

**A New Commandment**  
**Pastor Ty Blackburn**  
**John 13:31-35**  
**August 17, 2014**

Thank you Will and Miranda. What a blessing. Young people, you are invited to go to your classes now. May the Lord cause you to grow in your understanding of the wonder of the Savior we just heard sung about.

I invite you to turn with me in your Bibles to John 13. We move to another section. What we've discussed is really Jesus' *'Farewell Discourse'* in John 13-17. These five chapters are the recording of Jesus' personal time with the disciples the night before His crucifixion. John records for us in a much more extensive way the things that Jesus said on that last night before He was crucified. And so we have here before us the heartbeat of the Savior as He stood in the shadow of the cross. We've seen, leading up to this passage before us today, we're going to be looking at Verses 31-38, we've seen first of all a visual demonstration of Jesus' love, a profound, visual demonstration of His love in the washing of the feet. How Jesus is showing them, in that event, in a most graphic and stunning way, that for them to be clean before God, for them to have their sins washed away, something scandalous must happen. In the same way it was scandalous for any one, or just a normal person to wash someone else's feet. That was something reserved for the slaves, the lowest of slaves. The greatest among them becomes like the lowliest slave. That is what has to happen for us to be washed. That is how bad our sin is. And so Jesus demonstrates the glory of His love in a way that would have stayed with them all night, this powerful demonstration of His love, the wonder of that, the bewilderment of that still lingering in their minds.

Then, the next section of Scripture that we looked at was the betrayal of Judas, another striking moment in the evening when the disciples are confronted with the fact that, "One of you will betray Me." How arresting that must have been. I mean, they are kind of going through the emotional upheaval of it, an incredible night already. It is just anticipatory of what is going to happen the next day. The kind of extraordinary impact that the events of the next 24 hours are going to have on the disciples. In Verses 31-38, now after Judas has left, we really have the beginning of the *'Farewell Discourse Proper'*. This is where Jesus really starts the teaching. In the first section we had the visible, acted-out parable, sermon acted out in the foot-washing. Then we had Jesus basically telling Judas to leave. And now we have Him beginning to really share His heart with the disciples in word, as we have in Verses 31-38.

To really get the sense of this though we're going to be looking at the new commandment. The title of the message is 'A New Commandment' and we're going to consider it under two points—'The Circumstance of the New Commandment', and 'The Substance of the New Commandment'. To help get that first point, 'The Circumstance of the New Commandment', I want us to read a little broader section than just Verses 31-35. We are going to start at Verse 27, and we're going to read through Verse 38. Now Jesus has just told them, "Someone is going to betray Me." They are wondering about it, they are asking themselves, and talking among themselves. Jesus clearly says, "The one I take and dip the morsel, and the one I give the morsel to, he is the one." We talked about last time that this was an act of love and kindness to Judas. It is one last attempt to reach out to his lost soul, and He gives the morsel to him in His sovereign, electing purpose of course. He knows he is not going to receive it, and He is actually doing this act of goodness to push Judas along in his evil intent. I mean, Judas is determined to do that which is evil, Satan is at work in this, and Jesus is just demonstrating the goodness and kindness of God in giving the morsel to him. But look what happens in Verse 27.

*John 13:27-38 ~ After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus \*said to him, "What you do, do quickly." 28 Now no one of those reclining at the table knew for what purpose He had said this to him. 29 For some were supposing, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus was saying to him, "Buy the things we have need of for the feast"; or else, that he should give something to the poor. 30 So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night.*

*31 Therefore when he had gone out, Jesus \*said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; 32 if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately. 33 Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

*36 Simon Peter \*said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later." 37 Peter \*said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You." 38 Jesus \*answered, "Will you lay*

***down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times.***

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

*Our Father, as we bow before Your holy word, we confess our spiritual poverty. We confess our need of grace. We ask that You might, by the power of Your Spirit, enlighten our minds by illuminating Your word, and helping us to see what You would have us see, to hear what You would have us hear, and give us the grace to repent, and believe, and look unto our Savior. We pray in His Name, Amen.*

A new commandment. Jesus says, "A new commandment I give to you." In one sense, this commandment is not new. In another sense, it is. Obviously if Jesus says it is a new commandment, it ultimately is a new commandment, but haven't we been told to love one another before? Yes, we have. Leviticus 19:18, love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus, when He was asked, "What is the greatest commandment?" He said, "Well the greatest commandment is to love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and the second is likened to it. The second greatest commandment is you shall love your neighbor as yourself." But we will see that this is a new commandment. It is definitely, there are some things about it that make it very new. And to unpack that, we first of all need to, before we consider the substance of the new commandment, we want to look at the circumstance of the new commandment. The first point is '*The Circumstance of the New Commandment*'.

