

No greater command

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

(John 13:34-35)



This is one of those “pretty” passages of Scripture that we love to quote—it’s all sunshine and flowers and teddy bears. The sentiment darkens, though, when we consider the setting.

Jesus has just finished sharing the Passover meal with His disciples—what we call “The Last Supper.” He is about to lead them out into the Garden of Gethsemane where He will be betrayed and arrested (and He’s fully aware of this, by the way). When none of the disciples took the opportunity to serve the others, Jesus Himself got up from the table, removed His clothes, and undertook the filthy, humiliating task of washing their feet. Can you imagine how they must have felt?

Before Jesus issues His “new command” (above), Jesus sits down with them to offer comfort and reassurance. Judas, the traitor, has been exposed and dismissed. Jesus turns to the eleven and explains that the time has come—He is leaving and turning His ministry over to them. In a heartbeat, the panic level in the room is off the charts. Everybody knows that what Jesus is suggesting is inconceivable. There is SO much that needs to be said: Jesus feels it and so do the disciples. So what does Jesus say at that moment?

Love one another.

In church, we get distracted by so many important things that must be done. There are so many volunteer positions that need to be filled. There are so many upcoming events that need to be planned. There are so many big theological lessons that need to be taught. Jesus is saying, “Forget all of that. Just love one another. Everything else will take care of itself.”

And here’s a little bonus. That mission that Jesus left to the church? The one about going into all the world and making disciples? Jesus also addresses that here. He says, “The most effective way to make disciples is to love one another in a such way that everyone sees and wants to take part in it.”

So maybe we can change the world after all.

Pray

Lord, I like to think that if I had been with you at the table that night, I would have washed your feet. But then I remember that I am not very good about washing the feet of the people you’ve placed in my life. Please reveal your love to me in a fresh, new way so that I can drink it in and pour it out to others. Amen.

RECURRING NEEDS

Revival
Repentance
Wisdom
Marriages
Families
Sick/Grieving
Depression/Mental illness
City Church
Church leaders
Children
Youth
Singles
Senior citizens
Volunteers
Teachers and support staff
Emergency personnel
Business community
Elected officials
Missionaries
Worldwide church
The lost

REFLECTIONS
