

April 6, 2023 – Maundy Thursday

## How Should We Then Love

### John 13

*<sup>3</sup> Jesus..., <sup>4</sup> rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. <sup>5</sup> Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. <sup>34</sup> 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. <sup>35</sup> By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (ESV)*

“A new commandment I give you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.” What did Jesus really mean when He said to “love as I have loved you?”

This is a scripture that we all have heard, yet I think that we struggle to fully grasp what He meant. For us to get a better understanding, we have to go back to the beginning of this passage. Let me set some background for you.

Jesus and His disciples are in the upper room for the Passover. As was the custom of the time, your feet would've been washed by a servant (or slave), usually a Gentile, upon entering a home due to the dusty climate. This was a job reserved for the lowest of the low in society.

Yet this evening, that didn't happen, and it was a glaring omission in cultural hospitality. It wasn't by chance however, as we then see Jesus taking off his rabbinical garment, putting on the towel of the servant, and beginning to wash the disciples' feet.

This would've been a total shock to them as this act was “below” even them, let alone a rabbi!

Jesus didn't need to do this, but he did it to drive home a point: to love as He has loved them was to love with all humility, in a complete role reversal of what they knew and expected at the time.

An unprecedented and extreme act of devotion and love. Jesus didn't need to do this, but He did it to drive home a point. For us to love like Him, we must do so with the same humility and love that was shown in such an intimate act so long ago.

As we reflect back on the “*mandatum novum*” (Latin for “Maundy Thursday”\*) meaning “a new commandment I give to you”) that was given, how can we love as He loved? Are we willing to get down and dirty, humbling ourselves to serve others, or is loving like Jesus “below” us?

***Prayer:*** Lord, we thank you for your Son, Jesus, who displayed the ultimate example of humility and servanthood in a simple act of washing the dust from His disciples' feet. Help us to always remember this as we strive to live out the “*mandatum novum*” in our day to day lives and love others as He loved us. In Your Name we pray, Amen.

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