

## **A NEW COMMANDMENT**

### **John 13:31-35**

#### **Introduction:**

- 1. What are churches of Christ best known for in the communities we serve?**
  - a. Our emphasis on the Bible and the Bible knowledge of members?**
  - b. Our plea for restoring the New Testament church?**
  - c. Our practice of keeping the Lord's supper every Lord's day?**
  - d. Our practice of only acappella singing in worship?**
  - e. Our insistence that baptism is immersion for the remission of sins?**
  - f. Our emphasis on the New Testament teaching of one church?**
- 2. These are essential and fundamental points, but are they the most important thing we should be known for?**
- 3. Jesus said to His disciples: "By this shall all men know you are My disciples if you have love one for another."**
- 4. Let us examine this commandment of our Lord more closely.**

#### **Discussion:**

##### **I. IT IS NEW.**

###### **A. The command for one to love his fellowman was not new.**

- 1. The Law of Moses stated: "You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18).**
- 2. Jesus said the two greatest commandments in the Law were: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-39).**

###### **B. The commandment is new in degree.**

- 1. It is not: "Love one another as you love yourself."**
- 2. It is not: "Love one another as you love your wife or husband, children or parents."**
- 3. It is not: "Love one another by doing unto them as you would have them do unto you" (Matthew 7:12).**
- 4. It is loving one another AS Jesus loved us.**
- 5. Jesus loved us enough to lay down His life for us!**

**“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (John 15:13).**

**“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).**

## **II. IT IS A COMMANDMENT.**

- A. The Lord’s commandments are not matters of choice or options - they must be obeyed!**

**“But why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not the things which I say” (Luke 6:46)?**

**“And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him” (Hebrews 5:9).**

- B. It is as binding as the command to observe the Lord’s supper or the command to be baptized for the remission of sins.**

**“You are My friends if you do whatever I command you” (John 15:14).**

## **III. IT REQUIRES HAVING THE MIND OF CHRIST.**

- A. Christ had a mind of compassion for those in need.**

- 1. For the untaught (Matthew 9:36).**
- 2. For the hungry (Matthew 14:14-21).**
- 3. For the handicapped (Matthew 20:29-34).**
- 4. For the grieving (Luke 7:13).**

**“By this we know love, because He lay down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him” (1 John 3:16,17)?**

- 5. A missionary who spoke of his work with orphan children in India was confronted with an angry visitor who demanded, “Where is your authority to help non-Christians?”**

- B. Christ had a mind of forgiveness for those who mistreated Him.**

- 1. He asked the Father to forgive those who crucified Him (Luke 23:34; Acts 2:23; 37,38; 41).**

2. He taught that we must forgive in order to be forgiven (Matthew 6:14,15).
3. A woman confessed to a preacher she had been mistreated by another and said, "I can never forgive her even if she repents." The preacher replied, "Then pray that you will never need to ask God to forgive you."
4. When Christ was reviled, He "did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him Who judges righteously" (1 Peter 2:23).
5. Paul exhorts us to: "be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).

#### IV. IT IS THE "BADGE" BY WHICH CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE KNOWN.

- A. A badge is a mark of identification (a policeman has a badge which identifies him as an officer of the law).
- B. If we truly love one another as Christ loved us, the world will be able to identify us by that love.
  1. History tells us that John in his extreme old age had to be carried to the meeting place of the church.
  2. When asked to exhort the church, he would say over and over, "Little children, love one another."
  3. Tertullian, a Christian in the second century, wrote: "The heathen are wont to exclaim with wonder, 'See how these Christians love one another,' and 'how they are ready to die for one another!' For the heathen hate one another and are more ready to kill one another" (Tertullian, Apology, 39).

#### Conclusion:

1. Love will cause us to be concerned spiritually about one another.
  - a. We will "provoke one another to love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24, 25).
  - b. We will seek to restore those overtaken in a trespass (Galatians 6:1).
  - c. We will "each esteem others better than ourselves" (Philippians 2:3).
  - d. We will "be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another" (Romans 12:10).
  - e. We will "rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15).
2. Jesus loved us when we were unloveable, died for us when we were unworthy, and wants to save us even though we don't deserve it.

