

## **Loving One Another is Not Optional**

### **John 13:34**

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. NKJV

No matter how many times I read this passage it amazes me that Jesus felt it necessary to tell these Apostles that they must love one another.

Oh Jesus knew so much about how we are made. Each one of these men were already saved, with the exception of Judas Iscariot.

They had all committed their lives to Jesus. They had now been with Him for over three years.

But still Jesus has to tell them that they must love one another.

This must have been very disappointing to Jesus as well. Here He had chosen them and invested in them practically every day over the last three years. And now, tonight He will be taken from them and in His parting moments with them as one of the final instructions He gives them He tells them that they must love one another.

But then we know that Jesus was not speaking these words only to the apostles but to us as well.

Jesus knows what we are made of as well. He knows our natures and our selfish desires. He knows our tendency to tear others down so that we can build ourselves up.

He knows that we have it in us just as they did to quarrel over who will have preeminence, be the top dog.

Doesn't sound to glamorous when you put it like that does it.

Now I also want you to notice that Jesus did not give very many commands, at least not in this manner. "A new commandment I give you," He says.

In a sermon by Martin Luther, that I read this week, I received some clarity on this issue. He says that there are two elements in the Christian life. Faith and Love. Faith he says deals with the heart, while love deals with our actions.

I wondered how that would never work in our day and age. We think that love is a matter of the heart. A matter of emotions.

But then how could Jesus command, demand that we love one another. Have you ever tried to change your emotions.

If you are sad can you just decide to be happy and it all goes away. If you are angry over some injustice, can you just flip a switch and go into love mode.

Then how can Jesus command that we love one another.

What Martin Luther is telling us is that faith is a matter of the heart. Rom 10:9-10 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the

mouth confession is made unto salvation. NKJV

Love on the other hand is seen in actions, in things done for others. John 3:16

John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. NKJV

James then has the idea that if there are no actions there is no love.

James 2:14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? 17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. NKJV

James tells us that faith and love are so connected that if your love produces no fruit in your life then not only do you not have love, but you do not have a genuine faith.

What to do if you find yourself coming up short on love.

Be sure that you love God. For genuine love for others will come from that.

Love the things that God loves.

Righteousness, mercy, peace.

Hate the things that God hates.

Prov 6:16-19

16 These six things the LORD hates,

Yes, seven are an abomination to Him:

17 A proud look,

A lying tongue ,

Hands that shed innocent blood,

18 A heart that devises wicked plans,

Feet that are swift in running to evil,

19 A false witness who speaks lies,

And one who sows discord among brethren. NKJV

Love to do the will of God.

Ps 40:8

8 I delight to do Your will , O my God,

And Your law is within my heart." NKJV

Pray that God will work His love through you to others.

Phil 2:13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. NKJV1

Thess 2:13

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. NKJV

Step out in faith and do the works of love, trusting that God will give you the feelings to accompany those works.