

Love
John 13:34-35

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“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34-35).

Judas had just left. He went out into the night by himself, but he was not alone. Satan had entered into him and now the two of them would spend those last tragic hours together that remained to Judas on this earth. He left the fellowship of Christ and his comrades of the faith.

This, by the way, is usually the first step to a backslidden life. Some of the other disciples thought that he had gone to buy supplies or to give something to the poor. It seems that even though our Lord Jesus lived on alms Himself, He gave from his small income to the needs of others.

Jesus then spoke of His glorification. This seems strange, knowing that He would soon be exposed to the vilest disgrace, to be dishonored by the cowardice of his followers and the hatred of his enemies. But He knew that it would result in the ultimate victory over the powers of darkness and triumph over them.

He is about to take the field against the enemies of God. The hour was at hand when the battle was to come to a crisis. There had been many a skirmish, but now the decisive battle between heaven and hell was to be fought. God's honor and man's happiness must soon be won or lost forever. The trumpet had sounded that would be fatal to one of the other.

He was about to shed His blood which would bring everlasting righteousness and blessedness, and would be an inexhaustible fountain of joy and peace to all believers of all times. He would not be with them for long and they could not accompany Him on this mission.

Then He said it! He gave them a new commandment, a new basic law of His kingdom. It was new, but it was as old as the law of Moses. It had been so corrupted by tradition and cold formality that when Jesus Christ put it in this light, it was new.

Revenge and retaliation had become part of life. Self-love was on the throne. Brotherly love had become obsolete. It took its place right along side of faith: “And 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” (I John 3:23).

This new commandment had a new depth. The example was Christ Himself. How had He shown His love? He had instructed, counseled and comforted them. He had prayed with them and for them. He had defended them when accused. He had reproved them when they went astray. He had washed their feet and stayed with them when they failed.

If they did that with each other, all men would know they were Christ's disciples. So when people need help, when they differ with us, when they need forgiveness, and a hand reached out in compassion; during these times it will be known whether or not we wear this badge of discipleship, this badge of love.

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