



Sermon: Sunday, May 18, 2025

“A New Commandment”

SCRIPTURE: John 13:31-35 ³¹ When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³² If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³ Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’ ³⁴ I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Introduction: Can we really follow Jesus’ words, “Love one another”?

Today is the fifth Sunday of Easter. The key verse in today’s text is verse 34. It’s a verse many of us have heard before. In John 13:34, Jesus says to His disciples, **“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.”** But here’s the big question—can we live out Jesus’ words, **“Love one another”**?

If we look at the verses just before today’s passage, we find the story of Judas Iscariot, the one who would betray Jesus. John 13:21 says, **“After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, ‘Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me.’”** Then right after today’s text, in verse 38, Jesus says to Peter, **“Will you lay down your life for me? Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows, you will have denied me three times.”**

So today’s passage sits right between betrayal and denial. And it’s in this moment that Jesus tells His disciples, **“Love one another. Just as I have loved you.”**

Even though Jesus knew Judas would betray Him and Peter would deny Him, He still loved His disciples deeply. And He showed that love by going to the cross and dying for our sins. His death is the ultimate expression of His love. But the question remains—can we love like that? Can we really show the kind of love that Jesus did?

We use the word **“love”** a lot in everyday life, but we all know that truly loving someone is hard. Most often, the kind of love we talk about is romantic love. People fall in love and believe it will last forever. But as time passes—when marriage, kids, and real-life struggles come along, that passionate love often cools. The truth is that relationships don’t fade because people are heartless or have bad personalities.

The deeper issue is that, as humans, we don’t naturally can love like Jesus did. Most of our relationships are more like transactions than genuine love. We may say we love others, but deep down, we often expect something in return. That’s why it’s hard to find true, selfless love in our everyday lives.

So what does that mean for us? Should we just accept that we can’t love like Jesus and give up trying? How can we follow His command to **“love one another”**?

Body: Paul’s Description of Love and the Meaning of the Words Glory and Love Used by Jesus

The apostle Paul gives us a beautiful and challenging picture of what love really is in 1 Corinthians 13. He helps us understand the difference between ordinary love and the kind of true love God wants from us. In verse 3, Paul says, **“If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.”** In other words, even if we do big, sacrificial things—like giving away everything or even dying for a cause—if love isn’t the motivation in our hearts, it doesn’t count as true love.

Then Paul goes on to describe what real love looks like in verses 4 to 7: **“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered,**



it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, what comes to your mind when you hear Paul’s words? Honestly, we all fall short when we measure our love against this description.

But don’t let that discourage you or make you anxious. The love Paul describes here isn’t something we can produce on our own. This kind of love is only possible for God. That means that for us to love in this way, we must live in total dependence on God.

Now let’s go back to today’s text. In verses 31 and 32, Jesus talks about **“glory”**—in fact, He mentions it five times! Then in verses 34 and 35, He talks about **“love.”** At first glance, **“glory”** and **“love”** might seem like two totally different things. But Jesus connects them. Why?

In verses 31–32, Jesus says His glory and God’s glory are one and the same. That means Jesus’ glory is God’s glory, and God’s glory is Jesus’ glory. The **“glory”** Jesus talks about isn’t about fame or applause. It’s about showing the divine dignity and life that comes from God. Paul touches on this in 2 Corinthians 4:6, saying, **“For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”** What does all this mean? It means that true life is only found in Jesus Christ.

So we shouldn’t think of today’s passage as just a moral lesson or a general rule to be nicer to people. Every word in the Bible is tied to a deep spiritual truth. In this case, it’s the experience of Jesus’ resurrection. If we haven’t experienced the light of His resurrection, then trying to follow His command to **“love one another”** will just feel like a heavy burden.

But there was a problem for the disciples in today’s passage. Jesus told them He would be leaving soon (v. 33). In other words, the One they had been relying on—the One who was their light—would no longer be physically with them. Now they had to live in the world without Jesus by their side.

So how could they go on? How could they love others and reflect the light of Jesus’ resurrection? That’s what Jesus was teaching them when He connected **“glory”** and **“love.”**

Conclusion: Agapate (αγαπατε; you should love)

The Greek word translated as **“you should love”** in today’s passage is **“agapate.”** It’s not just a suggestion; it’s a command. The question is, do you really want to take this seriously? Are you willing to try to follow Jesus’ command to **“love one another”**?

It’s easy to ignore this command because we’re all so busy with life. But we need to ask ourselves: what kind of attitude should we have toward this command from Jesus?

Here’s what’s important—**“Agapate”** is a word that requires action. Loving one another doesn’t just happen on its own. First, we need to understand what kind of community we’re part of. The church is not just a social group or a hobby club. It’s a faith community for people who remember Jesus’ resurrection and wait for His return. It’s a community of salvation and a place where the Holy Spirit is alive and active.

You know best whether you’re living out **“agapate”** in your church right now. And if you’re not sure, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to show you. If you live according to Jesus’ command to **“love one another,”** your church will start to look more like the true Church. Because of people like you, trust will grow. Reconciliation will happen. Divisions will heal.

People like that won’t fall into despair or give in to selfishness and pride, because the light of Jesus’ resurrection will be shining in their lives. And even if they stumble, they’ll be able to get back up and live in a way that reflects the glory of Jesus.

I’m not telling you to become legalistic or try to live a life that’s only focused on ethics or morals. Instead, I hope we all keep practicing and growing in our ability to **“love one another”**—not by our own strength, but through the power Jesus gives us in our church community. And when we live that way, it won’t stop at the church doors. It’ll overflow into the world around us. May each one of us receive this blessing and live it out.

Amen!

