

**JOHN 13:31-38**  
**LISTEN CAREFULLY!**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 13 as we continue our in-depth study of the Gospel of John.

At this point in the ministry of Jesus, we are just hours from the cross, maybe some 12 to 15 hours before Jesus would be crucified.

He just celebrated the Passover meal with His men, except for Judas who left to betray Jesus. And at this meal Jesus instituted communion.

Remember how we ended last time, in John 13:30 regarding Judas. We are told, “**Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.**”

One writer put it like this. He wrote, “*The instant Judas was gone, the atmosphere was cleared, and Jesus began to instruct His disciples and prepare them for His crucifixion and His ultimate return to heaven. It was after Judas’ departure that He instituted the Lord’s Supper, something that Judas as an unbeliever certainly could not share. Judas was out in the night, controlled by the prince of darkness, Satan; but Jesus was in the light, sharing love and truth with His beloved disciples. What a contrast!*”

And that is what we will be looking at as we continue on here in the Gospel of John. Jesus is instructing His men, these eleven disciples on the work that they were to do. Warning them of what was ahead and preparing them for what they would encounter.

As you can imagine, I don’t think they grasped it fully until after the death and resurrection of Jesus. But these words were important for them, and they are important for us as well as we continue on in the work of the ministry!

I have called this study – ***LISTEN CAREFULLY!***

And the key here is that we need to listen carefully to the Lord, we need to filter things through what the Word of God has said and not what the world is saying. Yes, we need to know what they are saying but we are not to become assimilated into the wickedness of this world!

Let me give you an example and you will see what I mean.

When Julie and I moved up here some twenty-seven years ago, we found out that there was a south side of Manitowoc and a north side of Manitowoc.

I didn't think Manitowoc was that big to divide it up, but so they did.

And, to our surprise, someone said to us, ***“Oh, you live on the north side of town!”***

Now I am a little slow, but I had no idea what they were talking about. It was very strange.

What I found out was that the north side of town was the newer part of the city, and it was looked down upon by the south side of town, which was the older section. That is what I was told. It was still very strange to me to divide things up like that, and even Christians feeling that way. It was a Christian who said that to Julie and me.

But, over the years, more people came to town, and that division that was prevalent began to be washed away. Maybe because the north side became old as well. I don't hear talk like that anymore. And that is a good thing. Really, who cares what side of town you live on! Well, I guess they did years ago.

My point is this. The town was brought back together because people no longer cared, at least they shouldn't. The town was assimilated into one town, as it should be.

Now that is a good thing, this coming together.

But let's play this out with our faith, with what we believe.

Years ago there was this vast difference between Christianity and the world, and that was a good thing!

Christians held to their faith, they stood upon what they believed, and they did not let the world influence them. Was this perfect? No, it wasn't but I believe a majority of Christians held on to what they believed, and they were not going to let the world assimilate them into its wickedness!

But today, when you look at the church in general, there is not much difference between what the world believes and what the church believes. The big difference is the church tries to put a spiritual spin on it, but when what they are saying and what they are doing is contrary to what God has said, then they are not listening, and they are becoming more and more and more like the world!

Let me give you one example to show you what I mean, and I have seen this flood into the church and accepted by the church, as these results show. We are told,

Most American adults self-identify as Christians. But many Christians also hold what are sometimes characterized as “New Age” beliefs – including belief in reincarnation, astrology, psychics and the presence of spiritual energy in physical objects like mountains or trees.

Many Americans who are religiously unaffiliated also have these beliefs.

Overall, roughly six-in-ten American adults accept at least one of these New Age beliefs. Specifically, four-in-ten believe in psychics and that spiritual energy can be found in physical objects, while somewhat smaller shares express belief in reincarnation (33%) and astrology (29%).

But New Age beliefs are not necessarily replacing belief in traditional forms of religious beliefs or practices. While eight-in-ten Christians say they believe in God as described in the Bible, six-in-ten believe in one or more of the four New Age beliefs analyzed here, ranging from 47% of evangelical Protestants

- <https://pewrsr.ch/3QdZRac>

That tells me that they are not listening carefully to what God has said in His Word and they are being assimilated into the ways of the world, the beliefs of the world. And when that happens, we become just like the world!

