

Beloved, Be Loving

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[0:00] If you would open up your Bibles to John chapter 13, it's page 1070 of your pew Bible. And while you're turning there, I have a question for you.

What do you want to be known for? You personally, what do you want to be known for? Maybe you want to be known for being hardworking, being kind, being reasonable, being fair.

Maybe you want to be known for being athletic or being funny or being a sharp, snappy dresser.

Maybe you're sitting there saying, I want to be known for Jesus.

Do I have an amen? Amen. The question is how? How will you be known for Jesus? Jesus, Christ the King Church, what do we want to be known for?

Better yet, in light of the new commandment that we're going to read this morning, Jesus says, just as I have loved you, you love one another.

[1:16] In light of that, what must we be known for? We must be known for our namesake, Jesus.

Amen? But how? How are we to be known for Jesus? Well, in a word, it's the word love.

We identify ourselves as being followers of Jesus Christ by the way we love one another. Our love for one another should set us apart from everyone else.

Our love for one another is an otherworldly love. But the contrary is also true. If we don't love one another just as Jesus has loved us, we're just going to blend in with the rest of the world.

And it's going to be confusing. Because the world will conclude, you're just like everybody else.

What makes any difference? Why bother with Jesus?

[2:21] Two weeks ago, we saw Jesus give an object lesson on servanthood. He washed his disciples' feet. And he said to them, If I then, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

So he starts with himself and he gives his disciples an example. Well, today in a similar way, Jesus commands us to love one another. He says, Just as I have loved you, you are to love one another.

This is part of a bigger passage in John 13 through 17 called the Farewell Discourse. And so this command to love one another is just, he gave it just hours away from his own death.

And so this morning, I am going to be surgical. We've got a big passage in one sense. It's chapter, oop, I'm in 1 Corinthians.

13, 21 through 38. But I'm going to really focus on verses 34 and 35. And what I want you to see are four distinctions of this love with which we are to love one another.

[3:37] And here they are. This love is a required love. This love is a new kind of love. This love is a Christ-like love.

And this love with which we are to love one another is an identifying love. So let me just read verses 34 and 35.

These are Jesus' words to us. A new commandment I give to you, Christ the King Church, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.

So let's look at this first distinction, a required love. Loving one another is a command.

It's required of all who belong to Jesus Christ. We are to love one another. And that may sound strange in your ears.

[4:43] Because we often think of love as an emotion or a feeling. Anybody familiar with the lady Tina Turner? What's love got to do with it? What's love but a second-hand emotion?

Well, this command that Jesus is commanding us is not commanding us to feel a certain way. This is a command to love one another, which means each of us are responsible to love one another.

It's better thought of love as a commitment. A commitment to one another. And that's how we must define this kind of biblical love.

Now, God is love. That's His very nature. It's not that He is in a constant state of feeling loving. He is love.

He commits. You know, one of the things that I get to do on a regular basis is to marry people. And we got a marriage of a couple coming up in the next couple weeks.

[5:58] And one of my favorite things is to walk them through their vows. And so let me just give you a little section of the vows that I will lead this couple through.

I, groom, take you, bride, to be my wedded wife. To have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse.

It's called a commitment. For richer, for poorer. For poorer, commitment. In sickness and in health. Commitment to love and to cherish till death do us part.

That is a lifelong commitment. According to God's holy ordinance. And thereto I pledge you my faith. These vows of a marriage ceremony.

Which, it explains the kind of commitment a husband is making to a wife. And a wife to a husband. They capture what love is. Love is at its core a commitment.

[7:04] So what we need to be clear on moving into this passage on the new commandment is what love is. Jesus is calling us to commit to one another in a certain kind of way.

So the new commandment is a new commitment. What kind of commitment Christians make to one another. And it raises the question that distinction number two answers.

What kind of commitment are we talking about? In the passage we read, a new commandment I give to you.

That you love one another. What's so new about loving one another? If you're familiar with your Bibles in Leviticus 19:18.

Moses commands Israel to love your neighbor as yourself. So in one sense, the command to love is not new.

[8:05] It's old. So what's new about this new commandment here? Well, there's a number of things that are new. The first one is we have a new person giving the commandment.

Moses gave the command to love your neighbor as yourself. But someone greater than Moses is speaking this commandment. Jesus.