### 1) The Circumstance of the New Commandment:

It is important when we read the Scriptures to read them in context. We always ought to be asking what comes before, what comes after, and is what I'm reading right now informed by that which comes before, and that which comes after? Most of the time it is in a dramatic way. Sometimes it is pivotal that we see that. It is always important, and here especially, and that's why the circumstance of the new commandment really, why is it that Jesus brings this up right now? Isn't it interesting, I mean, you step back from it for a moment, why didn't He tell them this earlier in His ministry? It looks like they needed this a long time ago. I mean really, did they have trouble loving each other? Yeah, they were always having trouble loving each other. I mean, they were having trouble loving other people.

John, his name was one of the Sons of Thunder. He and his brother James, Jesus called them *'The Sons of Thunder'*. Do you remember what John said when the Samaritans were rejecting Jesus? "Lord, let's call down fire out of Heaven to destroy that city." They were having a little trouble loving. They were always jockeying for position. They would be arguing. Jesus is humbly teaching, and leading, and serving, and they are arguing, "Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" "I'm greater than you are." That is what they would be doing. They needed this long before, why now? I want you to think about that, and we'll see as we read through this, and we look at this passage, the significance of it. The circumstance of the new commandment. One of the first important words that jumps out to us in the passage is in Verse 31, *'when'*. The circumstance, I want to think about it around that question, *when* Jesus gives this commandment. Look at Verse 31.

***John 13:31 ~ Therefore when he had gone out,...***

In the Greek actually, the first word in the text is *'when'*. It says literally, "When therefore He had gone out..." And that points back to the previous verse. ***Therefore when he had gone out...*** When therefore he had gone out... That is Verse 30:

***John 13:30 ~ So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night. 31 Therefore when he had gone out,...***

Now this is where observing the text carefully is important. A lot of times as you read through the Gospels in general, or John in particular, you will come across a phrase like *'After these things...'*. John will use that phrase to say, "Listen, this happened..." He is telling you about an event. "After these things..." What he means is some time elapsed and then something else I want to talk to you about. But he wants us to see in Verse 31 that this is happening at exactly the moment Judas went out. I mean right afterwards. There is no time that had elapsed. They didn't have any small talk for a moment, or they didn't talk about anything else. This is what Jesus said as soon as the door closes behind Judas.

***John 13:31 ~ Therefore when he had gone out, Jesus \*said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified,..."***

This idea of *'When?'* is emphasized because four times in these verses you have the word *'now'*. Verse 31, ***"Now is the Son of Man glorified,..."*** The fact that Judas has gone out, the fact that Satan has entered into him, the fact that the plot is

now... I mean, Satan has been wanting to destroy Jesus all the way through, but now is the moment. It occurs four different times, the word 'now'. You have it in Verse 31, "***Now is the Son of Man glorified,***... You have it also in Verse 36, "***Where I go, you cannot follow Me now;***... Verse 37, ..."***Lord, why can I not follow You right now?*** And you also have it in Verse 33. I skipped over that, ...***You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you,***... Jesus says, "It is very important. This moment is very significant. This moment in time is very significant." I think it points back to Verse 30.

***John 13:30 ~ So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night.***

When we read the Bible, we want the author's intention, and there are times where people, in interpretation of a passage, will go astray at allegorizing something, or making something out of something that is really not there. You're going to read a straightforward account and say this, "I remember hearing a sermon one time about Jesus, and the boat, and the disciples, and the boat represents the church, and the sea represents the world," this kind of thing. You know what I'm saying? Allegorizing a story. Well you should never do that unless the text calls you to do that, and when it's telling a straightforward history it doesn't call you to do that. But now there are times where things may be shared where the author is intending to believe some meaning, or some figurative meaning into something, and I believe that John actually is one of those authors that when you carefully examine what he says through his book, he is one who intends to put some extra meaning into things by a phrase like '*it was night*'. Look at Verse 30.