Let me share with you these words and this writer goes back and sees how the children of Israel wanted to be like the world and what happened to them. We are told,

Every parent of teenagers has, at one time or another, lived through a period of greater or lesser anguish. The question *“Why can’t I be like the other kids?”* often initiates a running battle of wills.

The cry for liberation from family standards usually is not motivated by style, conduct, or adult opinion. Rather, it comes from a desire to assimilate into a peer group where bad taste or bizarre behavior often is “cool,” and not being “cool” results in ostracism.

Having said that, there are, nevertheless, two sides to the assimilation story.

For example, when people immigrate to another country, it is imperative they assimilate into that country’s culture, language, and laws.

However, there are those who immigrate with the intention of not conforming. Worse yet, they attempt to impose the ways of the place they left on the country that took them in.

These people should make a decision: assimilate and become a participating citizen, or pack up and go back to where you came from.

Ancient Israel showed us how bad decisions can produce unanticipated consequences. One such decision is recorded in 1 Samuel. Israel had emerged from the chaotic period of the judges to be led by the prophet Samuel.

Toward the end of Samuel's life, there was a stirring among the people. They had surveyed the pagan nations around them and came to a conclusion.

No longer did they wish to be a national phenomenon, a *"special people"* set apart to God (Dt. 26:18).

So they approached Samuel at Ramah and informed him of their decision: *"Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations"* (1 Sam. 8:5).

The age-tempered prophet responded by enumerating all of the problems inherent in their proposal.

But they persisted: *"Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, 'No, but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles'"* (vv. 19–20).

The Israelites unwittingly opted to forget their unique position as a light to nations that were mired in a world of dead-end paganism. They had been warned that they were taking a long step down, but the attraction of assimilation was irresistible. They did not want to lead any longer. Instead, they chose to settle for a seat among the people bent on their eventual annihilation.

It was a bad decision - one for which they would, in the short term, pay dearly.

And, as is often the case, one bad decision is followed by another.

The Israelites made a flawed appraisal of the type of man who would make a good king. King Saul - best described as tall, dark, and handsome - was ill-equipped to take the reins of responsible leadership. They were enamored with him, not based on his qualifications, but on the externals that made him an attractive image. Their hue and cry had been for change. Yet they would suffer the dimensions of that change after reality set in and the image had lost its allure.

They chose to join the crowd and be like everyone else.

But as dark as the situation was, it was not irreparable. Despair was not to be the coin of the future. The matter was in higher hands; and His, after all, are the hands of the Master Planner who would set things right.

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My prayer, as we look at this topic – ***LISTEN CAREFULLY***, is that we would open our ears and listen to what God is showing us, not compromising what we believe, and then walk accordingly! And what Jesus tells us is important, maybe shocking. But He is commanding us to live this way, so we need to ***LISTEN CAREFULLY!***

I have broken the verses we will be looking at this morning into the following main points. They are,

***GLORIFICATION – JOHN 13:31-32***

***HIS DEPARTURE – JOHN 13:33***

***A NEW COMMANDMENT – JOHN 13:34-35***

***LISTEN CAREFULLY – JOHN 13:36-38***

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in John chapter 13, beginning in verse 31 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word, and we look at this topic –

***LISTEN CAREFULLY!***

### **JOHN 13**

#### **VERSES 31-32**

John starts out by saying, “**So, when he had gone out . . .**” and then Jesus speaks of being glorified and that the Father is glorified.

What I want you to see is that after Judas left that upper room with Jesus and the rest of the disciples, everything was set in motion. Jesus was going to be arrested. He was going to face three religious trials and three Roman trials. He Was going to be humiliated. He was going to be condemned. He was going to be beaten, crucified and buried in the tomb.

And as many people look at that, they see defeat. But it was not defeat. It was according to the plan of God, and now it was all set-in motion.

And Jesus does not speak of this as a defeat, but He speaks of His coming death as glorification.

We see this spoken by Jesus in John 12:23-24, “**But Jesus answered them, saying, ‘The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.’**”

Now all this was about to happen, just hours away!

Think about this like a woman going into labor. Once those pains of labor begin, the delivery of this baby has been set in motion and it is not going to stop until the child is born!

And thus, Jesus says, “**Now**” and He is speaking of things happening one after another until the work is completed. Nothing is going to stop the events of Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection from happening. Nothing and no one!

