

LOVE AS JESUS LOVES

In John 13, Jesus turns to His disciples and gives them a new commandment. He calls them to love one another, just as He had loved them. He said that if they were to do that, people would be able to see that they followed Him. This love, which is desperately needed in a time like this, at times can get lost in what following Jesus is all about. Let's take a minute to focus on the part on verse 34 where Jesus says, "*just as I have loved you.*" This is a bold statement. Too many people in this world equate love with "being nice" or "always smiling", however, this is not what Jesus is asking the disciples to do. Now, there is no doubt that smiling and kindness are results of a loving heart, but to love as Jesus loves goes so much deeper than that.

JUST AS JESUS LOVES!

The way in which Jesus interacted with the disciples was one of true love. He taught them, corrected them and even rebuked them when needed. Sometimes love isn't nice because to care for someone's best needs and interests isn't always pleasant. Why do we discipline our children? Is it because we want to be mean? No, we discipline them because we love them and desire for them to grow in the strength and knowledge of the Lord. This is just one example of what it means to love as Jesus loved. It might not always be pleasant to hold someone accountable or to be held accountable by someone else, but isn't that love? Jesus' love is the giving of oneself to the best needs and interests of others, above our own, regardless of the cost to ourselves. So what then should be our response as believers? We need to correct our understanding of love and dive deep into what Jesus truly calls us to. Can people recognize us by our love for each other? Do we struggle with loving each other because we would much rather love ourselves first and foremost? These are the questions that Jesus wants us all to answer honestly before Him. The answers to these questions will allow us to see where our hearts truly align and will give us the opportunity to seek Christ for the love that He has called us to have.

JOHN 13:1-20

Jesus' love looks beyond self and takes a stance of humility. Just think about what Jesus had done for the disciples to show His love; He washed their feet! Jesus in that moment was making a bold statement that the love we have for each other takes the form of a servant - considering others more than ourselves and coming alongside them like Jesus has done for us. May we take the charge to love seriously as we realize that we cannot love the way that Jesus wants until we have given ourselves over to Him fully.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do you need to give up in order to love as Jesus has called you?
2. Whom do you need to take time to love? Is there any place in which redemption needs to occur in order to love well?
3. Ask the Lord for His strength to become like Christ and love others well!