And if you were to go back to John chapter 5. Jesus says some very interesting things about his relationship to Moses. In fact, he, Jesus himself said, Did you know that Moses, he wrote about me?

You see, Moses was a sinner just like us. Who needed the forgiveness that comes only through the death of Jesus.

What makes the new commandment new is who's giving it. God incarnate. The king of the kingdom of life.

[9:10] The greatest lover of all. So the first aspect, the first kind of dimension of this new kind of love is the one giving the command, Jesus.

The second is that this love has a new goal. A new aim. A new end. It's a new kind of commitment with a new aim.

New goal. Now, before we became Christians, we exercised more or less a self-serving kind of love.

It was somewhat contractual. I love you if you love me. I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine.

Our commitment to others was more often about what we could get out of a relationship.

But Jesus, when we see who he is and we believe in who he is, what happens to a Christian is that Jesus radically reorients our loves.

[10:23] We no longer live for ourselves, but for him who for our sake died and was raised, which means we love one another unto Christ.

A new aim. A new goal. Our commitment to one another isn't just for someone else's good. We are loving someone to Jesus.

Their greatest good. So the best thing I can do for you, Christ the King Church, is love you to Christ. And the best thing that you can do for me is to love me to Christ.

In other words, the best thing that we can do together is to treasure Jesus above all else together. The best thing that we can do together is to functionally make Jesus the controlling center of our lives.

our one consuming passion, our all governing reality. And when Jesus is functioning that way in our lives because he is that wonderful, all of a sudden, lives change.

[11:33] There's a new kind of love in town. We're not loving others for ourselves. We're not even loving others for them.

We're loving them unto Christ. So this new commandment has a new goal. Jesus.

Treasuring Jesus is the goal. When you have a bunch of people who are making Jesus the functional center of their lives, both personally and corporately, what I mean by that, as a people, as a church, when Jesus is the controlling center of our lives, the treasure center, you know what you got?

You got a church. This new commitment, the third kind of aspect is that this new commitment is to a new people.

One of the things about our church that I delight in is our growing diversity as a church. We have a variety of cultures represented, a variety of ethnicities, a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, and as we know, with diversity comes different experiences, perspectives, and preferences.

[13:06] And with that comes some challenges. But that's life together. And when Jesus is the goal of loving one another, you quickly kind of lay down your preferences.

You quickly kind of hold more loosely the things that you value out of love for Jesus and out of loving people to Jesus. I like to think about it this way.

I've been a pastor at a larger church, and that church, whom I love deeply, was by and large kind of a monoculture.

And they were seeking to bring glory to Jesus. There are a lot of different churches out there that are primarily one culture, one ethnicity. And they are seeking to glorify God.

And that's great. So don't hear me as saying something other than that. But here's why I'm interested in being a pastor of Christ the King Church. One of the many reasons.

[14:19] I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ gets a greater glory when there is a diverse group of people coming together to worship Jesus.

It makes no sense. It makes no sense from a worldly perspective. Why would these white people and these black people and these brown people come together?

Because of Jesus. We're a new people with new values, a new aim, a new king.

And we know that Jesus is at work right now bringing a people all around the world from every tribe, tongue, and nation together under his name.

And so one of the things I love about our church is that we get to practice loving one another with people from different backgrounds unto Jesus.

[15:32] We're a new people. And so this new commandment is to us, the new people of God. which brings me now to kind of the last aspect of this new kind of love.

And often it's a new to you kind of love. Here's the last aspect. And I'm guessing you're feeling this. I can't do that.

I don't love like that. I don't want to be around other people not like me. I like to avoid people. I don't like talking to people.

You want me to do what? You see, this new commitment also has a new power. What we're talking about here is the new covenant.

God's new way of relating to a new people under a new promise established through the blood of Jesus and with the new covenant, we know it from like Ezekiel 36 and then it shows up pronounced way in Acts chapter 2 that the Holy Spirit of God, the third person of the Trinity who Jesus will teach us about later in the farewell discourse, he comes in and dwells each of us to empower us to live for Christ as the controlling center of our lives.

[17:02] and you know what he's going to do? He's going to empower you to love one another in a way that you have never loved anybody before.

the first fruit of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5.22. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.

