

John: Jesus is the Christ # 48
(Preparing for Parting # 4)

John 13³¹⁻³⁵

Jesus's new commandment

Love one another, as I have loved you



(Context)

(Jesus is going, Judas has gone)

Within 24 hrs Jesus knows: He'll be dead;

- before the night is out Jesus knows: He'll be arrested – taken away;
- sun has already set – already dark;
- traitor has done his deal w devil;
 - departed to sell Jesus's soul to chief priests for 30 pieces of silver;
- Jesus has just a few short hours w His disciples;
 - this is His intense preparation of them for His departure.

What will be **Jesus's 1st words** now that Judas has gone – preparation is in its final phase?

(31) 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 glorify Him at once."*

(Where's the glory?)

(Not where we might expect)

1st words are **all about glory**;

- *the Son of Man is glorified*;
- *God is glorified in Him (the Son)*;
- *God will glorify Him (the Son) in Himself*;
- *God will glorify Him at once."*
- Jesus is saying: what you are about to see unfold:
 - including the treacherous betrayal by a so-called bosom-buddy – is glory;
 - including the insane jealousy of Jewish leaders – is glory;
 - including the kangaroo court travesty of justice – is glory;
 - including the frenzied crowds clamour for His crucifixion – is glory;
 - including the driving of nails thru hands & feet – is glory;
 - including the lifting of Himself up to humiliation – is glory;
 - including the cruel mocking claims of impotence – is glory;
 - including the cry of forsakenness as abandoned by His Father – is glory.

We might be **accustomed** to think : glory is in the **resurrection / ascension / reign** in glory;

- but no!
- Jesus says - *Now is the Son of Man glorified!*
- *God is glorifying Him at once!*
- Jesus is setting up His disciples w **biggest picture possible**;
 - from v 1st words of His farewell discourse;
 - He wants them to know : everything is about glory;
 - all a package deal;
 - all a perfect premeditated / predetermined / predestined plan;
 - everything is playing out according to His absolute sovereign power;
 - everything is about His glory.

This is absolutely **crucial / foundational** for them to get this;

- this alone will carry them thru the next 24hrs / 60hrs till resurrection;
- it is also absolutely crucial / foundational for us:
 - this alone will carry you thru the next 60 mins / 60 hrs / 60 yrs;
 - this is what life is all about.

Well does our **Westminster Shorter Catechism** have as its v 1st Q:

What is man's chief end?

Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever;

- but it is not only our chief end.
 - it is also our chief beginning / chief middle / chief everything;
- Jesus's glory / God's glory is what it is all about;
 - what your life is all about;
 - including the slow times when it seems like forever
for you to get to top of a hill;
 - waiting for a marriage partner;
 - waiting for a child;
 - waiting for a job opportunity;
 - waiting for relief from pain;
 - but also including times when you careering down other side
of rollercoaster at breakneck speed;
 - Lord, stop the world – I want to get off;
 - I can't cope w how fast everything is happening;
 - people's expectations are so overwhelming;
 - all piling up on top of me.

Jesus's glory / **God's glory is what it is all about**;

- what keeps you strapped into your seat w spiritual seatbelt / harness;
- what enables us to hang in there;
 - childlike faith – as little children - trusting our God : He has got this.

Now notice how **interconnected** it is – the Son is glorified;

- the Father is glorified in the Son;

- the Son is glorified in the Father;

- when the disciples get it – when we get it – we can add:
 - the Son & the Father are glorified in us – in you / me – awesome!

That's (31-32)

Then (33) **Little children**, yet a little while I am with you.

You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you,
'Where I am going you cannot come.'

- sneak peek ahead to next sermon:

(36) *"Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you will follow afterward."*

- we basically covered that already in children's talk;

- you're at the entrance to the **scariest roller-coaster** ride ever imaginable;
 - more inversions than the Smiler at Staffordshire, UK
 - which has 14 stomach-churning inversions;
 - more G-force than Tower of Terror in South Africa
 - w 6.3G
 - more acceleration than Formula Rossa in Abu Dhabi:
 - which does 0-100kmh in 2 secs – top speed 239 km/hr;
- Jesus is going on roller-coaster which is literally as scary as hell;
- not coming back – going to die – excruciating death;
- ∃ sign saying: little children, you cannot come;
- Jesus saying: *You cannot come*;
- you will follow – but He's making a way – better way – way for you;
 - still roller-coaster – but will not die – guaranteed;
 - way to glory.

