

## Part 12

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[0:00] 13 Three words Express the 11th commandment love one another We get every justification and every right to call it the 11th commandment because Jesus Christ Calls it a new commandment and if he'd given ten which we've already looked at then we have here the 11th commandment Love one another and in many ways these three words they subsume and they engulf everything that goes before them and Everything that has gone on since with regard to the gospel all the Old Testament all the ten words the ten commandments are in many ways summed up in this Command from Jesus to his people to Christians to love one another Everything lies behind it loving God lies behind it loving our neighbor lies behind it the cross lies behind everything lies behind it and

Why why does Jesus call it a new commandment? Well, I think in the same way that he speaks about the new heavens and the new earth that we're looking at in the morning in heaven Or theme of heaven. It's because it's a renewal It's radically new radically Fresh revelation and it's particularly in the light of the cross so as this morning we saw that Heaven all our understanding and perception of heaven and the no mores come to us Are expressed to us through the prism or the perspective of the cross so this commandment is a commandment that we can only understand in the light of the cross and is expressed because of what Jesus Christ not only has done for us, but has gifted to us in the in not only the person of himself, but also in the gift of his grace We sung in Psalm 84 these fantastic words about love and righteousness and faithfulness and peace they all meet together at the cross and

They kiss each other and that beautiful Old Testament language under the redemption of Jesus Christ we have all these great facets of God and of truth coming together and We find that the cross Satisfies God's justice God's love and righteousness and mercy and peace is given to us through the cross and so because of the cross he challenges us as believers who have accepted his grace To love one another Now I guarantee that there's no message like it anywhere in the world There's no other message in any religion or any philosophy that is like it Maybe at first glance loving one another year that could cover a multitude of different religious thoughts, but not in the light of Who has said it and the context in which she has said it and what he means by it for us?

So I just want to look at why he said it here and what it means for us practically in our Christian lives Because we have here truth from Christ to us. We have a gift of truth He says a new commandment. I give you so he's gifting us something He's telling us something very important. He's sharing us with some he's giving us something that we have to live our lives by and he does it by creating his own example And you command I give to you?

Love one another as I have loved you, okay? So he's gifting us something and he's doing it By his own example as I have loved you now. I think that's expressed in two ways particularly here or one way definitely and by implication another way the first is by washing his disciples feet you may think that's just a crazy kind of thing to say To express such a deep rooted Christian truth by such a menial task, but We're we're told in the we read that passage it all happens at the same time That Jesus in verse 1 of chapter 13 were told having loved his own who were in the world. He now showed them the full extent of his love and He went on to wash their feet He of course then went on to die in the cross

[5:04] So it's more than just the foot washing but the foot washing not only practically but symbolically Expressed his love for them there was cleansing in it because he speaks about the cleansing of Foot washing and that points forward to his work in the cross, but there was also the service the sacrificial menial service that he was engaged in you see Jesus is our great example of loving one another as believers Go back to the Gospels don't get tired with the Gospels go back to them and read About Jesus again read it all through and read with fresh eyes and and look at who

Jesus was and what he did We have this God who comes Into the womb of Mary and his born as a new born baby and grows up and lives

And he lives then particularly in his public ministry, but not exclusively so at to serve We find him Always serving people and expressing his love He goes out and reaches out to the rejected the neglected the sick the outcasts the lepers He is patient with those who are slow to learn. He brings the gospel to the belligerent and to the careless He has patience with the proud. He is willing to be misunderstood. He is silent in the face of opposition Because this is how he's revealing himself to us if we had a clean slate and had the opportunity For example, and I know this entirely hypothetical But if we had the opportunity to say right God's gonna come down and live as a human being for a few years you You describe how God would be How would God come and live among us and I guarantee if we didn't know about Jesus We would all have a God who comes among us and is grand and is powerful and is mighty and is worshiped and

