

#1

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It was Thursday before Good Friday.

The Pharisees had just confronted the Lord about the commandments.

Jesus spoke of His command that leads to eternal life.

Now, Jesus was telling His Disciples what was about to happen.

#2

John 13:33-35 (NIV)
 "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come."

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#3

John 13:31-35 (NIV)
 "A new command I give you: Love one another, as I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

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The Sadducees and Pharisees were on the attack.

They were attempting to discredit Jesus.

#4

Matthew 22:34-40 (NIV)
 Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

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#5

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.

37Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' **38**This is the first and greatest commandment. **39**And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

A new commandment?

Jesus' answer referred to the third book of the Torah, Leviticus, which dates back to the sixth century before Christ, it is stated "You should love your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus said this was the greatest commandment in biblical law.

What is new about this commandment?

Jesus' ministry was filled with the message to love one's neighbor as oneself.

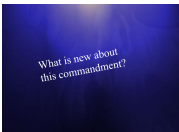
Leviticus is filled with the examples of how we are to love.

- The poor and the alien are to be provided for.
 - The deaf and blind are to be protected.
 - Judgments are to be just, without preferring the great.
 - Slander is forbidden along with theft and fraud.
 - No one is to hate another in his or her heart.
 - No one is to take vengeance, or bear a grudge.
- (Leviticus 19: 10-11, 13-18)

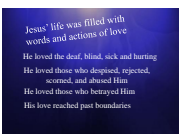
Jesus life was filled with words and actions of love.

- ***Love controlled His actions toward the deaf, blind, sick, and the hurting.***
- ***Love controlled His actions to those who despised, rejected, scorned, and abused Him.***
- ***His love was extended to those who betrayed him.***

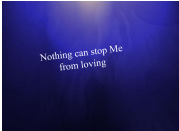
#6



#7



#8



➤ *His love reached past racial, social, and economic boundaries.*

*When Jesus said: “I remain in His love”
He was saying ‘nothing can stop Me from loving.’*

What is new about this commandment?

That night one of His disciples would betray Jesus. Most of his disciples would leave Him. Soldiers were coming to take Jesus to be tried, flogged and crucified. Peter, one of His strongest disciples would deny Him three times.

*These are Jesus’ friends.
Nothing could happen that would stop Him from loving them.
His love for them was secure.*

Things were about to happen that would challenge the character and faith of His disciples.

Knowing what was about to happen, Jesus called them to keep on loving Him and each other.

Jesus was calling for A NEW KIND OF LOVE beyond what Leviticus requires.

He is calling for the kind of love one is willing to die for.

His disciples don't seem to be up to it. Most of us identify with their feelings! This is pretty extreme love!

John 15:12-13 (NIV) ¹²My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

#9



Jesus loved his friends, and radically acted out His love.

Everything Jesus did was an expression of true love.

He expected His disciples to live the same way.

He expects the same of us.

#10

This kind of life is dangerous unselfishness
 "If I stop and help this man in need, what will happen to me."
 "If I do not stop to help... what will happen to them?"

Jesus was teaching and demonstrating a selfless life.

This kind of life is dangerous unselfishness.

- The question in life is not, "If I stop and help this man in need, what will happen to me."
- The question is: "If I do not stop to help... what will happen to them?"

This is what Jesus was teaching with the story of the Good Samaritan.

You may pass others by, but the love of God in Christ Jesus always stops and does everything that is necessary to help.

#11

Martin Luther King said: "we are not fully alive until we have found something for which we are willing to die."

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That is the kind of love that led Christ to a cross.

How can we realistically, in our own daily lives, understand and practice this new commandment of love of which Jesus was speaking?

#12

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No married couple's love has become complete until they can call each other true friends, and are ready to lay down their lives for each other.

This is being fully alive, fully committed, and fully fulfilled in a marriage.

True love involves the willingness to give up one's life instantaneously, without question, to save your spouse's life.

Most of us are willing to give our lives for our own children and spouses.

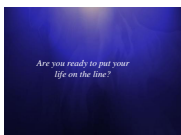
Jesus' new commandment of love takes us over to a new threshold.

What about friends who are not family members?

What are you willing to do for friends?

Our challenge is to keep expanding the circle to love more and more people.

#13



Are you ready to put your life on the line?

Professor Huston Smith has written a best-selling book on "The World's Religions."

He has chapters on Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity, and others.

When he examined Christianity comparatively with other religions, he stated that "Christianity's unique contribution, the essence of its "good news," has been a new and different kind of love as preached and practiced by Jesus, and ultimately by many of his followers."

"Conventional love is evoked by lovable qualities in the beloved, but the love people encountered from Christ embraced sinners and outcasts, Samaritans, and enemies. It gave, not prudentially in order to

receive, but because giving was its nature.”
Smith points out: “this kind of love dramatically reduced Christians' fears, including the fear of death. It also released Christians from the crippling confines of ego. They were freed to find the joy of their full selves after letting go their small, everyday selves.”

I hope you have been able to love someone that you are committed to unto death.

I hope you are able to follow in Jesus' footsteps and expand the circle of self-sacrificing love to include the hungry, thirsty, alien, homeless, orphan, sick, and the imprisoned.

By ultimately losing our lives in service to others we truly find life.

#14



What is the quality of love that you demonstrate?

If you have a friend that you love and that loves you, you need to let them know.

“This is My commandment, that you love one another... as I have loved you.”

The best thing you can do for your friends is to love them as Christ has love you.