We see this spoken of in Acts 2:22-24, “**Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know - Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.**”

One author had this to say about what was taking place. He wrote, “*His death might have seemed like defeat, yet it was the means by which lost sinners could be saved. It was followed by His resurrection and ascension, and He was greatly honored (and glorified) in it all.*”

And what I want you to see here, in these two verses, we see the words “**glorified**” and “**glory**” used some five times!

Why?

Because, as I have said, the cross is getting closer but how is there glory in that?

Jesus saw the cross that it would glorify the Father in His obedience and it would glorify Him.

Remember what Jesus said in John 12:27-28, “**Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name. Then a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.’**”

He will be glorified through it!

Now, here in John 13:31-32 Jesus is saying, like He has been saying His whole ministry, that He and the Father were One. In other words, if Jesus and the Father are equal, then Jesus must be God. And we see this Oneness come forth as Jesus said that whatever was going to glorify the Son would also glorify the Father!

Now you may be wondering, “*How did Jesus glorify the Father?*”

That is a great question, and we need to look at that because it is important for us as we live out our Christian faith, that we glorify God!

Here are three things that Jesus did that glorified the Father.

The first one is that ***JESUS OBEYED THE FATHER FULLY***. We see that spoken of in John 8:29, “**I always do those things that please Him.**”

As we obey God the Father, as we follow His Word, by our actions, our deeds, we are bringing glory to God!

The second one is that ***JESUS REPRESENTED GOD THE FATHER PERFECTLY***.

In other words, as Jesus said to Philip in John 14:9, “**He who has seen Me, has seen the Father . . .**”

The same is true in our lives. We are to represent God to other people. As they look at our life, as they listen to what we have to say are they seeing God?

And the third one is that *JESUS FINISHED THE WORK OF HIS MINISTRY*. Jesus did not stop, get tired and drop out, He finished the work. That is what Jesus said in John 17:4, “**I have glorified You on earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.**”

God has called each of us to a ministry, to finish a work that He has for our lives. May we, as we come to the end of our lives and go to meet our Lord, be able to say that we finished the work that He sent us to do!

As you can see, as you look at each of those points, that is also how we glorify the Father.

One writer put it like this, “*God is glorified in the work of the Savior. It proclaimed Him to be a holy God who could not pass over sin, but also a loving God who did not desire the death of the sinner; it proclaimed how He could be a just God, yet be able to justify sinners. Every attribute of deity was superlatively magnified at Calvary.*”

Now that brings up a very interesting point. How can a holy God have fellowship with fallen sinners? How can sinful man be reconciled to a holy God?

Paul talks about this in Ephesians 2:1-3 as he wrote, “**And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.**”

It is nice that Paul starts out by saying that Jesus made us alive who were spiritually dead. But then he launches into where we were at when we were dead in trespasses and sins!

Look at how this plays out.

***WE WERE DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS – EPHESIANS 2:1***

***WE WERE IN BONDAGE TO SATAN – EPHESIANS 2:2***

***WE WERE CONTROLLED BY THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH – EPHESIANS 2:3***

***WE WERE UNDER GOD’S WRATH – DOOMED TO SPEND ETERNITY IN HELL  
- EPHESIANS 2:3***

And let’s face it, this is not something people want to hear! It is not politically correct you might say! People feel that they are basically good!

But when you listen to what Paul said here in Ephesians you can see that we were dead in our sin, in bondage to Satan, our flesh controlled our lives and we were doomed for hell as we were under God’s wrath, we were at war with God!

Not a good picture. Not a lot of hope for fallen man. How can that be rectified? How can we resolve this problem of sin separating us from God?

Thank God Paul does not end there because we read in Ephesians 2:4-10, **“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”**

Those two words, “**But God**” changes everything. It is what God has given to us as a free gift, the forgiveness of our sins!

From the pit of Hell, we have been launched into heaven because of the gift of life that has been given to us by Jesus! God rescued us!

***So JESUS OBEYED THE FATHER FULLY, JESUS REPRESENTED GOD THE FATHER PERFECTLY, and JESUS FINISHED THE WORK OF HIS MINISTRY.***

May we bring glory to God by doing the same.

As we have seen, these verses here in John speak of – ***GLORIFICATION!***

As we read on Jesus is going to speak of – ***HIS DEPARTURE!***

### VERSE 33

As Jesus opens up this verse, He calls His disciples “**Little children.**” We read that and we may come to the conclusion that Jesus is putting them down, saying that they were like a child and just could not get it.

