

Loving and Caring for Others John 13:34-35

Introduction:

A. A New Commandment - John 13:34-35

1. In Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus said that the Old Testament law and prophets could be summed up in two commands:
 - a) Love God
 - b) Love your neighbor as yourself
2. But in John 13:34-35 Jesus said that something Different is expected of believers!
 - a) Something so special that it needs a new commandment.
34 “I give you a new commandment—to love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 Everyone will know by this that you are my disciples—if you have love for one another.
 - b) You would think the special commandment would be for loving unbelievers!
 - c) But no, it is for loving believers!
 - d) What – “to love one another” – v. 34b
 - e) How – “Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.” – v. 34c
 - f) Why – “Everyone will know by this that you are my disciples—if you have love for one another.” – v. 35
3. This is the one place in John’s Gospel where Jesus uses this word for ‘new’
 - a) It is used also in 19:41 of the ‘new’ tomb in which he was laid.
 - b) There is another Greek word for ‘new’ that means ‘recent,’ whereas this word has about it the notion of ‘fresh.’
 - c) It is not so much that the commandment has not been given before as that it has a different quality about it, a quality of freshness that differentiates it.

I. What is so different?

What, then, is so different about our Lord’s command here that He can call it “new”?

A. Love is a command

1. This new commandment is a command given by our Lord to the church
2. Loving one another is not a recommendation or a good piece of advice by our Lord.
 - a) *Love is a command*, one which John most certainly would not forget
 - b) 1 John 3:23 - ²³And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.
 - c) Since loving one another is a command, our only choice is to obey or disobey our Lord in this.
3. Love is a duty we must perform in deed.
 - a) Some people think of love as a feeling; Jesus describes love here in terms of our actions.
 - b) We want to wait till we feel love, and then express it.
 - c) It is interesting that Peter describes love as the capstone of Christian virtues and disciplines.
(1) 2 Peter 1:5-7 ⁵But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

B. A New Standard

1. The most important “new” dimension to our Lord’s command here is the standard which He sets for the love He requires: “*Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.*”
 - a) It is one thing to love one another as we love and care for ourselves.
 - b) It is a vastly greater love that gives up one’s own life for another, that sacrifices self-interest to promote the interests of another (John 15:13; Philippians 2:1 ff.).
2. The sacrificial work of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary is the “new” standard for the Christian’s love for fellow-believers.
 - a) Jesus loved them so deeply that he was about to go to the cross for them.
 - b) And it is love like this that he looks for from us.

C. The Model for Loving One Another

1. This last night Jesus is with the disciples, He wanted to tell them all they would need to know to carry out His work on earth when He was no longer with them physically.
 - a) Friends - Jesus wanted the disciples to know that He considered them friends, not servants.
 - (1) John 15:11-17 ¹¹“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that your joy may be full.* ¹²This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. ¹⁴You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. ¹⁵No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.* ¹⁷These things I command you, that you love one another.
 - b) Unity - He longed for them to be in complete unity with Him and to share the fullness of His love relationship with the Father.
 - (1) "My prayer is . . . that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (John 17:20-23).
 - c) Loving other believers and being in unity with them shows the world that Christ is the center of your life.
 - d) The abundant love which God the Father has for His Son, Jesus Christ, is the source of the love the Son has for His followers and, in turn, is the model for the love you are to have toward others.
2. God shows over and over in our Christian experience that we can do nothing without each other in the body of Christ.

II. How Do We Love One Another?

A. Loving Each Other at The Lighthouse

1. The New Testament reminds us that the church is God’s people coming together to listen to God, receive His forgiveness and guidance and be His disciples who actively love God, each other and the lost.
2. It is also important for us to see that when people we know who are part of the church visit us, care for us, help us, that that is the church visiting us, helping us and caring for us.
 - a) Now think about the ways people need help.
 - b) As part of the church each one of us has a role to play in these ways.
3. When we think of caring for others, we usually think of the practical care people need.
4. Over the last year listen to how God has shown His love to people through our congregation:
 - a) cooking meals for sick people
 - b) helping clean out and repair flooded houses
 - c) babysitting and animal sitting
 - d) giving others a ride to the doctor or hospital
 - e) visiting others when they are absent from church
 - f) visiting and teaching people in the prisons
 - g) sending cards to people telling them we are praying for them or missing them
 - h) praying for people
 - i) giving food
 - j) plus there are many more.
5. Can you think of a way someone in this congregation has helped you?
 - a) Thank God for them and His loving care through them.
 - b) Keep in mind that it is God showing His love to you through them, His people, the Church.
 - c) Unfortunately someone people believe the church should keep its nose out of this practical help.
 - d) However that is not the teaching of the bible.