(34) **A new commandment** I give to you,

that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

What's new?

Some say ...

A new commandment to replace the old commandments?

V **common** view – well-advised to be wary – on look-out for this;

- out w the old – in w the new;
- common to reject 10 commandments as **superseded** / obsolete;
- Jesus's new commandment has rendered them archaic / irrelevant;
- now we have Jesus's new commandment;
- **love one another**;
- people will say: to interpret this in terms of:
 - idolatry / blasphemy / Sabbath-breaking / adultery / robbery / lying / covetousness;
- ⇒ is to go back to dark ages;
- ⇒ to put ourselves back under law;
- Jesus's new commandment knows none of these old laws;
 - love is the fulfilment of the law.

Of course it is **true** that love is fulfilment of the law;

Rom 13(10) love is the fulfilling of the law;

- now – **What does that mean?**
- let's look at it in its context:

Rom 13(8) Owe no one anything, except to love each other,
for the one who loves another has **fulfilled the law**.

- (9) The commandments, "*You shall not commit adultery,
You shall not murder,
You shall not steal,
You shall not covet," and any other commandment,
are summed up in this word:
"*You shall love your neighbor as yourself."**

(10) Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

- this is not saying: out w old, in w new:
 - rather – new is summary of the old
 - new encapsulates the old;
 - new is essence of old.

This is of course how **Jesus had framed** it to His disciples:

- a lawyer asked him the Q:

Matt 22(36) "*Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?*"

(37) And He said to him, "*You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart & with all your soul & with all your mind.*

(38) *This is the great and first commandment.*

(39) *And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*

(40) *On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."*

- Jesus summarises the 10 commandments down into 2 commandments:
 - love God – love your neighbour / fellow man;
 - not superseding but summarising.

So perhaps we could express it as ...

A new commandment that is the same but simpler

Is the **same** – summary is there in OT too;

- in those summary 2 commandments – Jesus not actually saying something new;
- there in OT too:

Deut 6(5) You shall love the LORD your God

with all your heart & with all your soul & with all your might.

Lev 19(18) You shall love your neighbor as yourself:

But Jesus does call it a **new commandment** –

- if it is same but simpler – (simple was there before) – not really new;

So is it new or not?

- John says (1 John 2) my little children (same term of endearment as Jesus)
Beloved, I am writing you **no new commandment**,
but an old commandment that you had from the beginning.

At the same time, it is a **new commandment** that I am writing to you.

So is it new or not?

Word “**new**” is interesting – **2 words for new** in the Greek;

- one is brand new – other is renewed;

This is the **renewed** one;

- just as new heaven & new earth is a renewed heaven / earth
w both continuity / discontinuity;
- so new commandment is a renewal of the old commandment;
- but like the new heaven / new earth;
- has a superiority / beauty / glory that far surpasses the old.

This is what **I believe Jesus is saying** here ...

A renewed commandment that takes us deeper & further

So what is it about Jesus's new commandment that makes it new?

- it is **love one another, as I have loved you.**
- Jesus's life / lived out demonstration of love –
- takes the love commandment to an infinitely deeper level;
- puts it on a totally new plane;
- never before has anyone been able to live out what love is really all about;
- no matter how strenuously anyone has ever tried;
- no matter how successful they been in putting this into effect;
- everyone has fallen woefully short.

Jesus entered the world

- a loveless place full of unlovely people behaving in unlovely ways to unlovely ends
- His mission is to **love the unlovely**;
- to set His love upon those intrinsically unlovely;
- to liberate them from unloveliness by power of His love;
- to transform them into people who empowered to love from love received.

His new commandment is a command to **love as He has loved**;

- to love the undeserving;
- to love expecting nothing in return;
- to love in liberating / transforming way.

