

55. Jesus Gave the New Commandment

In our last topic, we saw that we want to demonstrate and show our physical and spiritual children how to lead people to Jesus, the One who is the Light of the world. We saw that Judas made the choice to remain in spiritual darkness rather than respond to the love that Jesus had for him. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus gave a new commandment for all Christians.

Once Judas had left Jesus and the other disciples, Jesus immediately began to give the rest of the disciples a summary of the most important lessons that they needed to hear from Jesus before His death, resurrection and return to heaven. John 13:31-33 says, “So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, ‘Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately. Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, “Where I am going, you cannot come,” so now I say to you.’” We see that Jesus began to share with the other disciples those lessons as soon as Judas had left and gone out into the darkness.

The next day, Jesus was going to go to the cross. God would cover the earth with darkness for three hours because Jesus and the Father would experience separation as Jesus bore our sins on the cross. However, at the end of that time, Jesus cried with a loud voice, “It is finished.” As a result, we see in these three verses that Jesus looked beyond the time of His suffering to the time when He would be glorified by the Father after He had paid the penalty for sin. The word translated “glorified” means *to praise, to honor or to cause the worth of a person to be recognized*. Jesus would be glorified by the Father. At the same time, the Father is also glorified in the Son. Later that evening in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed to the Father and said in John 17:1, “Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: ‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You.’”

Then, John 17:4 tells how Jesus had glorified the Father on earth. That verse says, “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.” Jesus had honored the Father throughout His public ministry on the earth. He had also finished the work of training the disciples to carry on His work on the earth. John 17:5 goes on to say, “And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” Here, we see that Jesus was going to return to heaven where He would have the glory that He had from the time before the world was ever created.

Christ would also be seated at the right hand of the Father because Hebrews 12:2 says, “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” We do see that Jesus stood up to welcome Stephen home as Acts 7:56 says, “And said, ‘Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!’” Jesus will one day receive even greater glory because Philippians 2:9-11 says, “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” This will bring glory to

both the Father and the Son.

Jesus told the disciples that He would be leaving them in a little while and that they could not go with Him. The disciples had been able to see the love of Jesus for them. Since Jesus would soon be leaving, the time had come for the disciples and all Christians to learn to show that same love to one another. That is why Jesus now gave the disciples a new commandment. John 13:34-35 says, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” This command is new because Matthew 22:37-40 says, “Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is *the* first and great commandment. And *the* second *is* like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” Jesus said that these two summarize the entire Old Testament. We see that the New Commandment that Jesus gave for all Christians summarizes the entire New Testament.

In this command, we are told to love one another as Jesus has loved us. The disciples had seen the love of Jesus for them throughout His ministry. The next day, they would see the greatest example of that love as Jesus gave His life to pay the penalty for our sins. Putting these commands together, we see that we are to love God with our whole heart, soul and mind, and we are to love our neighbor (all non-Christians) as we love ourselves. However, we are to love one another (other Christians) as Christ has loved us.

Since Jesus is no longer on this earth where the world can see Him, this new command tells us that the way that the world will recognize the love of Jesus is by seeing Christians show that same love to one another. We are only able to show that love when we are yielding our human spirit to the Holy Spirit so that the love of Christ is able to flow through our lives to those around us. That is why Romans 6:16 says, “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?” At any moment that we are yielding our human spirit to the Holy Spirit, the power of the Holy Spirit is working in us and the love of Christ is flowing through us because nothing can separate us from that love. Romans 8:37-39 says, “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

However, Jesus went on to warn Peter that love could not flow through him when he was depending on His own strength. John 13:36-38 says, “Simon Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, where are You going?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.’ Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake.’ Jesus answered him, ‘Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.’” Peter wanted to know where Jesus was going. Jesus told Peter that he could not follow Him now.

However, Jesus also said that Peter would later follow Him. John 21:18-19 says, “‘Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.’ This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’” Peter did not understand that Jesus would be condemned to death that very night. He also did not understand that he would later be put to death as the Roman emperor tried to stop the spread of Christianity.

Peter said that he would lay down his life for the sake of Jesus. In fact, John 18:10-11 shows that Peter did try to protect Jesus. Those verses say, “‘Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, ‘Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?’” Since Peter was acting in his own strength instead of under the guidance of Jesus, all he did was make himself open to the charge of attempted murder. However, Jesus showed His love to Peter by destroying the evidence so that no charges could be made against him. Luke 22:50-51 says, “‘And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, ‘Permit even this.’ And He touched his ear and healed him.” Here, we see that Jesus destroyed the evidence by healing the ear of the man.

Peter chose to deal with those who came to arrest Jesus in a human way instead of seeking the guidance of Jesus. Jesus would tell the disciples on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane in John 15:5, “‘I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.’” Jesus also had to tell the disciples in Luke 24:49, “‘Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.’” The disciples had to learn to depend on the guidance of the Holy Spirit instead of human thinking. Jesus also told the disciples that night in John 14:26, “‘But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.’” In the same way, we also need the guidance of the Holy Spirit rather than our own thoughts because we can do nothing in our own strength. In fact, we will fail just as Peter did that night.

Jesus told Peter that Peter would not lay down his life for the sake of Jesus. Instead, Jesus said that Peter would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed early the next morning. One of the most important lessons that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand is the fact that we will act from human thoughts if we are not led by the Holy Spirit. That is why it is very important to help our children learn to be led by the Holy Spirit instead of human thinking and reasoning. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children by your example how to be led by the Holy Spirit.