These are all fruit of the Spirit that has to do with relating to one another and it starts with love. The Spirit of God is seeking to empower us, Christ the King Church, because we don't have it in ourselves.

He's seeking to empower us to love people like us and unlike us to Christ. Christ, that's high calling. That's worth giving your life to.

That's worth saying, yes, Lord. Do you know what it means to not love others then? If the Holy Spirit is seeking to bring this about in us, then to not love us is to grieve the Holy Spirit.

[18:23] More on that later. This new kind of love is a new to us love because it comes with becoming Christians and this new commitment is from a new person, Jesus, a new goal, Jesus, a new people, the Jesus people, a new power that Jesus gives, the Holy Spirit, which brings us now to the third distinction.

You could call it a new precedent, Christ-like love. We need the Spirit to love like this. It's a new precedent. In Leviticus 19, Moses tells us to love your neighbor as yourself.

Here, Jesus is saying, just as I have loved you, love one another. We've got a new precedent. The Jesus kind of love.

How has Jesus loved his disciples? Earlier in this chapter, we saw Jesus love his disciples by washing their feet.

In love, he considered his disciples more important than himself. It's the way of humility. You can't love someone like Jesus loves without humbling yourself. So this humility is essential to the new commandment, loving one another.

[19:44] To say it crassly, it's to say it like this. Christ-like love is not a me-first love. Christ-like love is a you-first love. It's a commitment.

So you cannot insist on your own way and be loving like Jesus loves. But there's an even greater demonstration of Jesus' love.

And we all know what that is, and it's his death on the cross. his self-sacrifice, his giving of himself so that we could be forgiven of our sins and that we could be granted eternal life and that we can experience a relationship with the living God that we never knew we could.

So this death of Jesus is the way that we are to love one another. We are to sacrifice ourselves for the good of others.

And remember, that good of others is Jesus' joy. It's treasuring Jesus. It's a new precedent. This is a Jesus kind of love and he is requiring it of us.

[21:02] It's not optional. There's an example in Ephesians chapter 5.

It's this new commandment, Christ-like love applied to marriage. Specifically, it's applied to husbands and how they are to love their wives.

Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. It's the new commandment applied to how husbands love their ladies.

just as Jesus gave himself up for his bride, the church, so that the church thrives.

So we give ourselves husbands so that our brides thrive. That's the kind of love we're talking about.

[22:08] That's how we live it out. Other places, this is described as headship in the home and this headship is not oppressive.

It's life-giving. So I can say, based upon the authority of scriptures, brothers, love your wives and children unto Christ by laying yourself down so that they thrive.

the greatest thing that they need is not you. It's Jesus. And this is how you set a Christ-rich atmosphere in your home, brothers, by loving your family as Christ has loved you.

But this is an example of this precedent, this Christ-like love specifically applied to husbands. If we back up and go back to John 13, 34, and 35, this is being commanded to all followers of Jesus.

We are to love one another with this kind of Christ-like love. Now, if you're thinking, okay, I'll give myself for you.

[23:35] I'll follow my sword. It sounds miserable. And there's no question dying to yourself is not easy. Do I have an amen?

But check it out. Hebrews 12, speaking of Jesus, for the joy set before him, he endured the cross. When you're loving people to Jesus and you're laying yourself down so that people will treasure Jesus, do you know what strange thing happens?

Your woe is mine turns to glory to Christ. Now, I take joy in watching the people I love most thrive in Jesus.

All glory be to his name. And so, there's no question that there is pain in dying to yourself. But it's not, the end is not you dying to yourself.

The end is others thriving in Christ. So, we sacrifice our time with joy. We sacrifice our money with joy.

[24 : 46] joy. We sacrifice our comfort with joy so that others would treasure Christ with us. Do I have an amen?

Who wants to be part of a church like that? I do. This isn't complicated, is it? It's just hard because you've got to die to yourself for the joy of Jesus.

Which brings me to the last distinction of this new commandment love, identifying love.

When we commit to loving one another in this required, new, Christ-like way, good things happen. The church, Christ, Christ is magnified, the church is built up and strengthened, and non-Christians take notice.

They notice because these Christians are experiencing relationships with themselves that God intended. That that's otherworldly.

[25 : 58] It's not their experience. Beloved of Christ, be loving like Christ.

You see, our love for one another is an equalizing love. And in our culture, it's bizarre. The kind of love, this kind of love is like the incoming tide that raises all the boats in a harbor.

when we love one another with this Christ-like love, everyone in a church, they get built up, they're dignified, they are respected, they're valued, everyone.

one. So when an entire church is loving one another like this, we're all edified. It doesn't matter in your DNA, it doesn't matter about your culture, your ethnicity, your history with the law, it doesn't matter your age or your sex.

When we love one another like Christ loved us, all experience dignity. Everyone is valued.

Everyone is said, you are deeply loved.

[27 : 22] And they mean it. Christ the King Church, Jesus is calling us to be equal opportunity lovers of one another.

And when we're loving one another like this, it's a protection against something. Something we read in James 2. It's called the sin of partiality.

The sin of partiality preferences people, other people based upon their wealth or how well they're dressed, their success in life.

Or it doesn't preference them based on the way they smell, the way they look, what neighborhood they're from. And so this kind of loving, what it does is it flies in the face of the world.

it protects us from valuing people based upon worldly standards. And this identifying effect has another aspect to it that I just want to touch on briefly.

[28 : 32] And it gets noticed. It's how we speak the truth to one another. It's how we talk to each other. that gets noticed.

We use our words to love one another unto Jesus. So we're very selective of what we say because it matters.

Sometimes out of this new commandment love, we will say hard and even hurtful things for someone's greatest good to treasure Jesus. there are words spoken we know from the Proverbs that are like sword thrusts that are violent and damaging.

Those are unloving words. And then there are words spoken that are surgical. That they are intended to heal.

We see Jesus confront people throughout the Gospels in order to rescue them and heal them and grant them health. Remember the story of the rich young ruler who had everything and Jesus said, hey, just go sell everything you got and follow me.

[29 : 47] He's offering life. And the rich young ruler goes, wow, I'm going home. Jesus was speaking a word, a loving word to him. When we love those unlike us and like us as Jesus loved us and when we speak the truth and love to one another, it gets noticed.

Something different, there's something different about you based upon your language choice.

There's something different about your church and the way that they are embracing everyone.

What is going on? we need to be able to give a reason for the love that is in us. And that reason is we have been loved by Jesus himself.

And so now we love others with the love with which we've been loved. Do you know what that's called? That's called proof is in the pudding. it's what Francis Schaeffer called the final apologetic. You can talk about Jesus all you want but it shows up in the way you love people. So our Christ-like love for one another, it identifies us with Christ.

[31 : 14] Now let me just take a second and pan out because I want you to see something happening in this passage. In verses 21 through 30, Jesus speaks of the betrayal of Judas.

Look what he says in verse 21. Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me. Is betraying someone loving or unloving? Unloving. Now look down at verses 36 through 38. Peter is about to deny him. Verse 38, truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times. Is denying someone loving or unloving? Unloving. So here you have Jesus calling his disciples to love one another in the midst of he himself being betrayed and denied. Isn't that amazing? What a lover is that? That's the one who loves you. That's the one who loves me. And that's the one who wants us to love others as he has loved us. [32 : 24] And so here's the point of this passage. Beloved of Christ, be loving one another like Christ.

Beloved of Christ, be loving one another like Christ. Christ. So let me apply this in four ways. You ready? The first one is me loving you surgically.

We need to repent of not loving one another. You just can't ignore your unloving sin. You got to repent of it.

Are you bitter towards someone? It's not loving. It's unloving. Are you avoiding someone because they're a different color skin than yours or they have a different personality type than yours?

That's not loving. That's sinning. Are you dismissing someone else because you think that they're dumb? That's not loving.

[33 : 32] That's sinning. Are you involved in sexual immorality with someone? That's not loving. That's sinning. Are you gossiping? That's not loving.

Holding a grudge, blame shifting? Are you overbearing? Are you abdicating responsibility? These are not ways in which we love one another. These are ways in which we sin against one another. And these are things that we must repent of. sinning. These are the sins that happen between people. And they're always sinning not just against someone else but against God.

So in those moments, not only are we disobeying the new commandment, we're confusing our witness to the world. And we're grieving the spirit.

spirit. Anybody ever attend a shop class in high school? AJ, this is for you. Anybody attend a shop class?

[34 : 38] Nobody? Two people? Thank you. You're taught how to sand a board. You sand with the grain.

If you sand against the grain, you get scratches. Yucky. When we love one another, we are loving each other with the grain of the spirit, what he is wanting to do in our midst.

And when we don't love one another, we're sanding, loving, unloving against the grain of the spirit. That's why Ephesians 4.29 says in a passage about relating to one another, that that grieves the spirit.

You are working against the very thing God is wanting to do in us. It's serious business. Jesus didn't save us so we could sin against each other.

Jesus saved us so that we would love one another. So repent of not loving one another. Is there a particular area that God is bringing to your mind right now?

[35 : 51] That's him loving you so that you love with a holy love. Two, peacemaking is loving one another.

We must not sweep our sinning against one another under the rug. That's not loving one another. Peacemaking is when we seek to make wrongs right with one another.

It's conflict resolution. It's making sure that all is right in relationships with other people. And

sometimes that means owning your sin for offending someone and that sometimes means going to someone when they've offended you and say, hey buddy, that hurt.

And then you get to ask for their forgiveness and then they forgive you. Peace, biblically speaking, is not just the absence of tension in the relationships and many of us settle for that.

Peace is not just the absence of tension, it's fullness of trust, of joy, of mutual care.

[37 : 06] And Jesus is the ultimate peacemaker. Through his death, he made peace between us and God, between us and ourselves, between us and others.

And one day, with all of creation, talk about a powerful display. We are to love one another by pursuing peace with one another.

Romans 12, 18 says this, as far as it depends on you, be at peace with everyone. And you know what that follows? Romans 12, 9, let love be genuine.

peace making is a way we love one another. Is there someone God is bringing to your mind right now that you need to pursue peace with, that you need to love?

Follow the Spirit. He's leading you. and if you need help in figuring that one out, give me a call. Two others, applications, and they might be surprising.

[38:25] Third application, membership is loving one another. Church membership is at its core a commitment to love one another.

Church membership is essentially one Christian saying to a bunch of other Christians, I am committed to you, and the bunch of other Christians are saying to that one Christian, and we're committed to you.

Committed to do what? Together follow Jesus, to treasure him above all else. this kind of commitment that church membership represents.

It's a formalized commitment. It's, there's an accountability to it, and it flies in the face of our modern culture's fear of commitment, our modern culture's trying to keep all of your options open, our modern culture's view of relationships as like podcast subscriptions that you can discontinue anytime you want.

Membership is loving one another, and we have a membership class starting in just a couple weeks, and if you're not a member of our church, we would welcome you to come through our membership class, so you can find out who we are, where we're going, and how we're going to get there.

[39:54] And if you are a member, are you seeing your membership as loving others, as a commitment to other people, other Christians in your church?

The third, the fourth way, and again, this might be a surprise, is gathering weekly is a way we love one another.

Just showing up, just showing up and being together is how we love one another. Something sweet happens when we're together Sunday after Sunday, and we're singing truth together, we're under God's word together, we're praying together, we're doing things together, we're seeing each other, we're in each other's presence, we love one another when we gather.

Let me ask you this question. What would you think of a family member who showed up to maybe one family gathering every ten years?

You'd be like, oh, we're related by blood, but they're functionally not a part of the family. This gathering, think of it as our weekly family gathering as a church.

[41:13] Don't miss it. Love one another. So don't think about your coming to church simply as something that you benefit from. Think about it as coming so that others benefit too just by you being here.

How about that? We'll experience joy. Do you know what the second fruit of the Spirit is? Love. Joy. Joy. Beloved of Jesus, be loving one another like Jesus. It's required. It's new. It's Christ-like. And it identifies us as belonging to Jesus. It's not complicated, but it is hard because you need to die to yourself.

But it's for joy. Treasuring Jesus together. It's a high and glorious calling. So the question before us this morning is not what do we want our church to be known for?

[42:19] The question is what does Christ require our church to be known for? Beloved of Christ, be loving one another like Christ.

Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, help us love one another. We come up short.

We hurt each other often. We drop into selfish motives. Save us from us. And would you pour out your Spirit upon us that we would love one another in a Christ-like way.

In your name we pray, Jesus. Amen. Amen. Amen. may! may