***John 13:30 ~ So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night.***

Now anybody who knows anything about the Passover knows you are eating that meal at night. It is somewhat gratuitous. It is unnecessary to point that out. It's like saying, "I was asleep last night, and I was awakened in the middle of my sleep by a coyote, and I got up, and I looked outside, and it was night." I already told you it was night, right? Anyway, it was night, what does he mean by that? I think John is helping us to see something of what is happening here, and when you really put it in context, let me show you how he uses this. Go back to John 1. There is this theme of light and darkness in John that he wants us to see throughout the book.

***John 1:4-5 ~ In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.***

John says that Jesus came into the world as the light of the world. He is going to be the only Gospel-writer who records that saying for us in John 8:12. Remember when Jesus said, one of His 'I AM' statements is, "I am," what? "The light of the world. He who believes in Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." So at the very beginning of his Gospel he makes his point, and he goes on in Verses 7-9 and talks about the fact that John the Baptist wasn't the light. He came to testify to the light, and the light is Jesus. But Verse 5, ***The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*** The word translated 'comprehend', you may have a footnote in some of your translations. It will tell you the word could also mean 'overpower'. Actually, the Greek verb means 'to take down', literally. It is a compound word, it means to 'take or receive down'. So it can mean that you take it down, and that you comprehend it, or it can mean that you are trying to take it down, fight against it. There is probably something of a double meaning in that word, but here the idea is a conflict. ***The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.***

Later on in the book, this idea of light and darkness in the ministry of Jesus, and what John records, in John 3. Turn to Verse 19. Jesus, after He has shared with Nicodemus the Gospel, He says:

***John 3:19-21 ~ This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. 21 But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."***

This idea of light and darkness, and the conflict between light and darkness is something that John is saying. That when Jesus came into the world, that what happened was He came into a dark world, and His coming was the shining of the light, and there was this conflict, this clash of the Kingdom of Light versus the kingdom of darkness. Now I mentioned earlier, in John 13, when I was saying it was night, I'm saying there is something significant about that. Let me show you that even in John 3, look at John 3, before the verses we just read, look back at John 3:1.

***John 3:1-2 ~ Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; 2 this man came to Jesus by night...***

Well I think that certainly has an important reference. It is telling us that Nicodemus didn't want to be seen coming to Jesus, but is there something more there? Possibly! And I think as we put it all together throughout the book, I think it is clear there is. In fact, he is basically saying, Nicodemus, the teacher of the Jews, this great Pharisee that everybody looked up to, who was revered to be a man who understood the Scriptures, this man is in the dark. In fact, Jesus is going to make clear in Verses 10, 11, and 12, He basically says, "Nicodemus, you are the teacher of the Jews and you do not understand! Nicodemus, you are the teacher of the Jews and you do not even receive the teaching from God! Nicodemus, you are the teacher of the Jews and you do not believe! You do not understand! You do not receive! You do not believe! You are completely in the dark. Nicodemus, you need to be born again! You need the light of God to come into your soul."

And He keeps this theme going in John 8. I mentioned He says at the Feast of Tabernacles, which part of it was the lights that were displayed at the Feast of Tabernacles, "I am the light of the world." Then in Chapter 9, the next thing John records for us is the healing of a blind man. Remember that? And to show you this, Jesus was painting this picture for His disciples and John picks up on it. Look at John 9, He sees a man blind from birth, the disciples ask Him the question, "Who sinned? This man or his parents?" It was neither but this man was blind for the glory of God, and look what He says in Verse 4:

***John 9:4 ~ We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.***

Do you see that? Jesus is saying, "Look, Me being here is day, but night is coming." Look what He says next:

***John 9:5-6 ~ While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." 6 When He had said this,...***

Right after He said this, He spits on the ground, He puts clay on his eyes, and He heals the man. Do you see that? "I'm the light of the world," and we talked about this when we were in John 9, it is basically showing that we are all born blind. We can't see spiritual reality, just like Nicodemus. He said, "Unless you are born again, you shall not see the Kingdom of God," because you're in the dark! But Jesus is the light of the world. Now back to John 13 when He says,