That is not what Jesus is saying here. In fact, this is the only time that we see Jesus call His disciples “**Little children**” in the Scriptures.

What we see here is that Jesus is speaking to His men with words of endearment, loving words, calling them His “**Little children.**”

It is after these tender words that what Jesus tells His men was like a bomb going off. He said, “**. . . I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come,’ so now I say to you.**”

Again, that must have blown their minds. What a shocker, that Jesus is going away, and they can’t follow Him!

How hard that must have been for them as they left everything, they followed Him these past three years and now it was all going to end!

They had their plans, their ideas of what was going to happen. They were going to be high ranking officials in the Kingdom of God as Jesus sets up His Kingdom. But Jesus never said that He was going to set up His Kingdom at this time.

You see, they did not listen carefully to what Jesus was saying and they came to wrong conclusions, and we will see that with Peter in a few minutes.

When did Jesus say to the Jews, **“Where I am going, you cannot come”?**

We see this in John 7:32-35 where we are told, **“The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me. You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come.’ Then the Jews said among themselves, ‘Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? What is this thing that He said, “You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come”?”**

For these Jewish religious leaders, they just did not get it. They had all the information, but they did not listen carefully to what Jesus was saying and they did not want to believe. Thus, they closed their ears to the truth and came up with their own ideas of what Jesus meant.

We also see this in John 8:21-24 as Jesus is once again dealing with the Jewish religious leaders, the Pharisees. And we are told, **“Then Jesus said to them again, ‘I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come.’ So the Jews said, ‘Will He kill Himself, because He says, “Where I go you cannot come”?’ And He said to them, ‘You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am, you will die in your sins.’”**

Did Jesus say that He was going to kill Himself?

No, He did not!

Then how did they come to that conclusion.

Because they were not listening closely to what He was saying. They were approaching what He said with worldly wisdom, and it led them to the wrong conclusion. And for these Jewish religious leaders, if they reject Jesus as being Almighty God, the Great I Am, they will die in their sins!

And thus, they will never be with Jesus, but they will be eternally separated from Him and that goes for anyone who denies the Deity of Jesus!

Now when Jesus spoke these words to the Jews, it was a little different than when He spoke these words to His men.

Let me show you what I mean, and I did touch on this.

For the Jews, His departure would be final. He was returning to heaven, and they could not follow Him.

But why?

Because of their unbelief!

But for the disciples of Jesus, this departure would only be temporary. He would come again to receive them to Himself. And as we move into chapter 14 next time, we will see how Jesus explains this to His men, this statement of His, and then He will give them words of comfort as He encourages them, not leaving them all alone as orphans!

Just listen to what Jesus told them in John 14:1-4, **“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.”**

In other words, Jesus is saying to them, *“Men, I am going away for a time. We are going to be separated for a time. But don’t lose hope, don’t be troubled by this because where I am going you will also go and be with me.”*

Now that is pretty clear, but again, because they were not listening carefully and maybe didn’t want to hear that Jesus was going away, that He was going to be crucified, they just did not want to believe it until they saw the resurrected Lord!

So Jesus is speaking of ***HIS DEPARTURE*** to His men and out of this, out of the fact that He is going away, Jesus is going to give to them – ***A NEW COMMANDMENT!***

#### VERSES 34-35

Before I expound on this new commandment, let me share these words from Ray Stedman. He wrote,

At times I grow tired of the ugliness of our world. Sickening reports of violence, rape, murder, drug traffic, pornography and child abuse are flung at us constantly by television and newspapers. It's enough to make you want to either fade out or blow the whole mess up.

In our local paper last week there was a story that President Reagan, Constantin Chernenko of the Soviet Union and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Britain were each given one wish they could have fulfilled.

Reagan wished that a flood would cover Russia; Chernenko wished for an earthquake to swallow the United States; but, asked what she wished, Margaret Thatcher replied, "Well, if those two wishes are granted I would like a nice relaxing scotch and soda!" Many would probably join her in that wish.

The world is well supplied these days with naive and simplistic solutions to some of the terrible problems that grip us. Every day we see bumper stickers that suggest easy ways to solve our problems. "Make Love Not War," "Arms Are For Embracing," "Ban the Bomb."

