set!
1. Here they are:

John 15:13

13 “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

 2. This gives quality to the command to love.
 3. Remember, Jesus said that He is the good shepherd and a good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep:

John 10:11

11 “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

4. And, according to the rest of the book of John, and the testimony of the other gospels, and the epistles, Jesus did, in fact, die for the benefit of the sheep.

John 10:15

15 even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

5. This is the nature of love, as defined by the Son of God Himself.

IV. HOW:

A. Now, how are the disciples going to arrive at this challenging level of love?

1. From here, we will see the NT develop the quality of the love in the hearts of these men, and Paul, for our instruction.
2. How, then, will the apostles arrive at this love?
 - a) We know this:
 - (1) Jesus surpasses Moses since Moses is a servant of Christ, and Christ is God.
 - (2) Love is the fulfillment of the Law.
 - (3) The Old Covenant is surpassed by the New Covenant.
 - (4) The New Commandment of the New Covenant is to love one another.
 - b) But, we also know this:

Romans 7:18–21

18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not.

19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.

20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

3. How will any disciple ever obtain the prize of this kind of love under these conditions?
 - a) Well, it is significant that Jesus said that He was giving a New Commandment in the same discourse that He said His blood, His sacrificial death, was the blood of the New Covenant because apart from that, you cannot have this kind of love in your soul.
 - b) Consider:
 - (1) Romans 5:1-6
 - (2) Galatians 4:6; 5:22
 - (3) 2 Thessalonians 3:5

5 May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ.
 - c) Thus, the source of love is God working in us:
4. However, we are commanded to “love one another.”
 - 1 Corinthians 14:1
 - 1 Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy.

Colossians 3:14

14 Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

Ephesians 4:1–3

Unity of the Spirit

1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,

2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love,

3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

1 John 3:17–18

17 But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

Ephesians 5:1–2

1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;

2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

Ephesians 5:25

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,

Ephesians 5:22

22 Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

Titus 2:3–5

3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good,

4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 *to be* sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

- a) Need I go on?
 - (1) How can we do this?!
 - (2) This is impossible! RIGHT!
- 5. That is the point.
- 6. Or, to put it like Paul did:
 - Galatians 3:3
 - 3** Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?
 - a) Beloved, you are under command by Jesus Christ, under penalty of death (1 Corinthians 11:30-31) to love one another.
 - b) However, He does not always simply kill us when we fail to love like we should, does He?

7. What is it, then, that builds us up to love like this?
 - a) Do you want the answer?
 - (1) We know that love is from God, however, this love is already in our hearts (Romans 5:5).
 - (2) What will take it from our hearts and put it into our members?

John 14:15

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

15 Ἐὰν ἀγαπᾷτέ με, τὰς ἐντολὰς τὰς ἐμὰς τηρήσετε·

- b) The Word of Christ will produce the faith necessary to live by the Spirit and, as a result, cause us to walk in love.

Romans 10:17

17 So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

8. Therefore, you may consider yourselves a lover of the Word of God, a passionate follower of Christ, an undying loyal friend of the risen Lord.
9. But, if you do not have love for one another, you are not really listening to the Word of Christ but fashioning it to your own fancy.
 - a) It is not shaping you.
 - b) You are shaping it.

V. Next time, we will begin to learn what this looks like in the life of the church!