***John 13:30 ~ So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night.***

He's saying, "Look, the onset of spiritual darkness is upon us. The darkest night, the world's darkest night is crowding into us. The light of day is fleeing." Now Jesus is still the glorious Son of God, but what is happening is, the glorious Son of God is turning Himself over to the night, to the darkness. You see it unfold in John 13, this idea of spiritual darkness and the night. John 13:2, John tells us before Jesus washes the feet that:

***John 13:2 ~ the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him,***

Then in Verse 21, Jesus is troubled in spirit and says:

***John 13:21 ~ ... "Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me."***

You see the pressing darkness coming in upon our Savior? Verse 27, we read earlier, Satan enters into Judas when Jesus hands him the morsel. And then Verse 30:

***John 13:30 ~ So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night.***

Jesus does something interesting in Luke 22. Luke records for us when they come out to arrest Jesus. Remember a group of priests, chief priests, comes with their soldiers to arrest Jesus, and Jesus says, "Every day I was with you in the temple courts and you didn't arrest me. Why?" He says, "This is your hour and the reign of darkness." In the Greek, the idea is, the reason is this is now your hour where you have power over Me, and this is the hour of the reign of darkness, the authority of darkness. This is the moment." Remember how He has been talking throughout John's Gospel. "Now is not yet My hour." "Now is not yet My hour." "My hour has not come." "Now is the hour." It is at this moment that Jesus gives that command. The hour when darkness reigns, the hour when darkness is crowding in, that is when He says, ***A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another,...*** What is He saying? "When evil comes in like a flood, what are you to do?" There are moments of greater darkness in the history, and in God's providential dealings with man in history. There are moments where church is persecuted, there are moments where evil reigns in unprecedented ways, or in ways that are incredibly burdensome. What are you to do? This is really a battle plan in a sense. That the whole night is a battle plan. He is basically telling them, "This is how you live in this present darkness. When evil comes in like a flood, when

persecution breaks out, when people give themselves to hating Me, what are you to do? Are you to fret, are you to worry, are you to just turn tail and run? No, you are to love one another.”

We saw last time part of what He’s telling him as He predicts the betrayal. We saw that He is basically showing His glory even in that. Remember? He’s showing how He has all authority. He commands Judas, He commands Satan basically, “You do what I’m telling you. Do it even more quickly than you were planning on it. You do it according to my schedule,” Jesus says. He was also showing His goodness, that even in those moments He is kind to the traitor. So He was telling His disciples, as they looked back, and they reflect back on those moments, “When we see things falling apart around us, what are we to do?” We are to look at Jesus. We are to trust in Him.

That is what the psalmist says, in Psalm 11 where David writes, he is putting on the lips of people around him, “You say to me when evil comes in like a flood, what shall the righteous do? When the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? You are telling me, ‘Flee to My mountain.’” And this is what David says, “The Lord is in His holy temple. What am I to do when evil comes in like a flood? I’m to look at God and realize He is in His temple, He is on His throne. Then I’m also just to be about being faithful, to do what I know to do. I can’t fix what is going on around me. I can’t fix the fact that the floodgates are breaking open, and evil is rushing in. What I can do is do what He commanded me to do. He commands us to love one another.” He basically is saying, “When we feel overwhelmed, when we feel afraid, when we want to run, what should we do? Take the focus off of yourself and serve your brothers and sisters because they feel the same way. Serve them, love them.”

In fact, a great passage for when you’ve been watching too much Fox News Channel, go read Psalm 37:1-9. Basically the message is, “Do not fret. Do not fret. Do not fret. Rest in the Lord. Trust in the Lord. Wait for the Lord. Dwell in the land. Cultivate faithfulness. Do good. Don’t worry about what is going on out there, you trust in the Lord. Do what He’s called you to do.”

There’s something freeing about that, isn’t there? When you realize that when we want to take on more stuff and we think we can be our own god, we don’t consciously sit there and think that as believers, but we act like it. “I can sort of make things work out better.” What have I done wrong? God just says, “Be faithful to Me and trust Me.” We can’t make anything work out. We can’t do anything. “Lord, we can’t control anything.” We think we can, but we really can’t. I mean,

our best laid plans, you know, you lay out everything, you try to make something happen, and all it takes is a little breath of wind. I think the Lord does that. I'm putting together a good plan and the Lord just sends a little breath of wind, and my plan is demolished. He's reminding me, "Ty, I'm in control. You're not in control. Yeah, you're supposed to be faithful, but I may blow on what you're doing anyway, so don't get too hung up on what happens. Just keep being faithful." Sometimes it means you just pick up and start putting back together what He just blew down, but with a joy in your heart that He's on the throne.