Once I even saw one that said, "Abolish Hate." Well, these are perfectly proper goals, but I confess I grow weary of such mindless solutions.

Yet, when we turn to the wisdom of Jesus, as he is teaching his disciples in the Upper Room on the very night on which he was betrayed, it sounds as if he too is suggesting the same kind of futile advice when he tells them to "Love one another."

In the section for today, found in Chapter 13 of the Gospel of John, our Lord sends the traitor out from the midst of the disciples to do his dirty deed; then gives the disciples a new commandment that sums up all ten of the old ones in one commandment; and he reveals to Peter his coming denial of his Lord - in that order.

Make no mistake about it, the world is looking for love and they are looking in all the wrong places. Perfect love is seen in Jesus and now that He was departing, He is telling His men that this love needs to be seen in them.

And let me say this. We see that Jesus starts out by saying, “**A new commandment I give to you . . .**”

What do you think of when you hear that something is new?

I don’t know about you, but for me, I think that it was just invented or made. It is something that did not exist previously.

But that is not what the Greek word for “**new**” means here.

What Jesus is speaking of is that this new commandment is going to be explained more in depth, it will be richer than what was previously thought.

Remember what the Old Testament said about loving others, loving people. That you were to love them as you love yourself. That is the Old Testament or the Old Covenant idea of love.

In other words, it places others on the same or equal level with yourself.

We see this in Leviticus 19:18 where we are told, “**You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.**”

Again, we place our love towards others on the same level as we love ourselves. But that is the Old Covenant idea of love!

But, in the New Testament and here in John 13:34 Jesus tells us how we are to love. He said, “**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.**”

How did Jesus love us, because that is how we are to love others?

He loved us by placing our needs above His needs and thus, He was willing to die for us.

In other words, this love, this **AGAPE** love is sacrificial, it is unconditional. This is the greatest kind of love, and it is not natural, it is a supernatural love!

In other words, it is not a love we can manufacture, it is a love that can only come from God as we surrender our will to His will!

Jesus said in John 15:12-13, **“This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”**

Did you notice that this is not a suggestion by Jesus.

He did not say, *“If you feel like it, love one another as I have loved you.”*

He did not say, *“If they treat you nice, love one another as I have loved you.”*

No, He said, **“This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”**

Please understand that this kind of love is not a feeling, it is an act of your will, and your will needs to be in tune with the will of God. Thus, you are to love one another as Christ loves you. You are to lay down your life for another in love even if you feel that they don’t deserve it!

And yes, in the Old Testament, we see the command to love our neighbors as we love ourselves, and there is nothing wrong with that. That is what we should do. It is a human love!

But now, like I have said, in the New Testament, we see Jesus tell us that we are not only to love our neighbors, but we are also to love our enemies! That is a supernatural love!

And to put it mildly, that is a hard one, isn’t it?

And yet, listen to the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:43-48, where He said, **“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”**

So, the mark of a Christian is **LOVE!** Now, think of the example that Jesus just left. Remember they were sharing in the Passover meal and with them was Judas, the one who would betray Him.

And where was Judas seated?

In the place of honor next to Jesus. And Jesus was the one who seated him there!

Who did Jesus give the piece of bread that was dipped in sop to?

It was Judas, and this was reserved for the honored guest even though it showed that Judas would betray Jesus. Jesus continued to give him an opportunity to repent.

Imagine knowing all that Judas was going to do and yet, loving him so much that none of the disciples knew who would betray Jesus because His love for His men was rich, it was deep, and it was sacrificial.

It was this **AGAPE** love or unconditional love, and it is a love that God wants us to manifest in our own lives!

Make no mistake about it, Jesus is telling us that we need to love people like this, especially the brethren! He laid down His life for us because of His love for us and now we are to do the same for others, love them to the fullest! His love at the cross shows us what true love is all about, it defines it for us!

Now let me ask you a question. It is a simple question. Here it is, ***“What is the mark of a Christian?”*** or ***“What identifies you as a Christian?”***

And the list can go on and on in regard to this. For instance,

***I am a follower of Jesus Christ!***

That is true, that is an identifying mark that you are a Christian, but not the right answer.

