

LESSON SIX

FEBRUARY 27 , 2022 – ONE ANOTHER ACCORDING TO JESUS

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” John 13:34

Following five weeks of Introductory lessons, ably provided by Ron, we begin our examination of the 40+ New Testament passages that specifically reference “one another” Our purpose is to create within Bethany Baptist Church the Christian community desired by Jesus as he prayed to the Father on his last night with his chosen friends. It all focuses on his new command to “love one another” (John 13:34) As we saw last week, our relationship with others must always begin with love. So, what is love? The Apostle John tells us:

“THIS IS HOW WE KNOW WHAT LOVE IS: CHRIST GAVE HIS LIFE FOR US, AND WE IN OUR TURN MUST GIVE OUR LIVES FOR OUR FELLOW CHRISTIANS” I JOHN 3:16

“THERE IS NO GREATER LOVE THAN THIS, THAT SOMEONE SHOULD LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS” JOHN 15:13

ONE ANOTHER ACCORDING TO JESUS

This week we begin to look at the specific Scriptures as they came from Jesus during his last evening with his friends.

JOHN 13:34 -- “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

The context of this verse comes from the discourse found in John's gospel chapters 13 through 17. Unlike the body of the four gospel accounts, John now spends five of the twenty chapters of his gospel describing the final evening Jesus spent with his chosen twelve disciples, now to be known as his friends.

The early section of the discourse is a description of the early evening and Jesus washing the feet of his friends. The washing is then followed by Jesus' description of humility and servitude, as exhibited in his own actions, as a fundamental element of the true Christian. He goes on to tell of his coming betrayal followed by his “new” commandment to “love one another” even as he has loved his followers. We now have a direct command from Jesus to “love one another”.

From this description of the discourse, we gleaned some specific eternal truths.

It is all about love for one another as Jesus provides in his last instructions to his friends. The Apostle John, writing this gospel many years following the historical events, is caught up in the expressions of love that took place on that historic evening. Jesus, now calling his disciples his friends, proceeds to teach them about the servanthood they must practice by directing his own actions towards them. He tells them of the coming of the Holy Spirit, the reality of eternal life, and the importance of their relationship with the Father as their sole source of life in the spirit. His evening with them concluded with his amazing prayer asking the Father to keep his followers in total unity while referencing the “new” commandment to love one another. All so that “ the world will know that you sent me, and that you loved them as you loved me” (John 17:23).

Ron went on to discuss the incident, at the beginning of the evening, when Jesus amazed his friends by the washing of their feet. While the washing of feet was a custom, the significance of the host doing so was an act of sincere humility. The disciples needed to understand that true love is always accompanied with humility and servitude. The passage emphasizes that the first and greatest commandment is to love God with all our being and that the second is like it in requiring us to “love your neighbor as yourself”. Now Jesus adds a third command THAT “you love one another”. Ron stressed the meaning of the word “that”, as used 145 times in John’s writings, including 48 times just in chapters 13 – 17 of his gospel. In effect, the significance of the word has a meaning of “here’s why”. Here’s why you must love one another -- because I have loved you.

JOHN 15:12 -- “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”

The context of this statement is, once again, the final evening when Jesus gathered with his friends for the final time in his earthly life.

Jesus chose an allegory of a vine and branches, quite common in their everyday world, to demonstrate his relationship with them. He instructed them to “dwell in my love” by keeping his commandments (John 15:9-10). He told them that the result would be complete joy (vs. 11). He then repeated his command that they “love one another as I have loved you” (vs. 12) and promises the sending of the Holy Spirit as their enabler.

Again we can develop some basic truths from this portion of the passage.

Jesus continues to focus on his relationship with these friends. In so doing he focused on the need to dwell in his love. The allegory of the vine and the branches became his primary basis for describing this relationship. And now he declares that the purpose of this relationship is to provide joy for his friends. His reiteration of the command to love one another reinforces the basis upon which his chosen friends enjoy relationship with the Father.

Ron then focused on the key elements of the passage, beginning with the illustration of the vine and the branches. As a demonstration of the requirement that the primary source of power remain connected to the functional elements, Ron used an electric clock to demonstrate that any disconnect from the power source rendered the clock useless for revealing the time. From there he once more connected the command from Jesus to “love one another” as being evidence that the connection is secure.

HOW THEN SHALL WE LIVE?

- 1. MAINTAIN A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS AS OUR SOURCE OF LIFE**
- 2. BE CONTINUALLY AWARE OF OUR CALLING**
- 3. ACKNOWLEDGE THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AS OUR ENABLER (16:13ff)**
- 4. NO ROOM HERE FOR TRIBALISM**
- 5. PRACTICE LOVE ON SOMEONE OUTSIDE YOUR TRIBE THIS WEEK**

Ron concluded our study by discussing how this passage, and these “love one another” commands applied, in a very practical way, to our recent voting activity as a church. What a wonderful opportunity to come together, as Bethany Baptist Church, to bring together any differences and renew our sense of unity, even as Jesus so prayed.

NEXT WEEK -- “ONE ANOTHER” ACCORDING TO JOHN

I JOHN 3:11 I JOHN 3:23 I JOHN 4:7 I JOHN 4:11 I JOHN 4:12