Is adored throughout the world because he's God And yet we come and see Jesus Whose divinity spills out at occasions at various points, but who primarily is unknown and Unworshipped and isn't to be served but is serving and And most significantly shows that here with the foot washing the foot washing was a most menial of all tasks in Cultured Jewish society no Jew worth their salt would wash any other person's feet It was the task of a slave Preferably not anybody of the Jewish nation And here is Christ the teacher the master the leader who is taking off his outer clothes and Wrapping himself in a towel and getting on his knees and washing the disciples fee. So it was an act of hospital hospitality really

That when you went to someone's house the servant would come and they would wash your feet Because you would be clean. That's what Jesus says. You know the rest of you clean It's not that they were dirty as people But you know they wore sandals if they wore anything at all and there was the ground was very dusty So when they went to someone's house feet were washed and that was an act of hospitality, but it was never done by the host It was kind of an undignified thing to do in many ways menial and here's Jesus Menial of all things tremendously undignified absolutely unimpressive It wouldn't have impressed this is I this wasn't an impressive thing for his disciples to see this would gain him No VIP passes into the Sanhedrin not in any degree whatsoever The intellectual Academy wouldn't be impressed by Jesus washing the disciples feet It wasn't the stuff of PhD studies at all. It wouldn't be what would impress anyone in that society

If he was trying to show himself as a religious Messiah as a leader but here he is showing his love by putting others first in this most remarkable and stark way imaginable, but of course he goes on to express a deeper sacrifice and service and love by his self-sacrifice on the cross which the cleansing refers to He does for us Great, isn't it great thing? He does for us what we can't do what we couldn't do for ourselves That's what he does for us He gave up his heaven which we spoke about this morning his home and his glory and his authority and his rights He resisted at any point the fast-track home. He had one or two opportunities to take the fast-track back to heaven Angels would have come and gone could have gone back home quickly

[ 10 : 20 ] You know when he'd been among us for a few years you fed up with the fact that nobody understood him Nobody believed Have it enough fast track back to heaven avoid in the cross could have done it in the mountain when devil said You know just bow down to me here and it'll save you all the hassle It goes all the way to the cross darkness unmatched the wrath of God internalized into himself on that most mysterious of events on Golgotha That's the full extent of his love ask yourself what would you do?

For the people that you love you know you would would I do something like that for the people I love Well, obviously it would never be the same as Christ sacrificed But you would hope that for the people that are closest to you Your flesh and blood your family your children you die for them You die in her place If you had the opportunity that someone that you really loved you would do something greatly sacrificial to them But ask the question again, would you do it for a common thief?

we do it for someone who'd robbed you of all your Electrical goods in your house or someone who had you know Knocked down your best friend when they were drunk driving. Would you would you do the same for them? Would you die for them?

We probably wouldn't Someone who'd vilified you in the press told lies about you. Would you die for them? We wouldn't But here is Christ who dies for his enemies dies for people who weren't looking the same way looking the other way Didn't care weren't interested died for those who remained in

Even when people couldn't care less he wept for them and died for them and died for us Even before we were born and that is the love and the sacrifice and the grace of Jesus Christ that he gives us an example, you know as he says there, you know and as I have loved you so there's this Motivation that he gives us and if I take them both together and say that that is what he's requiring of us He is requiring of us a Sacrificial service we can never be like Christ. He's Christ unique Christ our Savior

Christ is God Christ is perfect Christ is eternal But yet he asks us to imitate him as we can as believers when the strength of the spirit of God in our hearts And I take these two together and he wants us to love one another and how does that look?