How about, ***I know the Bible, the Old and New Testament!***

That is good, you should but if that is all that identifies you as a Christian, something is missing. There are people who know the Bible, that are not a Christian!

***What about having Christian bumper stickers or Christian tee-shirts?***

Well, those may not be a good witness of your faith, depending on what you are doing, how you are driving!

And I think we can list many things here but the one that Jesus wants us to manifest in our lives is ***LOVE!***

Now, tragically, throughout church history, that has not been the case. In fact, it has been the exact opposite!

But don't place the blame at the feet of Jesus, the blame needs to be placed at our own feet, we are at fault for not following in His footsteps!

I know, there are those that claim a righteous indignation, but that is ridiculous for most cases, it is used to justify their behavior.

Think about this. You are arrested, and you did nothing wrong. They try and get you to confess your crime, the one you didn't commit, they give you the third degree, they beat you up so bad, you lose so much blood, your face is so battered that you don't even look like a man anymore.

The court system is just as bad, you are guilty not because you did something wrong, but the people, the jury wants you dead! So, you are placed on a cross as the crowd's yell at you, they mock you and-so-on.

What would you do?

Words that would come from our mouth might not be pretty at this point! And the reality is, we fight back for far less than that.

What should we do?

We follow the example of Jesus!

You see, Jesus, with one of His remaining breaths as He hung on the Cross of Calvary, cried out, "**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.**" Luke 23:34.

You see, if Jesus is our example, we need to follow what He did, not lash out, but cry out to the Father for their souls, to cry out to the Father to restore them, to cry out to the Father to help us forgive!

We need to do a heart check!

Remember what Paul said in Galatians 5:15, "**But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!**"

Don't consume each other for a meal; build them up in the faith, in the love of Christ. Remember the song many years ago, "*They will know we are Christians by our love, by our love, yes they will know we are Christians by our love!*"

It is a great song, and may that be true in our own lives, for that is the desire of Jesus for us. That they will know we are Christians by our **LOVE!**

I am sad to say that I have seen Christians devour each other or get so mad and nasty because of what the government is doing with COVID and the COVID shots. What is going on with the world leaders coming together to form a one-world government. The cashless society. How our nation is turning into a socialist nation. And Christians even fight amongst themselves over these things.

What kind of love is that showing to those who are watching? Something to think about!

Let me ask you this. On the night before His Crucifixion, what was so important, what was on the heart of Jesus that He shared it with His men who were to carry on the work?

He told them to “**. . . love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.**” Again, this is not a suggestion by Jesus, it is a **COMMAND!**

And the way you can tell how you are doing, and I think you know, is by what is flowing from your life. Is it love or is it hate? Is it love or is it anger?

In Galatians chapter 5 Paul talks about the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. And the fruit of the Spirit is **LOVE** and that love, that **AGAPE** love is manifested in many different ways.

Paul tells us in Galatians 5:22-25, “**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.**”

And I think we all deal with this issue of not loving others as God has commanded us.

Why is that?

Because self gets in the way. Self is on the throne of our hearts and not the Lord! Thus, we do things that help us but may harm others. We would not see it that way because we are right and they are wrong and thus, ***SELF GETS IN THE WAY OF LOVING AS CHRIST HAS COMMANDED US!***

And if you are struggling in this area, of loving those that hate you, then you need to repent and study the life of Jesus and ask Him to give you that kind of love for people.

Why?

**“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”**

John 13:35.

Thus, if we truly love like Jesus, we will serve others instead of desiring to be served.

Remember on this night, while all the disciples waited for someone to wash their feet, Jesus girded Himself with an apron and washed their feet.

Will we wash their feet and help them? And when I say that I am not speaking of literally washing their feet but are we willing to care for them, help them with their needs, whatever they may be?

It is as Paul said in I Thessalonians 4:9, **“But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.”**

Yes, God has taught us this but are we willing to obey Him and do those things, love people as He loves us?

Most of you know the love chapter, I Corinthians chapter 13, but I think it needs to be repeated for it gives to us the definition of what **AGAPE** love or unconditional love is all about. The kind of love that Jesus wants us to show to others.

In I Corinthians chapter 13 beginning in verse 1, listen to what Paul says as he lays the groundwork for his definition of *AGAPE* love. We read, **“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.”** I Corinthians 13:1-3.

As I have said, Paul is leading up to the definition of *AGAPE* love and notice what he says.