Martyn Iles had a post this week on the horrendous murder/suicide in Brisbane;

- it was a call to all men w interest in a woman:

When you meet God, as you surely will,

you will be held accountable for the condition of the woman in your life.

The standard is given in Ephesians 5.

It is this: Have you given yourself up for her?

Is your love for her a sanctifying influence, leading to increased holiness?

Is she free of blemishes inflicted by you, whether physically or spiritually?

Is she *“in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing,
that she might be holy and without blemish.”*

- this is how Jesus loves us;
- now He says – go and do likewise;
- if that leaves you as trembling as it leaves me ⇒ so it should – but know this:
- **I will be with you**, even to end of age - Matt 28(20)
- as **He who works in you**, both to will & to work for His good pleasure
- Phil 2(13)

Jesus's new commandment is not only for husbands – for **all of us**:

- selfless / sacrificial emptying of ourselves:

- our comfort / our convenience / our rights / our reputations;
- could apply when someone else is in the bathroom you want to be in;
- could apply when someone else is given credit for the work you have done;
- could apply when you are blamed for something you didn't do;

How did Jesus respond when He blamed for everything bad we all done?

A new commandment I give to you,

that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

(35) **By this all people will know** that you are my disciples,
if you have love for one another."

How's it work?

Is this an evangelistic strategy?

That loving people is **winsome** in winning people to the Lord;

Is this what Jesus is saying?

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

- No - He not speaking about loving people into kingdom;
- the **one another** is one another as disciples;
- Jesus is saying that love for one another as disciples – w/i body of Christ
⇒ lets others know : we are His disciples.

Of course some might see that love w/i Christian community:

⇒ say ***I want what they've got*** – I want to be part of that;

- but I don't think that is primary purpose of what Jesus is saying.

(Is this a characteristic description?)

What then is His purpose?

- Jesus is saying that love is a distinguishing / **defining characteristic** of His people;
- if we are His - if we have received His love:
⇒ love for fellow Christians will be manifest / in evidence / will be happening;
- not that fellow Christians are lovely – that is the point;
- as Jesus loved us unlovely as we are;
- we are enabled to love the unlovely in the body.

Jesus says He **always gives this gift** to His people;

- so much so – that if ∃ no evidence of love

⇒ no evidence of grace / no evidence of being saved;

- not that it have to be evident in its fulness - in fact – never will be;

- only finds its fulness in Jesus.

- John well understands this – basis of his argument in **1 John 2**

(9) **Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.**

(Is this universalistic enough? What about loving our enemies?)

You might be wondering **why** Jesus's new commandment focussed on love for **one another**;

- seems somewhat narrow;

Why not love your enemies?

- in Jesus's *sermon on mount* – **Matt 5(44)**

- He seemed to be saying – loving one another is **no big deal**;

(46) If you love those who love you, what reward do you have?

Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

(44) But I say to you, Love your enemies

and pray for those who persecute you,

(45) so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.

Loving your enemies is far **more likely** to be **evangelistic**;

- unbelievers far more likely to be drawn by way in which you love them;

- rather than seeing way you love your own kind.

So why would Jesus here say new commandment is to **love one another**?

- I'd suggest : in **preparing** His disciples for His **departure**;

- Jesus is taking them right back to basics;

- loving enemies is important;

- but 1st base is loving one another;

- once got to 1st base – then go onto 2nd base – love for enemies;

- but can't bypass 1st base – go straight to 2nd.

Again I think John got it when He expounds on this in later letter;

- **if don't love brother** in Christ ⇒ not love Christ.

Disciples' faith is about to be sorely tried w His **departure**

- they going to **need one another**;

- they going to need to love one another;

- not going to be easy – sinners as they are;

- still not easy;

- not everyone in this room is easy to love;

- I'm sure I'm not easy to love;

- but Jesus is saying to us – this is 1st base.

(Conclusion - Jesus is coming, we're going)

He's told us **He's coming**- but His **love has already come**

- His love enables / empowers us to love ⇒ He says we can do this.

Pray

Sing A new commandment I give unto you ...

Benediction – Rev 1(5,6)