

## Obligated to Love Others

John 13: 34-35

Our text today comes at a definitive time in the lives of the disciples. They have just finished eating the Passover meal in the Upper Room. Jesus will soon be arrested and condemned to death. In a few short hours, He will be crucified on the cross of Calvary. The disciples will be scattered, afraid, and doubtful. The One they believed in will have been taken from them. Their faith will be tested as never before. If there was ever a time in their lives when they needed each other, it would be then.

Our circumstances are much different today, but the difficulties we face are similar. The world in which we live is increasingly less tolerant of our faith. Our religious liberties are vanishing before our eyes. Our faith is being tested as never before. If we ever needed each other, we do so today more than we ever have.

I realize also that we aren't the only ones who are struggling. The world is a difficult place to live. Our economy is still not stable. People are concerned about health care, insurance, retirement, and a host of other issues. Many feel as if they are forced to face these difficulties alone, with no one to care or understand. Our society is changing rapidly, but the basic needs of humanity remain the same. Everybody needs someone to lean on, someone to love them and share in their times of difficulty.

Jesus spoke these words thousands of years ago, but they are as timely today as they were when He spoke them. He urges the disciples regarding their love for one another. I want to look at the [directives](#) Jesus gives as we consider that we are: [Obligated to Love Others](#).

### **I. The Expression of Love (34a) – A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another.**

Keep in mind, Jesus will soon be crucified. His time with the disciples is drawing to a close. He has spent about three years with the men, and they have experienced much together. There is much they could have talked about, but Jesus knows they need final instructions. This is not a time for small talk or idle chatter. Jesus is emphasizing the matters of importance. He is leaving final words that will guide their lives in His absence.

- Jesus is aware of the need for love among the disciples. He knows it will be imperative to their spiritual well being and advancement of the Gospel. He admonishes them to love one another. This is a matter of great importance.
- I am sure these men were all close. They had spent a lot of time together, with each of them making great sacrifices to follow the Lord. However, some of them shared closer relationships than others. There had been some debate and contention at times. James and John

had asked to sit on the right and left hand of Jesus, creating jealousy among the others. Peter was always outspoken and part of the inner circle. Matthew was a tax collector. Thomas was somewhat of a loner, prone to doubt and pessimism. The point is: all these men were different. They had different personalities and points of view. They were to lay aside any personal differences they had and love one another. Their love for each other was to exceed any former controversies or obstacles they faced.

- This stands as a great challenge for us today. We too are called to love one another. We too are all different. We have different likes and dislikes; different strengths and weaknesses; and different callings and points of view. However, we need each other! The world in which we live creates challenges we can't overcome alone. We must be willing to lay aside any differences we have and love one another. Many churches are in turmoil and a state of decline because believers can't love each other and get along! [1 Cor.13:1 – Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.](#) [1 Cor.13:13 – And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.](#)

## **II. The Expectation to Love (34a) – A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another.**

Jesus isn't speaking of something He hopes the disciples will grasp and engage in. He isn't offering a suggestion for their consideration. In fact, He reveals this matter isn't optional. He has commanded they love one another. This was the last charge Jesus gave the disciples before being led away to the cross. It was imperative they love one another.

- This teaching isn't new to the disciples. They have been challenged concerning love before. Jesus spoke of loving their neighbor on many occasions. Likely the most memorable was when He spoke of the great commandment. [Matt.22:37-40 – Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.](#) <sup>[38]</sup> [This is the first and great commandment.](#) <sup>[39]</sup> [And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.](#) <sup>[40]</sup> [On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.](#)

- We too need reminded that loving one another isn't optional. We know love is essential in our relationship to Christ, and yet many times we allow anger and bitterness to hinder our love for one another. We cannot be right with God, nor love Him, if we do not love our brother! [1 John 3:14 – We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.](#) [1 John 4:20 – If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?](#)

## **III. The Example of Love (34b) – as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.** The love Jesus spoke of was no ordinary love. They were commanded to love each other as He loved them.

- This is certainly a tall order, but one we are expected to fulfill nonetheless. We are to love one another as Jesus loved us. We don't have time for an in depth look at Jesus' love, but I do want to mention a couple aspects of His great love. We know it was:
  - **Selfless** – Many today are willing to show compassion toward those who are beneficial to them, but Jesus loved all regardless of their condition or ability to return any favors. In fact, He was often drawn toward those who had nothing to offer, those in desperate need of help.
  - **Impartial** – Jesus was not prejudice with His love. He showed no partiality toward a particular group while neglecting others. He took time for the poor and needy. He loved the sick and hurting. He ministered to the rich and prominent. He spent time with the educated and unlearned. Jesus loved people, regardless of their status, social standing, race, or political views.
  - **Enduring** – Jesus was not fickle with love toward others. His love was not influenced or motivated by circumstances. His love endured regardless of the actions of others. There were times when His love was rejected and He continued to love. There were times when those He loved turned on Him, even denying Him, and yet He loved them anyway!
  - **Sacrificial** – It is impossible to think of Jesus' love and not consider the sacrificial nature of His love. He often sacrificed His time when dealing with large crowds. He made a great sacrifice in being separated from the Father as He dwelt here on earth. His greatest sacrifice was clearly His offering of Himself on the cross for our sin. He loved us enough to take our place, bearing our sin and suffering the righteous judgment of God.

For us, this is likely the most difficult aspect to emulate. We love others, but our love often has boundaries. We will give in love for others, but often resist sacrificial love. I pray we will develop the kind of love Jesus had for one another.

**IV. The Evidence through Love (35)** – *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* Jesus knew His time with the disciples would soon be over. He was preparing for the cross, knowing what was to come. He would ascend back to His Father and the disciples would remain to continue the work, preaching and sharing the Gospel. Jesus knew the opposition would remain fierce. Many would deny the truth and others would question the legitimacy of the disciples and the message they shared. Love would be essential for the furtherance of the Gospel. Love would separate the followers of Christ from the world. By loving one another, as Christ loved them, the world would see and know they were true followers of Christ.

- I am reminded of the great need for love in our day. We live in a fast paced world. Many never take the time to notice others. We are so busy and burdened taking care of our own needs

that we fail to consider the needs of others. The world is looking for someone to show some loving compassion. They seek someone to care. They seek a message that transforms those who were once selfish and unconcerned to loving, giving people. We must love one another so the world can experience that love and recognize the source of our love. There is no greater way to reveal Jesus to a world that needs Him than by loving as He loved.

- I wonder if there is enough evidence of Christ's love in our lives for the world to notice. As those who know us examine our lives, do they see the love of Christ in us? Are we impacting the unsaved by living out the love of Christ before them? Our love for the Lord and one another is the greatest witness we have. It does us no good to recite doctrine if our hearts do not show love!

**Conclusion:** We live in a difficult day. Many are struggling through difficult circumstances and hurting from the pain they bear. This world needs the love of Christ. Are we loving as we should? Could it be said that we love others as Christ loved us? H.A. Ironside said this: *Love is a very practical thing. To what extent are we manifesting it toward those in more difficult circumstances than ourselves? To what extent are we manifesting it to those who have failed and sinned? Are we content simply to point out their faults and criticize and say hard, unkind things? Or do we love them enough to go to them in the Spirit of Christ and seek to recover them to Himself? "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another."*<sup>i</sup>

In order to love as Christ loves, one must have experienced the love of Christ in salvation. Do you know Christ as your personal Savior? Have you repented of sin and confessed your need for salvation? If not, please come to the Lord in salvation.

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<sup>i</sup> H.A. Ironside Expository Commentary - H. A. Ironside Commentary – John.