[ 13 : 01 ] Well, it looks like sacrificial service to one another in the Christian community. That's what is first That's his first port of call here. It's to each other as Christians That's who he's speaking to and he isn't they know when he says love one another You know love one another 1960s kind of hippie love one another. It's not just a kind of vague and sentimental Expression, it's not just he wants us to have nice feelings about each other It's not a kind of ephemeral or wispy or sentimental Kind of love that he's speaking about is primarily active Love one another by how you live among your fellow Christians and how you respond to them and how you treat them and how you serve them You see that it's not really an emotion as such It is an act of the will and it's how we live among each other

That we it's a love which Causes to lift up our chin and look around us and look out Rather than looking in and rather than pampering ourselves. We're looking as to how we can serve others because of Christ having served us. That's our greatest motivation Christ has shown us his love in the most self-sacrificial way and That's how we're to do it And it's to be in a sense I hope increasingly spontaneous and natural to us sometimes you got a bit frustrated in the church when you're in the church And when you're a leader in the church We can often wonder if we just maybe we plan too much and we organize too much Well, let's plan some loving one another and let's organize it and let's have wrote us about it And it just seems that we're maybe all just a bit too organized and planned and it just becomes ritualistic and Drudge a drudgery and some of you don't really want to do but here you say look my motive is I've done for you, and I want you to show that love As a response and as a recognition of the spirit in your life, it's really radical and very fresh For us that we love in that way it's entirely Counter-cultural today Where really the deep-seated philosophy that is love me and what I am and why do as long as I'm happy and doing what I want Then that'll be fine in the rest of the world It's completely at odds with that and says it's not primarily about me being the center of my universe but Christ and what he's done be the center of my heart and life and Seeing my fulfillment and serving others and sharing the love of Christ with them prioritizing the Christian community, this is primarily a message for Christians to Christians

Now it's not monastic. It's not Insular so that we're just looking into one another as we'll see in a minute But it nonetheless is there very importantly We're not just individual Christians You know the Western world has made Christianity very personalized very individual you've got an individual savior an individual Lord He's your Lord you need to come to him personally to ask him into your heart, but the gospel is very community oriented He has that individual element, but it's absolutely about the body. It's absolutely about community It's about people together and sometimes we just kind of rub ourselves in the back with a personal salvation say well I'm okay and We just close off the rest of the world and the rest of the Christian world Christ is an example and he continues Not only to be an example, but to be the strength by which we can do it. He is still Serving us and is ascended glory. He's

Answering our prayers. He's pleading on the behalf. He's giving and giving and giving and that is how we can give in return I was at Alton Towers in the summer with the camp the church camp and we someone ringing the bell the sidebell Missed that one and Alton Towers and we were in every time you go on one of the rides There's a kind of shop at the other side of the ride where they sell the the photographs of your fear and horrors you're going down the Whatever ride it happens to be And there's also always lots of sweets So that while you're waiting for your photograph you buy the sweets This is a long-winded story Lou and it's gonna think to do with Alton Towers But it's to do with a dispensing sweet machine That I was waiting for ages for everyone else to come off the ride I was watching all the kids who would go with a kind of wee bucket and they go to this amazing massive big sweetie machine which had all kinds of different sweets in glass compartments

[ 18 : 16 ] So you could see them and they were as jobless as high as the ceiling in the place and You put your cup under the dispenser and you pushed it up and the sweets would empty from this little vial and You take it away and it would fill up immediately with all the other sweets from inside You know the kind of thing?

you fill up empties and it gets filled up and it always gets filled up and It's very much a picture of of us serving in love as we give and as we empty ourselves And as we serve and as we express grace and as we give out grace The Holy Spirit's always there to fill us up We're always filled up again again the more we're emptied the more we're filled up and And he gives us the strength and the ability to love in this way. It can be very tiring and very exhausting He fills us up. It's not just in our own strength. We do it. He gifts us his spirit his power his peace his love and His grace in our lives fantastic But sometimes you know we need to ask for that As a reminder that we're not living our Christian lives or loving one another in our own strength It is a miraculous provision again and again as we are emptied so we are filled as we are emptied So we are filled again and again

So it's from Christ to us. He says a new commandment. I give you But there's also you see this briefly There's something from us to the world Not only is it from Christ to us, but as we live this way we have something to give to the world Around us. He says by this all men will know in verse 35 that you're my disciples if you love one another So we have a fantastic truth here about Christian evangelism and the gospel and living the Christian life What's most important to us? It is not having a sandwich board that says Jesus loves you In terms of evangelism It's not that you have great evangelistic programs a hundred Christianity explored courses a year It's not that you're able to defend your faith in the most

