



Love One Another

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Introduction:

During this past month we have been looking at love. First we talked about the Love God has for us and our response to that, then the covenant love that there is in a marriage, and today we want to conclude our series on love. It is very obvious from the text we will be reading from this morning, that the way we love each other demonstrates whether or not we are pupils, disciples of our Lord.

Text: John 13:34-35 – “I’m giving you a new commandment: Love each other in the same way that I have loved you. Everyone will know that you are my disciples because of your love for each other.”

If people are going to know we are His disciples by the love we have for each other, there has to be something unique about that love. The way we demonstrate love must be easily recognizable as a manner of love different from what is generally seen and acceptable.

Those who are not followers of Christ, observe this love. In this way Jesus said, all men will know you are mine, and you have learned from my example.

The depth, demonstration, purity, and motivation of our love for each other all bears on the perception of people and their being able to identify that we are His disciples.

How do you want to be known? Some people want to be known as a philanthropist, others want to be known for their inventions. Some want to be known by their writing, or artistic ability. Some want to be great educators, or great economists, or entrepreneurs. Still other people want to be known for their wisdom, or leadership. Some people want to be known as soul-winners.

There is indication from our text this morning, that there is an undeniable, distinguishable, unmistakable characteristic of being a pupil of Christ, and that is by your love for one another.

So what was it that set Jesus love apart from others? The way He demonstrated His love was by laying down his life for those who despised Him, who rejected Him, who mistrusted Him.

I. **I give you a New Commandment** – the word commandment means injunction or directive.

The new command that Jesus was giving them was to be a badge of discipleship, by which they might be known as His friends and followers. It was not a new command because the law already required that they

love each other. It was new from the aspect of how Jesus’ disciples would be recognized as different from other groups or classes of people. The Jewish people were known for their external rites and the way they dressed. The philosopher was known by some other mark of distinction. The military person by the way they saluted, and their dress. In none of

these cases had love for each other been the distinguishing characteristic and badge by which they were known.

The Christians, who followed Jesus, were not to be known by wealth, fame, style of dress, or learning, but by the tender and constant attachment to each other. These believers were redeemed by the same blood, they were going to the same heaven, and they were serving the same Lord. They were to support each other, befriend one another through trials, be careful of each others feelings and reputation, and deny themselves to promote each other's welfare.

You are to love as I love you. How was it that Jesus loved then? If we are to love in the same way as He did, how do we do that?

When Jesus gave them this teaching and instruction, He had just completed washing their feet. He had served them as a hired hand. He had cleansed the filth from the contact they had with the mud and dirt and stink of earth. It was not His job, but He made it such. It was not His responsibility, but He assumed it. It was not beneath Him to assume the role of serving them even though He was KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS.

By washing their feet, He was showing them in a unique way that He loved them. He cared for their comfort; He seized the opportunity to go beyond what was expected. In this way He set the example that when it comes to demonstrating love to each other, nothing is too small, too lowly, too dirty, or insignificant to do when it comes to caring for one another, and showing love in that manner.

John 13:12-17 - When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."

Love is more powerful than money, more transforming than education, stronger than super glue or steel. God is love.

II. People will know who you belong to

It's so nice to belong. People want to belong. People join organizations for many reasons. Some join because they believe in the principles and values for which that organization exists. Some join because they want to be a part of something that is bigger than them. Often people join just to belong. They want to identify and feel a part of something. There is a connection in belonging to someone or something.

I belong to this country. I am an American. I'm proud to be a citizen of this nation. I am also a Christian. I belong to the group of people who are followers of Jesus Christ. I am not ashamed of the gospel, the good news about Jesus Coming. I belong to Christ. I am one of HIS.

Jesus said that by the love demonstrated to one another, all men will know you belong to me.

I want people to know who I belong to. I want people to understand that His life and love are active in and through me.

III. People will know you are my disciple

The criteria for the knowledge of people that these men belonged to Jesus and were His followers, was that they loved like Jesus loved.

What was the extent of his love? His love was strong, unending, unconditional, and extended to them through his own death. It was sacrificial.

There is no greater love than a man lay down his life for his friends.