Now, really you see that the circumstance of His commandment, He gives this commandment at the hour when darkness reigns. The circumstance of the new commandment, there's really kind of two angles to this. He gives this new commandment at the hour when darkness reigns. That's what we've just looked at. But He also gives this new commandment, the when, the first point, the circumstance of the new commandment is also simultaneously the hour when the Son of Man is glorified. The hour when darkness reigns, is the hour when the Son of Man is glorified. That is made emphatically clear by Jesus. Therefore, when he had gone out, it was night.

***John 13:31 ~ Therefore when he had gone out, Jesus \*said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him;***

And look at the emphasis on the word *glory* and *glorify*. Verse 32:

***John 13:32 ~ if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately.***

Jesus is making it clear that this is the hour that the glory of God is going to be set on display. "This is the hour when God is going to glorify Himself in Me," He's saying, "and as He glorifies Himself in Me, I'm going to be glorified in Him." That's something of the wonder of the Trinity in this. To lift up Jesus is to lift up the Father. To lift up the Father is to lift up Jesus. They're one God. Five times the word *glorify* is used in those two verses. The glory of God, God is glorified when His true weight and His true value are made known. The Old Testament word for *glory* is a word which means *weight*, and the Old Testament words bleed into the New Testament. When you read a New Testament word, to really understand what a New Testament word is, you don't just look at a Greek dictionary, but you also look at how the word was used in the Old Testament, because they're reaching into the Greek language to pick out words to describe Old Testament concepts.

The weightiness of God, the idea of God's glory is when He makes some of His attributes known, He makes His character known. The Shekinah glory of God was the sense in which His glory weighed on the people. It pressed upon them. It forced them to the ground. That's His glory. The New Testament word adds a little bit to it in the sense that the word δόξα (doxa) for glory comes from a word which means to think and to esteem. So the glory of God is when our thoughts of God are raised up. It works together. His weightiness is now seen. Who He really is comes to mind.

What Jesus is saying is the hour when darkness reigns is simultaneously the hour when God's true weight, and beauty, and majesty, and glory are made known. It's the supreme revelation of God at the moment when darkness reigns. Now that is astonishing. Satan is rejoicing at this moment. He believes he has the Son of God in his clutches. He believes he's trampling on the Son of God, and in a sense he is, because the Father has pulled back His hand and is allowing Satan to do so. But the true measure of the glory of the Son of God is being made known.

In fact, just to show that how Jesus goes freely, He said, "No man takes My life from Me. I lay it down freely." He said that in this Gospel, but I mentioned Luke 22:53. Just make a note of a few verses to look at and I'll just tell you what they say: Luke 4:32, Luke 4:36, Luke 9:1, Luke 10:19, and Luke 22:52-53. I quoted to you Luke 22:53, in which Jesus says, "This is your hour, and the reign of darkness. This hour is yours, and the reign of darkness." "This is your hour when darkness reigns," is basically the idea. He's saying basically, "The reason you guys are able to arrest Me is because right now darkness is reigning. Satan and his demonic kingdom, the prince of darkness, is reigning."

When you read through Luke 4, 9 and 10, what you see is in Luke 4, they marveled at Jesus' authority, because He commanded the demons to come out and they did. In Luke 9:1, He gives His disciples as they go out authority over the demons. In Luke 10:19, they come back and He talks about how He saw Satan fall, and it was because they had authority over the demons that He had given to them. You see, Jesus has authority over the kingdom of darkness. He had absolute authority. In John 13:3, remember when He's introducing the foot washing, after he says in Verse 2 that Satan had already put in the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Him, he says:

***John 13:3 ~ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands,...***

What the point is clearly is Jesus has all authority. As He says, “All authority in heaven and earth is given to Me,” and He lays it down, just like He laid aside His garment, He lays down His authority over Satan, because what would happen when the demons would see Him coming? Do you remember how you see this in the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke? Somebody will be demon possessed. There was one time in particular and they started yelling at Jesus from a distance, basically, “Son of Man, take it easy on us! Son of God, take it easy on us!” That’s not exactly what they said. I’m paraphrasing. The demon who has possessed this person is begging for mercy just as Jesus comes into the field of vision of that person, but they know who’s in charge. He is the one who sits at the right hand of the throne of God, and so now He’s basically made really clear here, do not be mistaken. When He submits to go into the night, the Lord of Light, the Lord of glory walking into the darkest night, He does so by laying aside His authority and offering Himself as the sin-bearer, the one who should endure all of the wrath of God for everyone who would ever believe. He does so freely.