Atheistic Debating environment however significant any of these things may be the most significant thing and Any Christian can do this is to live the life of love Within your Christian community. That is the first point of evangelism. That is the distinguishing mark of Christianity of Christian living By this all people will know that you're my disciples That is an amazing statement and it's been radically under emphasised in the Christian church, I believe How we love our fellow Christians not our separatist we are from them how cynical we can become how judgmental we are how aloof we are How superior we can be how much more I know than other Christians, but How much we love one another despite the oddness of each other the odd bunch that we are

That we move out of our castles and of our walled palaces and that we serve one another Sacrificially and love each other. There's no place in New Testament Christianity for come of me making up a word communityless living There's no such thing as community less a lack of community Christian living you can't live and express your Christian life simply internally simply by Ascending to belief in your head or even accepting grace in your heart for yourself it must have this External expression firstly to the Christian community It goes beyond that obviously loving our neighbor whoever we meet but primarily it comes here That's the first and the most it's the most powerful evangelism that is There is no more powerful evangelism than loving one another a community of people

[ 22 : 53 ] Who are Christians who worship together who? Whose lives are open and shared together who give and who are involved in each other's lives? That is the first and most powerful point of evangelism. I received two emails today Well, I see more than that, but I just happened to have my computer on the study before I came in this evening to one was a really Really?

Fantastically encouraging email that I'm not gonna embarrass the person about tonight, but it just filled my heart with great joy The other one was utterly depressing because it was a link To a newspaper article that some of you may have seen Or may not have seen and the scottes It's not the scottes, but it's a Sunday version of the Scotsman whatever it is this Sunday Scotland on Sunday aye, and it was a link to that article and it was about the free church and it was about the Broadford case free church has been involved in a legal case and it was about that and The article itself was was okay. It was usually in accuracies that you get in the press But what was absolutely terrifying or the comments?

That followed the article because in these online Newspaper articles there's always comments, and I'm sure the probably the comments tend to come from the more extreme people who bother to comment On either side or neither and but it was astonishing the comments about how irrelevant how Petty-minded how loveless how typical Christian the churches were and the kind of things that we're doing much of it Recoiled against unfairly because I thought they didn't know the situation But you had to look at some of it and say well, that's the image we're portraying to the world It's not this

image It's not this image of All costs of people who love one another Absolutely fundamental if your idea of church is coming one hour a week To worship and then go whether there are people there or not it's entirely unbiblical entirely unbiblical in fact it's quite heretical and In the society we live which is so difficult for us To get beyond that and our own situation is very unideal Because we're gathered together from all so suppose we do have to work very hard at expressing Love for one another beyond the mere worship hour, but what's even more fascinating about this command about living the life of love I Think it's most powerfully expressed in our darkest Christian hours Not when everything's going well in our darkest Christian hours see Christ here gives us command Where does he give it? What's the sandwich that he gives this command in the sandwiches it before it?

and during it He's he's facing betrayal From his closest Believers his closest friends his 12 disciples they are shortly all going to run away and one of them particularly is gonna actually betray him for 30 pieces of silver and he knows that he knows that and He's going on to die in the cross Spat upon rejected vilified abused facing not only God's wrath, but the wrath of all those around him That's when he gives us that command love one another You know, it's not kind of as he's skipping through the fields and The smell of spring is there and there's sweet music like the sound of music That's not what he's giving us this command. He's giving us this command as he faces his darkest moment love one another and

[ 27 : 05 ] That expression as I have loved you That goes out to us as well so that our greatest evangelism Our greatest expression of Christ likeness will be when we love one another in our darkest hours in other words When our fellow Christians let us down just as Christ's believe those closest to him let him down It's when we love each other in these moments that we express the uniqueness and the miraculousness of our faith You see, it's easy to love our friends. We all love each other. We're all friends. That's easy to do that We can all do that's naturally something we do It's easy to love those that are naturally lovable and those who are naturally close to us and similar to us But we need to see and open our eyes and look around and see our Christian community beyond our friends our natural friends See that many will misunderstand us many are struggling many we're not naturally attracted to many are different