B. How to Love Your Brothers and Sisters

1. Christ places a special bond of love between His followers.
2. This love comes from the Spirit and is the same love that flows from the Father to the Son and from the Son to His followers.

3. God's Word is filled with instructions about how Christ expects you to treat others with whom you fellowship.
 - a) Hebrews 10:24-25 - "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching"
 - b) Christ-honoring relationships don't just happen.
 - c) They require careful cultivation and nurture.
 - d) That's part of the reason we need to fellowship with one another.
 - e) Because all of us live in fleshly bodies, it is easy to fall into patterns of thoughtlessness in the way we treat others.
4. The best way to do this is found in the "one another's" of the New Testament.
 - a) "Love one another" (John 13:34, 35).
 - b) "Be at peace with each other" (Mark 9:50).
 - c) "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love" and "honor one another" (Romans 12:10).
 - d) "Live in harmony with one another" (Romans 12:16).
 - e) "Accept one another" (Romans 15:7).
 - f) "Instruct one another" (Romans 15:14).
 - g) "Serve one another in love" (Galatians 5:13).
 - h) "Carry each other's burdens" (Galatians 6:2).
 - i) "Be patient, bearing with one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2).
 - j) "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other" (Ephesians 4:32).
 - k) "Submit to one another" (Ephesians 5:21).
 - l) "Encourage each other" (1 Thessalonians 4:18).
 - m) "Confess your sins to each other" and "pray for each other" (James 5:16).
 - n) "Offer hospitality to one another" (1 Peter 4:9).

III. Why the Commandment Is Needed

A. So People Can Experience God's Love

1. Our acts of caring for others are ways God will use to help others experience His love, and also to create opportunities for us to develop relationships with them.
 - a) That allows us to share more about how good God is and what He does in our lives.
 - b) We need to take this seriously both as individuals and as a church.
2. Think about your own life.
 - a) Who has good placed in your path that needs some help or care?
 - b) How are you helping them?
 - c) How can this be an opportunity for you to build or strengthen a relationship?
 - d) What spiritual conversations have you been able to start?
 - e) Did you ask them if you can pray for them?
 - (1) It could be as simple as saying, "Can I pray for you?"
 - (2) It may be telling people that even though they are going through a tough time, God still loves them and they are not necessarily being punished.
3. Our acts of service, especially in caring, are not just about doing stuff.
 - a) They are about building relationships so that we can connect people to God and to His people.
 - b) This is why it is also important that we have leaders and volunteers who are being shaped by God through their church life and worship.
 - c) We need to see that care is much bigger than practically caring for the individual.
 - d) This means not just looking at the physical needs of people, but especially at their spiritual needs.
 - e) A good question to ask is, "Am I being shaped by God, sharing God's forgiveness and inviting others to be part of His kingdom?"
 - f) The truth is unfortunately we often get distracted from this calling.
4. We should be constantly preparing our life as God's people, loving God, loving each other and loving lost people.
 - a) Where do you need help so that you are better able to be part of our congregation's life?
 - b) I need to know, the Elders need to know, the House Church pastors need to know to we can help you.

