

New Commandment

7-21-24

John 13:34 (ESV) O/H

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another!
Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another!

Where did this come from? What exactly does Jesus mean? Why is Jesus adding this commandment to the Scriptures and calling it new? In the OT, Lev.19:18, the Israelites were commanded to love their neighbor as they loved themselves. Let us look closely as to why Jesus gave us this command and called it NEW. Context: Jesus has come into Jerusalem riding a donkey while multitudes declare HIM as King of Israel. The next event recorded is Jesus celebrating the Passover and instituting the Lord's Supper. We should remember that Passover, the Lord's supper, and the upcoming crucifixion are related and intertwined.

John 13:1 (ESV)

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having "loved his own" who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

The evening of the Feast of Passover, Jesus knows HIS death is imminent. At this intense moment, Jesus turns HIS attention to HIS disciples. It is significant that Jesus refers to HIS disciples as 'his own' which is similar to earlier references in John 10:3-4 where Jesus called as 'his own' the sheep who hear HIS voice. Now Jesus showing HIS love would wash HIS disciple's feet just as Mary days before had washed HIS feet.

John 13:3–5 (ESV)

³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, ⁴ rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. ⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

The Messiah, the King of Israel, was washing HIS disciples' feet. I believe this action was almost incomprehensible to the disciples. Peter stunned by this action told Jesus, "You shall never wash my feet." To which Jesus replied,

John 13:8 (ESV)

Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with ME."

Not only did Jesus wash Peter's feet who HE knew would later deny HIM three times, HE also washed Judas's feet who HE knew would betray HIM. Then Jesus makes a most profound statement to HIS disciples:

John 13:13–16 (ESV)

¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

The Apostle Paul repeats this same attitude in Philippians 2:5-8: “Have this mind in you which is in Christ Jesus, who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant.” Jesus’ example of love and humility set the tone for one of this most powerful command. Back to our overhead.

John 13:34 (ESV) O/H

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another! Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another!

The Word “New” (*kainēn*) is significant. It implies freshness. Jesus had loved them without reservation and without limit and expected them to do the same. It as a ‘new’ command because Jesus said, “*As I have loved you, so you must love one another.*” Jesus said love like HE loved. This was NEW! Challenging, but It is God’s love for us which enables authentic *agapē* love among Christians.

1 John 4:19 (ESV) O/H

We love because HE first loved us.

What does this look like? Jesus just showed us. Will you stoop to wash your fellow believer’s feet?

Why is this important?

John 13:35 (ESV) O/H

By this **ALL** people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

Being willing to wash a believer's feet is evidence of our love for one another and a witness to the world. This attitude of love keeps us united and will be to ALL people the convincing demonstration that we are the disciples of Jesus. Granted Jesus is using a cultural norm of HIS day to communicate this truth. However, it is descriptive physical example that drives home the attitude which Jesus desires all believers to have. Thus, NEW Commandment.

1 John 4:7 (ESV) O/H

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

Everyone who shows this kind of love (*agapē*) in action also shows that he or she has been born of God. This has nothing to do with us becoming a Christian, but it is the evidence that should be present in every Christian. *This* love can occur only among those who have come to know God's love in Jesus Christ. So, those who love their brothers and sisters in the community of faith show not only that they are members of God's family but that they know God as well. Thus, NEW Commandment! We are to love one another! Just as Jesus loved us, we also are to love one another! By this all people will know that we are Jesus' disciples.

Why? What is our motivation.

John 3:16 (ESV) O/H

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.