Many will let us down many think differently from as many are selfish Yet we love them why because we are all these things And because Christ died for us and he didn't reject us in all our selfishness and greed and bitterness and pride and lust and pure impurity So we don't wag the fingers. They will I'm only gonna love a b and c but let's forget x y and z Because they just are beyond appeal. They don't think like me. They don't act like me. They don't believe like me. They don't They aren't me They've let me down. They've hurt me They've broken my heart Christ want me to love them. No, I'll just turn my back on them. That's not what he says It's love against all the odds. It's love against all your legal advice Love that's inexplicable to the world that hasn't been touched by the love of Christ

It's love that says no to revenge and no to getting our own back He's our example and that's what I mean when I say It's unique this love one another. It's not like any other love that is offered or proffered or suggested in the world When our fellow Christians fail us and also when we're surrounded by enemies When we're oppressed Persecuted in the way that Jesus was When everyone is against us And we're living in a day. I can if you're taking it nationally We're living a day where Christianity is really on the wane in many ways and secularism is very much the philosophy of the day and it's a good day to not be a Christian in the world's eyes a good day to bash Christians It's easy to do it and it happens all the time and the temptation for us. Maybe it's just to recoil to just be pampered and just to feel sorry for ourselves and to maybe You know just take a step back from commitment and service, but Christ says look

Just when people don't understand you when people misunderstand the gospel when they reject it when they vilify it when they They mock it and maybe they have many just reasons for doing so because of our own Poor examples in the past and in the present He says to love one another Keep on loving one another look out for your fellow Christian and Don't recoil and don't feel sorry for ourselves. You will find him You as you serve you will be served as You expend your energy you'll be given strength as you feel defeated you will be given victory Even when we're opposed so we have this amazing command The 11th command subsumes all the hours because it puts loving Christ first it must do and It involves loving our neighbor whoever that neighbor is Inside the outside the church, but there is some there's a newness about this Which says you love your fellow

Christian?

That will be the greatest apologetic for the gospel that there is all people will know you're my disciples and it will be the kind of image if we're talking about image that we want the world to have of what Christianity is because it most closely reflects Jesus Christ I Wonder just as we close how different we would look if we really understood the truth behind this if I understood it and If you understood it and let's pray for the grace and the wisdom To understand it more clearly and live it more powerfully in our lives Let's bow our heads and pray again together Lord God we thank you for your love and we thank you for this great commandment that you've given to us and we ask that you help us to expend our energies and on loving others

[ 32 : 23 ] Primarily and firstly within the Christian community In the way that you have shown us in a self-sacrificial way Which is going to be Powerfully used and also That is going to be ex We will expend but we will be given energy from the spirit to do so Help us to have a concern for our Christian communities not just here in the church St.

Columbus here, but Christian communities and Christian friends whatever they are maybe have a real prayer for prayerful concern for our fellow Christians Thank you for the prayer meeting for the amount of people that we're able to pray for and support And assure them of our support and help and Thank you for these things Thank you tonight that we have got friends from Bill and Pam Switzer's congregation in Newcastle and we we thank you for the links we have with them We remember Katrina MacArthur who's gone out For six weeks to South Africa and the links we have would do Miss Annie and the the teaching of the gospel there And we thank you for the wider links we have as well as the local links And links in different parts of the country and we pray that we would express our love in Sacrificial and in blessed ways and that you would provide for us Thank you for you example. Thank you that though we didn't deserve to be you have redeemed us and we ask you to forgive us for

How little we see that and how little we see The depth of your love and how ordinary it's become to us we ask for nice to see for wisdom to live for grace to be changed and We pray for the spirit of God to bless us tonight for Jesus sake. Amen