

A New Command (2)

Scripture Reading — 1 John 3:16-20

"A new command I give you: ... As I have loved you, so you must love one another." John 13:34 —

Jesus' new command to his followers is that we are to love others as he has loved us. What does this mean? It means loving others with a sacrificial love. It means being willing to give up something for them. Loving others will cost us something--and, as Jesus' followers, we are willing to pay the price.

One day when I came home from work, my wife, Mary, informed me that I'd received a letter from New York City claiming that I owed \$25.50--a 50-cent toll and a 25-dollar fine for not paying the toll. A car rental company had forwarded my name to the authorities.

I asked Mary to check the date of the alleged crime. The letter said it happened on April 3. I took out my planner. Aha! On April 3, I was guest-lecturing at a seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I was in New York the following week. The rental company had forwarded the wrong name to the authorities. I was innocent.

After some time of explaining all this to the authorities and getting nowhere, however, we tired of arguing and decided to pay the fine anyway. Then it dawned on me: that's something like what Jesus did. He paid my fine even though he was totally innocent. In fact, he was condemned to death for my sake even though he didn't deserve it. As we think about this, let's ponder: In what ways is Jesus' calling us to show his love?

Prayer

Lord, as you have loved us, teach us to sacrifice our time, talents, ideas, and possessions to help others understand the good news of your love. Thank you for rescuing us. Amen.

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