John 15:9-14 – "I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. When you obey me, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father and remain in his love. I have told you this so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! I command you to love each other in the same way that I love you. And here is how to measure it—the greatest love is shown when people lay down their lives for their friends. You are my friends if you obey me."

Obedience, love and joy went hand in hand. Our Lord made it very clear that when we obey Him, we remain in His love. Joy is the inward sense that we have done something well, that we have been obedi-

ent to God, that we have pleased Him. Joy comes from within not from without.

We are called as followers of Christ, to deal with the self-life. We are not be self-centered, not be selfish, to think of others more than ourselves.

A story about sacrificial love includes a little girl Helen who was 8 and a little boy Brandon who was 5. Their dad had taken them to the Cloverleaf Mall in Hattiesburg to do a little shopping. As they drove up, they spotted a Peterbilt eighteen-wheeler parked with a big sign on it that said, "Petting Zoo." The kids jumped up in a rush and asked, "Daddy, Daddy. Can we go? Please. Please. Can we go?"

The Dad speaks: "Sure," I said, flipping them both a quarter before walking into Sears. They bolted away, and I felt free to take my time looking for a scroll saw. A petting zoo consists of a portable fence erected in the mall with about six inches of sawdust and a hundred little furry baby animals of all kinds. Kids pay their money and stay in the enclosure enraptured with the squirmy little critters while their moms and dads shop.

A few minutes later, I turned around and saw Helen walking along behind me. I was shocked to see she preferred the hardware department to the petting zoo. Recognizing my error, I bent down and asked her what was wrong. She looked up at me with those giant limpid brown eyes and said sadly, "Well, Daddy, it cost fifty cents. So, I gave Brandon my quarter." Then she said the most beautiful thing I ever heard. She repeated the family motto. The family motto is "Love is Action!"

She had given Brandon her quarter, and no one loves cuddly furry creatures more than Helen. She had watched Sandy take my steak and say, "Love is Ac-

tion!" She had watched both of us do and say "Love is Action!" for years around the house and Kings Arrow Ranch. She had heard and seen "Love is Action," and now she had incorporated it into her little lifestyle. It had become part of her.

What do you think I did? Well, not what you might think. As soon as I finished my errands, I took Helen to the petting zoo. We stood by the fence and watched Brandon go crazy petting and feeding the animals. Helen stood with her hands and chin resting on the fence and just watched Brandon. I had fifty cents burning a hole in my pocket; I never offered it to Helen, and she never asked for it, because she knew the whole family motto. It's not "Love is Action." It's "Love is SACRIFICIAL Action!" Love always pays a price. Love always costs something. Love is expensive. When you love, benefits accrue to another's account. Love is for you, not for me. Love gives; it doesn't grab. Helen gave her quarter to Brandon and wanted to follow through with her lesson. She knew she had to taste the sacrifice. She wanted to experience that total family motto. Love is sacrificial action.

[Dave Simmons, *Dad, The Family Coach*, Victor Books, 1991, pp. 123-124.](#)

What a story. Jesus did not think of His comfort, or of Himself while He was here. All He was thinking about was to do the will of His heavenly Father, and show us completely the Love that He wanted to demonstrate toward us.

Now He calls us to love each other that way. Love with the same depth, determination, decisiveness, the same selflessness, and sacrifice. It is through that demonstration that all men will know we are His followers.

Conclusion: I close with a story from D.L. Moody's anecdotes.

Show me a church where there is love, and I will show you a church that is a power in the community. In Chicago a few years ago a little boy attended a Sunday school I know of. When his parents moved to another part of the city the little fellow still attended the same Sunday school, although it meant a long, tiresome walk each way. A friend asked him why he went so far, and told him that there were plenty of others just as good nearer his home. "They may be as good for others, but not for me," was his reply. "Why not?" she asked. "Because they love a fellow over there," he replied.

If only we could make the world believe that we loved them there would be fewer empty churches, and a smaller proportion of our population who never darken a church door. Let love replace duty in our church relations, and the world will soon be evangelized. *Moody's Anecdotes*, pp. 71-72.