When He makes this commandment, the hour when darkness reigns, the hour when the Son of Man is glorified, now He says, “In light of all of this, what you need to do is love one another. You’re seeing the most amazing display of love that you could ever imagine.” The glory of the Gospel is that Jesus Christ walked into the darkness of hell that you deserve, that I deserve. Every sin that you’ve ever committed, one sin, if you had lived your life and only committed one sin, I would say if you’ve lived the last hour and have only committed one sin, I’m impressed. I’m really amazed. If we could know our hearts, we’d know that even our best moments are tainted with sin. It’s the blood of Christ that purges even our best moments. But if you think about all the hundreds of thousands, maybe millions of times, and you add up every thought that was wrong, every selfish moment, one of those could not stand in the presence of a holy God. One of those, if we really saw its ugliness, is an act of rebellion against a loving and benevolent King, an act of cosmic treason, one of them, and yet we have sinned multitudes of times, and multitudes of times, and multitudes of times, and we deserve a thousand times over to go into hell.

Yet Jesus on that night, He goes in and He takes everything that you and I deserve, in Himself. He goes into that night, He lays aside His glory, and He receives the wrath of God in full, and He is treated as if He had lived our filthy, ugly lives, and not just one, but all of us who believe. His resurrection proves His offering was accepted, but the idea that He gives this new commandment in that moment, and what that tells us is listen, the hour of increasing darkness, whenever you find yourself moving into a night—there are little nights in our lives where you go into

suffering, difficulty, times of doubt, relational problems, death of loved ones, betrayal, personal betrayal, times where we move into the night—what do you know? You know that, listen, it is God’s way when things get the darkest, that He likes to shine His glory the brightest.

So the Christian is the person who when we’re really thinking rightly, when we look at how the world is going around us, we can be appropriately brokenhearted that the world is moving and accelerating toward evil. That’s appropriate for us to do that, but there should also be with that a sense of, “Lord, if You continue to allow things to go like this, it means You’re going to show more of Your glory.” There should be an element of joy that balances our hearts. “You’re sovereign, and it’s your way when the night gets darker, to shine Your light the brightest.” You see the stars the most clearly when you are the farthest removed from the lights that come up from this earth, don’t you? When you get away out into the wilderness and you don’t have all the streetlights coming up, you can see the stars. In the same way, the Lord loves to show His glory in the darkest night.

There’s a wonderful verse in Philippians 2:14-16. He basically says, “Do everything without grumbling or complaining.” Here again, this is like Psalm 37:1-9 and Philippians 2:12-16, when you’ve been watching too much TV or listening to too much talk radio. He says:

***Philippians 2:14 ~ Do all things without grumbling or complaining, 15 so that you may prove to be blameless and pure, children of God who shine like lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world...***

If the generations are getting more and more crooked and perverse, what are you to do? Stop grumbling and complaining. “Lord, but look how awful it is.” You can pray, but don’t grumble or complain. Rejoice that our Savior is on the throne. Nothing’s happening apart from His will. Just like this night, nothing happened apart from His moment by moment control. And if He sends us into the night, He’s going to glorify Himself through us, and we’re going to get to see His glory more. That’s the circumstance of the new commandment, and basically again, the circumstance is what are you to do? Be faithful. Love.

Now, the substance of the new commandment. Let’s get at exactly what He says about this. The second point is:

## 2) The Substance of the New Commandment:

There are two sub-points here. First note:

### A) The Newness of the Commandment:

I mentioned earlier in one sense it's not new. Love your neighbor. Love one another. But what makes this new? Well, first of all, it's new because it has a new standard. He doesn't say, "Love your neighbor as yourself." What does He say? *...love one another, even as I have loved you...* Wow, the way that Jesus has loved us, that is a new commandment. That is a supernatural commandment. That's why He didn't give it before now, because it's not just got a new standard, but He is communicating a commandment that will require a new power. The reason He hadn't told them before now is there was no way they could ever hope to love like this until they had access to the power of the cross. You cannot love as God wants you to love, without the cross. It's impossible. That's why He didn't give this commandment. It wasn't like He's, "Hey, I've been meaning to talk to you about this commandment thing of love." No, He's telling it because He now is in the shadow of the thing that's going to give them the power to love. We love Him because He loved us, and we love Him because He loved us, by loving one another. This is how we express our love. They weren't going to be able to love like this until the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, but the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was purchased at Calvary. That's why it's a new commandment. Now, the nature of the commandment.

### B) The Nature of the Commandment:

That's the second sub-point under *The Substance of the New Commandment*. We saw first its newness, and now its nature. There are three things I want to point out about this command to love, the nature of the commandment. First of all, the commandment to love shows it's volitional. Love is volitional, that is, it's a command to be obeyed, not a feeling to be experienced. "Love one another as I have loved you." He doesn't ask how you feel. "Do you feel loving? Are they lovable? Are Christians lovable to your right now?" There are times when they are, and we have to confess there are times when we don't find each other lovable. He says it really doesn't matter. The command is, "Love as I have loved you." It's the imperative mood. It's not a suggestion. It's a command. *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another...* It's an act of the will. You choose to love or you choose not to love.

Secondly, it's to be continual. Love's not just volitional, it's continual. In the original language, the command to love, ...*that you love one another*, is repeated twice in Verse 34, ...*that you also love one another*. Both times it's in the present tense, the Greek present tense, which we've noted before. The present tense Greek verb doesn't just talk about the time of action, the present time, but the kind of action. The present tense is ongoing action. Whereas the aorist is a point in time, the present is ongoing action. So He says, "Love," and it's continual. "Keep on loving. A new commandment I give to you that you keep on loving one another. Even as I have loved you (aorist tense), I've done it, I've demonstrated it. Look at the cross. I did it. There it is, that you also keep on loving one another." This means we're to keep working at loving one another. We're not just to give up after awhile. "Well, I've tried to love you and I'm done now." No, we are to follow Jesus and to keep on loving, to do it as an act of will, and to keep on loving.

Thirdly, it's not just volitional and continual, but it's sacrificial. The word *agape* implies that, but also when He says, "As I have loved you." We're to love sacrificially. I mean, remember the picture that He gave. Actually, I've been trying to use this in my mind, three verbs that we looked at a few weeks ago when we were looking at the picture of the foot washing and how it was a picture of love, remember? There are three main verbs that I pointed out. I don't think I described them exactly this way. The third point I did differently, but I've been thinking of it this way.

To love someone, what you've got to do is you have to *lay aside*. That's the first verb. Remember how Jesus laid aside His outer garments? And we said that in laying aside, what do you lay aside? Well, He laid aside His real concerns and His rightful position. He had the most reason to be concerned about Himself, and it was no contest. What He's going through compared to what they're going through, there's no comparison, but He laid aside His real concerns to serve. He laid aside His rightful position. He was the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He's the God of all flesh, and yet here He is taking upon Himself the form of the lowliest slave. So He laid aside, and then He takes up.

The second verb is *take up*. I like to think that this is what love is. Love is laying aside my concerns, my agenda, and it's taking up. What do you take up? He took up the towel. He took up the mantle of a slave. To love someone like Jesus loves, what you have to do is you have to lay aside and take up. And taking up the mantle of a slave is basically something that happens in your heart when you say to God, "Lord, I really have a concern about this. I think this is what's very important right now, but what You're telling me is I need to lay it aside and I'm a slave. I'm

reacting to this person, because I don't think they're showing me the kind of respect they should, or the kind of kindness they should, or they're being unfair with me. Wait a minute. I'm a slave. A slave has no rights. A slave has no agenda. So what does a slave do? A slave does what his master wants him to do. So I'll lay aside, I'll take up, and then I'll pour out. The third verb is *pour out*. Once you lay aside your rights, your concerns, you take up the mantle of a slave, and then you pour out. Jesus poured out the water. He poured out Himself. We pour out ourselves in service to God by serving others.

