

A New Command

Scripture Reading — John 13:31-34

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

When Jesus taught his disciples, he could have issued a long list of do's and don'ts. He could have given them libraries filled with rules and regulations to cover every possible scenario in their lives. But he doesn't do that; he gives just one short command: "Love one another."

Jesus knew that all his followers were created in God's image. He knew that if his disciples were going to become more like God, they would need to love each other with the same unconditional love with which he loved them.

Love is a wonderfully complex emotion. It has the power to change lives. It can soften the hardest heart and melt the most frozen personality. I don't fully understand love, but certainly I have experienced it. I will never forget the love I felt as I held my first grandchild. Nor will time ever erase the pain of love I knew as I lowered my child's remains into the earth. Jesus knew that obeying the command to love would not always be easy. Jesus himself had experienced the highs and lows of love as he obeyed his own command to love.

Unconditional love--the kind Christ commands--is not quick or easy. It requires an act of the will, not simply an emotional response. God loved us before we were lovable. So, too, we are called to love others.

Will you do that?

Prayer

Jesus, loving is not always easy. But you love us unconditionally. Fill us with your love so that we can love our neighbors as you have loved us. In your power, Amen.

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