

THAT YOU MAY HAVE LIFE

(A Study of the Gospel of John)

Do It like I Did

TEXT: John 13:34-35

Days before Jesus went to the cross, He said to His disciples,

John 13:34–35 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

If we had walked the dusty roads of Judea and Galilee with Jesus, we would have never heard Him say, “Do what I say and not what I do.” No, Jesus always set the example. He did not merely command us to do things. He did it first, and then said, “Now, you do it like I did.”

To all of us who have decided to follow Christ and be His disciples, Jesus gives the same command as He did to the eleven who remained at table with Him after Judas, the betrayer left. He says to us, “Love one another.” Then He adds the characteristic “Do it like I did it” example. He said, “Love one another, as I have loved you.”

As we worship this morning, I want us to be meditating on that command. In a little while we will talk about what that really means and about how we can do it. But first I want to remind you of a great truth.

Jesus not only gives us the command to love others.

Jesus gives us the grace and power to love others.

In Christ we not only have forgiveness, we have the power to forgive.

In Christ we not only are loved, we are given the power to love.

In fact, one of the reasons we worship Christ this morning, is because in Him, we have absolutely everything that we need.

INTRODUCTION: As Jesus gave the command for us to “love one another;” He also told us how we could do it: “as I have loved you.”

So, let us ask, “How did Jesus do it?” How did Jesus love others?

I. JESUS LOVED GOD FIRST AND MOST.

Mark 12:28-31 28 Then one of the scribes came, and ..., asked Him, “Which is the first commandment of all?” 29 Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: *‘Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. 30 And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’* This is the first commandment. 31 And the second, like it, is this: *‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’* There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Jesus loved people, all people.

But, Jesus loved God the Father first and most.

- **Jesus did what the Father told Him to do.**
- **Jesus said what the Father told Him to say.**
- **The constant desire of Jesus was to please and honor the Father.**

A. If we are going to love people the way Jesus loved people,

we first have to love God the way Jesus loved God the Father.

Why is that true?

Because **love for God is the fuel for the engine of obedience to God.**

A couple of weeks ago we looked at **Jesus’ own struggle with the cross.** Jesus wrestled with

- **The pain of the cross**
- **The shame of the cross**
- **The separation from the Father caused by sin**

So, what was it that caused the Father’s purpose to win out?

What made Jesus say “yes” to the whip, to the nails, to the humiliation, to the forsakenness that was to be His upon the cross?

Was it me?

Was it you?

Was it some other soul through history?

Jesus thought of us and said,

- what potential!
- what glorious sons and daughter in the Father's family they are going to make.
- how much sweeter eternity is going to be because of their presence.

No way!

- None of us individually are worth the cost of the cross.
- Not all of us collectively across all of time are worth the cost of the cross.

The cross was not an investment that would pay dividends in eternity that would make the initial price justifiable.

The cross was because of grace, and grace is unmerited favor.

- We did not merit what Christ did on the cross before we were saved.
- We still do not merit what Christ did on the cross after we are saved.
- And even when we've been there 10,000 years, we will not have been able to be enough, not been able to do enough, that we will deserve what Christ did on the cross.

Now, don't you think Jesus was aware of this truth?

That the people for whom He was bearing the shame, for whom He was enduring the agony, for whom He was paying the awesome cost of sin would never, never, never deserve what He was doing on the cross.

Sure He did. He knew it. He went anyway.

So, why? Why did He still go to the cross?

Why did Jesus say, "Not My will but Thine be done?"

Because of His love for the Father!

Now listen, I am in no way saying Jesus did not love us and all of those for whom He died. He did, and He does, praise God.

But loving others was second for Jesus just like He told us to make loving others be second for us.

First is loving God with all of your heart and soul and mind and strength.

Jesus loved God the Father first and most.

His love for God the Father fueled the engine of obedience.

And so it will do for us.

B. If we do not love God first and most,

our love for a person or for people will often wane.

Why is this true?

People will disappoint us.

- **All have sinned**
- **We know our own sins.**
 - **We either deal with them,**
 - **or we excuse them,**
 - **but they don't surprise us.**
- **Often we are surprised by the sin of others.**
- **This brings disappointment.**

If our obedience to the command to love others is fueled only by love of people,

when we get disappointed, the fuel dries up, and the engine of love stalls!