Love needs to rule in our lives more than speaking in tongues.

In some churches they tell you that you are not saved unless you speak in tongues, foolish and where is the love?

Maybe you know the Word of God very well and yet when you speak, there is no love.

Maybe you understand the deep things of God and again, you have no love.

And Paul is telling us that without love these other things are nothing!

He then goes on to say beginning in verse 4 of I Corinthians chapter 13, **“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. . .”** I Corinthians 13:4-8a.

You see, on your own you cannot produce this kind of love; it is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, as I have said.

Thus, if you are lacking this or should I say when you begin to lack this in your life, ask God to give you His love and the power to manifest it in your life.

As Paul said in I Corinthians 16:14, “**Let all that you do be done with love.**”

Remember these words of John, the one who was with Jesus on this night and heard all that He said, and he wrote in I John chapter 4, “**Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.**” I John 4:7-11.

May we not forget the love that has been bestowed upon us by God. And may we not forget to bestow that kind of love to them. Let love shine brightly in this world for it is this love that will tell the world we are His!

So Jesus gave to them, and to us – ***A NEW COMMANDMENT!***

As we finish up this morning, we are going to look at the last point – ***LISTEN CAREFULLY!***

#### VERSES 36-38

Jesus tells Peter and the rest of His men that He is going away, speaking of His death!

And He tells them that they can't follow Him, not yet, but one day they will be taken to glory!

And I think Peter understood what Jesus was saying, for Peter tells the Lord, “**I will lay down my life for Your sake.**”

Peter's devotion to the Lord was based upon emotion alone at this point. He wanted to die for the Lord but as we are going to see, he had a hard time living for Him!

And as you look at what happened to these men, what Jesus said was true. Not only did they all turn from the Lord at the crucifixion, they did return, but they also all would die a martyr's death for their faith in Jesus, except for John.

In fact, as tradition tells us, Peter was to be crucified on a cross like the Lord, but he could not bear to be put to death the same way His Lord was, so he asked to be crucified upside down and he was!

What was the problem for these men of Jesus?

They refused to listen to what Jesus was saying, they did not listen and believe. They were thinking Kingdom Age and their positions. They were thinking that they would fight for the Lord.

And it is easy to get fired up and make all kinds of statements about what we are going to do, but when push comes to shove, we back off.

Notice what Jesus said to Peter in John 13:38, "**Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.**"

Jesus challenges Peter on this one, and really, all of us. You see, Peter believed in himself and his abilities and the area he thought he was the strongest in; he failed and denied the Lord! He thought he could handle it, no problem but He didn't listen to what Jesus was saying to him!

Make no mistake about it, the Lord knew Peter and He knows us better than we know ourselves. Peter needed to learn to trust in the power of God and not his own power, and he did learn the lesson, and it was a hard one!

The Lord does the same with us, breaking us of self-will so we look to Him to be the strength of our life! But we need to listen to what He is showing us.

And I love this about our Lord because, as Luke tells us, not only did the Lord pray for Peter, but He is praying for us, that we would not fail.

In Luke 27:31-32 we are told, “**And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.’**”

I love that and so should you!

God is not angry with us! He is not going to disown us! Remember His love that we talked about, and that love is unchanging towards us!

Let me share this with you. One writer summed things up for us like this. He wrote,

High among the indispensable truths of practical Christianity is this: God is constantly at work to show us that even those things we count as our greatest natural strengths are, by his standards, really weaknesses.

When this principle is put to work, our strengths are enhanced and ennobled [dignified] just like Peter’s.

But perhaps even more glorious, our weaknesses become occasions for his power! Our shyness, an occasion for his boldness; our weakness of speech, an occasion for his articulation; our lack of imagination, for his creativity; our ignorance, for his instruction; our insecurity, for his assurance.

Second Corinthians 4:7 says: “***But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.***”

May we lay our lives before him with all our strengths and all his fullness to work in and through us.

- R. Kent Hughes, John, That You May Believe, p. 334

The key is that we are to listen to the Lord and let His love not only fill our lives but flow from our lives and touch others. That we would love as He loves us!

We can't love like that on our own. We must surrender to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to empower us to love unconditionally the saved and the unsaved. That when people look at our lives, they will know we are Christians by our love!

And I will close with these words from Jesus, "**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**"