Now, let's think about this for a minute, and we're going to talk about this more next time, the idea of where Jesus is going, but basically what's going on here, when He says in Verse 33: ***Little children, I am with you a little while longer.*** He just said it's the night. The night is coming, right? Judas went out, it was dark, it's night, Satan's plot is happening, and they don't know it. Jesus is about to be removed from them by going to the cross, and then even the time He comes back with them, it's never going to be quite the same. It's going to be better, but it's going to be different. They'll never be able to touch Jesus again until they die and go to heaven. The rest of their earthly lives will be lived without being able to touch His hand, to feel Him put His hand on their back, to encourage them with His physical touch. They won't have that. They won't hear His earthly voice again until they die and go to Him.

The rest of their lives, they're going to be missing His physical presence, and that's why He says, "Little children, I'm with you a little while longer, and you're going to seek Me. I'm with you a little while longer, and in the middle of this turmoil, in the middle of the rest of your lives, you're going to have moments where you want to be with Me. You're going to be afraid. When darkness comes in, you're going to be afraid and you're going to want to draw near and say, 'Lord Jesus, just wrap Your arms around me,' and I'm not going to do that. In this part of the plan of God and salvation, I'm not going to be there physically to hold you. When you feel like you need Me, what are you supposed to do? Go serve somebody else." That's what He's saying.

He goes from Verse 33, "Where I'm going, you cannot come. Listen, this is what you do. Love one another. When you feel overwhelmed with life, when you feel afraid because of what's happening around you, check on your brothers and sisters. Go serve them. Lay aside your agenda, your concerns. Take up the mantle of a slave and pour yourself out in service, and as you do, realize that you're going and you're loving Jesus at that moment."

What happens when you do this is, isn't it amazing that when we lay aside our concerns and we take up the mantle of a servant, when we're walking in obedience to the Lord, what we find is that's the moment where we begin to feel His presence not physically but spiritually in an incredible way? And when we get on His agenda and die to self, His glory comes. Peter describes this in 1 Peter 1 when he's talking about suffering. That whole letter is about suffering and persecution, and he tells them, "Listen, you're having to go through some trials right now, and these trials have come so that your faith, which is of more worth than gold, will be proved genuine. There's a reason for the trials. God's sovereign in the trials. So basically rejoice in that."

He goes on to say, as he flows out of that in Verses 6 to 10, "Though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him. Though you can't touch Him right now, you trust in Him and you are filled with joy inexpressible full of glory." When we trust in Jesus, when we rest in Him, when our lives are hammered, and darkness is around us, when we learn to put our focus on Christ and do what He says and serve one another, what happens is we do get filled with His glory. That's the way that He's called us to live. And then the irony is that the hour when darkness comes in in the most profound way is the hour truly if you're faithful to Him, when the Son of Man is glorified again in your life to the extreme. When else can He be magnified except when you find yourself overwhelmed?

Isn't that when you think about people that have made an impact in your life? Isn't it when you saw them weather a storm and they shined with the glory of Christ? And can't you look back and say, "Lord, thank You for letting me see that"? And they can say, "He held me up when I had nothing," and you say, "I know. I saw Him. I could almost see Him holding you up." That's what will change the world. That's what He says. When we love one another in the midst of all kinds of adversity, when we love one another, when we visit one another in prison if it should come to that, when we serve one another no matter how small or big the night is, when that happens, the world looks at it and says, "There's something different about those people," and they're seeing lived out before them the glory of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. His light is shining and shining, and it is vanquishing the night, because He will reign forever and ever.

Let's go to Him in prayer...

*Father, we confess with Your people through the ages, we are empty and we need You to fill us. Lord, for those that are here today that have not truly repented and believed, that maybe they have thought they're Christians, but as they really look*

*at their lives, they realize they're not, You Lord, invite them today to truly cast themselves upon Jesus, to put all of their trust, all of their hope in Him, to let go of sin, and to cling to the cross. And for those of us who, Lord, have been born again and have been enlightened by the Light of the world, we confess how we still let the darkness press in upon us, and we lose our focus. God, help us. Help us to trust in You and to see that it is Your way to use those moments to shine Your glory, and let us cling to You so that You will be glorified in us. We want to see Jesus magnified. Help us make the most of the moments that You put us in, for the days are evil. We pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.*

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