You know that I love Brazil, and I love Brazilians. It was the first end of the earth place, God called me to minister. I love the sharing the gospel there. I love planting churches there. I love much of the culture and the language. I enjoy sharing the gospel in my poor Portuguese and singing with Brazilian brothers and sisters hymns and songs in worship. So going to Brazil to do missions and loving the people of Brazil is not a heavy burden on my back, it is a blessing.

But in the thirteen years I have been doing mission work in Brazil, of course there have been disappointments. One common characteristic of Brazilians as with many Latin American cultures is that punctuality is not very important. It is as if the standard

is **“Never do today what can be put off until tomorrow.”** Now, let me say, that this is not true of the primary people with whom we are working presently. But years back, I would be emailing a pastor whom we were going to work with in planting a new church. And I am trying to get the schedule worked out. I am trying to get the name of a hotel and a couple of restaurants so I can take care of the team. I send him an email, and wait a day, a week, and email him again. Did you get my email?...

I had one Brazilian Convention official I worked with for years. The only way to get him to answer an email was to email an American friend of mine in Brazil, and ask him to call the official and ask him to answer my email.

There were times I thought, “Man, if this does not mean more to him than this, I’m just going to drop it.”

And when I did, very quickly there was a brick bouncing around inside of my conscience. Ever have one of those? The Holy Spirit can plant one there in a millisecond.

And the quiet voice of the Lord would say, “So why are you going, Mike? For him or for Me?”

Are you understanding?

Jesus said,

John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

We are to love one another, but the only way to maintain that is to do it like Jesus did it.

Jesus loved God the Father first and most.

And if we would love others as He loves us, we also must love God first and most.

- **Men, some of you do not love your wife like you should; and the reason is because you do not love God like you should.**
- **Ladies, some of you have a grudge against another woman that you will not forgive and reconcile, and the bottom line of the reason that you will not is that you don’t love God first and most.**
- **Young people, as young as you are, some of you have some real relationship problems**
 - **Some with parents**
 - **Some with siblings**

- **Some with other teens in youth group or at school**

And when you hear Jesus say, “Love others as I have loved you,” you just think, “But not them.”

The reason you cannot bring yourself to love “them,” is because you do not love God first and most.

Folks, we have to get the order right or we will never obey this new commandment.

*29 Jesus answered him, “The **first** of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. 30 And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. 31 And the **second**, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’*

II. THE SINGLE GREATEST BARRIER TO LOVING GOD MORE, AND LOVING PEOPLE MORE, IS THE DESIRE TO PLEASE OURSELVES.

Do a little experiment with me. This is just in your mind, not going to share it.

Think of two things you know that God would like you to do more than you do.

- Read Bible more
- Witness more
- Serve the Lord more

Ok, got your two things?

So, why don’t you do them? Bottom line, almost always, is I don’t want to. I don’t want to give the time, don’t want to make effort, don’t want to risk embarrassment or discomfort,

Now, let’s do the same with a person that God has put in your life to love. If you’re married, think of your spouse. If not, think of a close friend or a parent or other relative.

Think of two things they would like for you to do more than you do?

- Spend more time with them.
- Do an activity they really enjoy with them.
- Help them with something you are good at and they not as much.
- Let them help you with something they are good at and you not as much.

Ok, so why don't you? "I don't want to!"

Desiring to please ourselves is the single greatest barrier to loving God more, and to loving people more.

The Bible has a name for this barrier.

SELFISHNESS

A focus on what self wants.

In the same way Jesus shows us how to love others by first loving God,

He also shows us how to love both God and others by laying aside selfish desires.

Jesus said "No" to people's request of Him pretty often.

Jesus never said "No" because

- **it was inconvenient for Him.**
- **it would cost Him something.**
- **it would cause Him discomfort or pain.**

Jesus day after day,

hour by hour,

laid aside

- **personal wants**
- **preferences**
- **comforts**

so that He could show His love for the Father by pleasing and honoring Him, and show His love for people by doing what was good, right, and best for them.

CONCLUSION: When we do what Jesus did, people will know that we are His disciples, because that is a really different way of living. You don't see that terribly often in this ol' world.

"Love one another; as I have loved you; ...

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

~ Jesus