B. So We Can Minister to Jesus – Matthew 25:31-40

1. There is something very important to remember
 - a) As we get involved in caring for others, God will use these interactions to help us grow as His disciples and help us understand more about Him and His way of life.
 - b) Matthew 25:31-40
 - ³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.
 - ³² Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.
 - ³³ And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.
 - ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.
 - ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
 - ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’
 - ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?
 - ³⁸ And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?
 - ³⁹ And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’
 - ⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’
2. Think about what this means!
 - a) When we love and care for others it’s not just about us giving something on behalf of God.
 - b) It is also about us ministering to Jesus and receiving something from God.
3. Story about how God changed Jim Cymbala not through prayer but through him serving another person.
 - a) It was Easter Sunday and I was so tired at the end of the day that I just went to the edge of the stage, pulled down my tie and sat down and draped my feet over the edge. It was a wonderful service. Our leaders and pastoral assistants were talking with people. As I was sitting there I looked up the middle aisle, and there in about the third row was a man who looked about fifty, disheveled, filthy. He looked up at me rather sheepishly, as if saying, “Could I talk to you?” We have homeless people coming in all the time, asking for money or whatever. So as I sat there, I said to myself, though I am ashamed of it, “What a way to end a Sunday. I’ve had such a good time, preaching and ministering, and here’s a fellow probably wanting some money for more wine.” He walked up. When he got within about five feet of me, I smelled a horrible smell like I’d never smelled in my life. It was so awful that when he got close, I would inhale by looking away, and then I’d talk to him, and then look away to inhale, because I couldn’t inhale facing him. I asked him, “What’s your name?” “David.” “How long have you been on the street?” “Six years.” “How old are you?” “Thirty-two.” He looked fifty- hair matted; front teeth missing; wino; eyes slightly glazed. “Where did you sleep last night, David?” “Abandoned truck.” I keep in my back pocket a money clip that also holds some credit cards. I fumbled to pick one out thinking; I’ll give him some money. I’ll have to do it because no one will volunteer. They are all busy talking with others. Usually we don’t give money to people. We take them to get something to eat. I took the money out. David pushed his finger in front of me. He said, “I don’t want your money. I want this Jesus, the One you were talking about, because I’m not going to make it. I’m going to die on the street.” I completely forgot about David, and I started to weep for myself. I was going to give a couple of dollars to someone God had sent to me. See how easy it is? I could make the excuse I was tired. There is no excuse. I was not seeing him the way God sees him. I was not feeling what God feels. But oh, did that change! David just stood there. He didn’t know what was happening. I pleaded with God, “God, forgive me! Forgive me! Please forgive me. I am so sorry to represent You this way. I’m so sorry. Here I am with my message and my points, and You send somebody and I am not ready for it. Oh, God!” Something came over me. Suddenly I started to weep deeper, and David began to weep. He fell against my chest as I was sitting there. He fell against my white shirt and tie, and I put my arms around him, and there we wept on each other. The smell of His person became a beautiful aroma. Here is what I thought the Lord made real to me: If you don’t love this smell, I can’t use you, because this is why I called you where you are. He started memorizing portions of Scripture that were incredible. We got him a place to live. We hired him in the church to do maintenance, and we got his teeth fixed. He was a handsome man when he came out of the hospital. They detoxed him in 6 days.

He spent that Thanksgiving at my house. He also spent Christmas at my house. When we were exchanging presents, he pulled out a little thing and he said, "This is for you." It was a little white hanky. It was the only thing he could afford. A year later David got up and talked about his conversion to Christ. The minute he took the microphone and began to speak, I said, "The man is a preacher." This past Easter we ordained David. He is an associate minister of a church over in New Jersey. And I was so close to saying, "Here, take this; I'm a busy preacher." We can get so full of ourselves.

- b) As you care for others look for how God is meeting your needs.
- c) Look for how God is shaping you.

C. The Body of Christ

1. Lost people see Jesus, today in His Word and in His Body – the Church!
2. Fellowship with other believers is really important because it allows you to show love to them, and for them to show love toward you.
 - a) Christ brings believers together as a family.
 - b) He provides the ideal place for you to grow-His church.
 - c) The church is not a building or an organization, although it uses both of these.
 - d) The church is the living body of Christ in the world today.
 - e) Each local body of baptized believers is called to carry Christ's ministry to the world.
3. A person who professes to be a Christian but does not fellowship with His church is disregarding God's Word and is living outside His will.
 - a) A committed Christian stays in fellowship with a local body of believers in order
 - (1) To grow in Christ,
 - (2) To worship,
 - (3) To use his or her gifts to serve others,
 - (4) To receive instruction from God's Word,
 - (5) To learn how to reach lost people.
4. The world can mimic many aspects of the church: its traditions and rituals, its ethics and morality, and its social ministries.
 - a) But it cannot imitate the love of the Spirit.
 - b) When we love one another as Christ loves us, we become a living expression of Christ.
 - c) We bring glory to God the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ!