

Eternity Daily Bible Study

The Importance Of Love

Number: 01
Verses: John 13:34,35
Topic: A New Covenant & a New Commandment
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John 13:34-35 *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. (35) By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

2 John 1:5-6 *And now I ask you, lady, not as writing a new commandment to you, but one which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another. (6) This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.*

In John chapter 13 Jesus initiates the New Covenant at the Last Supper, then, after Judas leaves the room he announces the New Commandment – the only commandment of the New Covenant "...that you love one another as I have loved you!".

The Jewish Law, which was the Old Covenant was national and neighborly and priestly and had around 613 commandments which could be summed up in two commandments – loving God and loving one's neighbor. In fact Paul says loving one's neighbor fulfilled the entire Jewish law!

Matthew 22:37-40 *Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' (38) This is the first and great commandment. (39) And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' (40) On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."*

Romans 13:9-10 *For, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not kill," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, in this word it is summed up, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (10) Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*

Galatians 5:14 *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

Now for a surprising twist... the Jewish Law was fulfilled by neighborly love, helpfulness and harmlessness (Good Samaritan style). That is the Old Covenant. The Good Samaritan could help his neighbor then get on with his life and yet still fulfill the Law.

The New Covenant tells us to love one another as Jesus loved us – that is in sacrificial, binding and eternal community. We are knit together in love into one new humanity in Christ, as part of an everlasting bond.

This takes love to a much higher level, a level that can only be fulfilled through the dynamic of the Holy Spirit. Now its not a sharp break but rather an exaltation and

expansion of the old commandment (love they neighbor as thyself) to a new level (love one another as I have loved you).

1 John 2:7-10 *Brothers, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. (8) Again, a new commandment I am writing to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light already shines. (9) He who says that he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. (10) He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.*

We are to love one another, to love the brethren, to love the new community of God, with such intensity that: "the world will know that you are my disciples". Jesus calls "love one another" "My commandment" , His own particular commandment, separate from the law of Moses or human commandments and the true sign of His discipleship.

In fact the apostle Peter tells us that our love is to be "fervent":

1 Peter 4:8 *And above all things have fervent love for one another, because "love will cover a multitude of sins."*

Fervent love is much more than a polite smile on Sunday morning! This is a huge challenge to me. God is very, very serious about us loving one another. Its not optional and it is supposed to be intense! "Love one another as I have loved you" is the only "New Commandment" of the New Covenant. It is the very hallmark of being a real Christian!

This series will explore in-depth what it means to love one another in a truly Christian manner. I am also writing this partly as a challenge to myself. I need to take agape love seriously and place it at the very center of my busy life in ministry. Life is not about goals and destiny (which can be selfish) or about growing institutions (which can become oppressive or a treadmill) rather its about loving "one another".

Indeed if we don't love our brother we have not even begun to love God!

1 John 4:20-21 *If anyone claims, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how is it possible for him to love God whom he has not seen? (21) And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God should love his brother also.*

More on this tomorrow!

Blessings,

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