

# One Body, Loving God and Each Other

Մէկ Մարմին, Միմեկով զԱստուած եւ Զիրար

## John 13

“To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable.” (C.S. Lewis)

Why in the world I should love you?

Why in the world I should love the unlovable in the church and outside the church? Why?

I mean I get it; you want to be with people who are like you. They are lovable, hmmm. Sometimes even those might change their behavior, then what.

But is this what Jesus is asking us to do?

-Even the disciples of Jesus would have trouble liking-loving each other

He said, “follow me” and the disciples followed Him. The same invitation is open to all of us...

-He chose 12 disciples. One can say, he chose the best. He chose the elite.

-Hmmm not so fast...

-Jesus chose Matthew the tax collector who was hated by everyone among his people, because they know he worked for the Roman oppressors;

-Jesus chose Simon the Zealot; “the zealot party worked to violently overthrow the Roman occupiers. They resented the Pharisees for not doing enough to expel the foreigners. But they really hated collaborators-- men like Matthew the tax collector.”<sup>1</sup>

Two extreme political views....

How was the conversation between these disciples? How smooth was their relationship?

One Body, United in Christ’s love.

Here is John 13:

**It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.** (13:1- NIV)

It is Passover mealtime. The time has arrived to depart from this world. It is not an escape from His ministry, in fact we arrive to the most important time of Jesus' life. The love of Jesus will be manifested: **Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.**

**The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. <sup>3</sup> Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; <sup>4</sup> so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. <sup>5</sup> After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.** (John 13:2-5 NIV)

-Only slave servants would do such an act, washing the guests' dirty feet. It was unthinkable for a Rabbi to do this. His washing included Judas as well, the one who would betray him. What kind of devotion, commitment Jesus had towards his disciples, and toward us? Do you see how Jesus loved them and us? How do you define His love?

Footwashing is not just hygiene issue.

"Footwashing was commonplace in Greco-Roman and first-century Jewish culture and appears as a ritual of daily cleansing, as a religious act (such as washing the hands and feet in hot water before Sabbath), or as a token of hospitality when someone entered a home."<sup>2</sup>

But you see we find here the characteristics of God's love, *agape*, *hesed* (OT). We are observing the humility of Jesus becoming a servant; he is going to die for humanity the next day.

-It was the Passover meal which became the Eucharist, the communion table prepared for them (disciples) and for us.

-This is the table of thanksgiving, the table of love, the table of sacrifice, the table of giving, the table of grace, the table of forgiveness, the table of redemption, the table of reconciliation, the table of justification.

-Footwashing is a symbolism for something much greater the act of sacrificing the Son of God on the **cross**: Jesus said to them: **"You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."** (13:7 NIV)

Peter did not like this; he refused the Rabbi to wash his feet. Jesus answered, **"Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."** (8)

Jesus is saying to Peter and us, come and participate to my table, communion table. **Jesus breaks bread and pours out wine.** It is his life poured out—his work as a servant—that brings everlasting life. And Jesus mentioned earlier in John 6: **"I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you"** (John 6:53 NIV)

Only through Jesus we will be cleansed from our sins. ONLY. ONLY. ONLY  
This means we need to invite Him in our daily life. We need to be ready to examine our life and ask forgiveness and allow him to wash our feet.

Then he asked them to wash each other feet:

**you also should wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup> I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.** (John 13:14b,15 NIV)

We wash each other feet, it means we show love, care, to each other. We lift up each other. We can be servants to each other.<sup>3</sup>

**-Confessing to each other, washing each other feet...**

If this does not unite us, what else can?

Let us move ahead with the passage in the same chapter; Jesus will talk about a New Commandment.

<sup>34</sup> **"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."** (John 13:34,35 NIV)

What is new in this commandment?

"The word "new" (Gk. *kainos*) may mean something more. We can recall that in this Synoptic supper setting Jesus also talked about "newness" in another respect. He referred to **the "new" covenant established** in his sacrifice, and he also said he would not again drink wine until he did it "new" in the kingdom of heaven. This "new command" may be a signal that Jesus is talking about **life in a new era, a messianic era. In that era love must characterize his followers—a love patterned on the generous, loving act of God that saves his people.**"<sup>4</sup>

The command to love God and each other is central topic for John.

**For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another** (1 John 3:11 NIV11)

**And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.** (1 John 3:23 NIV11)

**Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.** (1 John 4:7 NIV11)

**Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.** (1 John 4:11 NIV11)

All these commandments about loving are not suggestions, they are imperatives.

What are the characteristics of Agape love?

### **1. It Takes the Initiative**

I wish we learn this from Jesus. God's love takes the initiative. He first loved me... So Agape is not a response for something the other did to you. You take the first step

### **2. It is Unconditional**

"If you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours." The world teaches this in the society. That is not love, it is business transaction.

Christ loved us without attachments. Christian love is much different and deeper.

### **3. It Considers the Other's Best interest**

How can I serve you? What can I do for you?

It is for the other person's best interest.

### **4. It is a Commitment and Decision and NOT an Emotion**

As Bonhoeffer "it is not love which makes your commitment strong, it is commitment that makes your love strong."

It is a decision to love...

### **5. It is Sacrificial**

The life of Jesus is all about sacrificial love which was costly.

My professor Kenneth Baily says:

**The Cross of Jesus is a costly demonstration of unexpected love.**

Those are good characteristic of Christian love.

The disciples did not get it. They argued who would sit on right side of Jesus in heaven. Then argued who would be the chief.

**A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest .....But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves** (Luke 22:24-26 NIV)

What's wrong with us?

Can we force someone to love?

We cannot, it will be artificial. From the outside fake love, from the inside boiling pot.

“Unless one has a profound experience of being loved, it is virtually impossible to express profound love for another.”<sup>5</sup>

Maybe we have difficulty to forgive for example, because we have never experienced God's forgiveness in our lives.

You see the center of our issue, we think we can do it without Jesus.

To allow Jesus to have control our lives is key to learn from HIM to LOVE.

Humility is an issue?

I read in Kevin's room:

“Shall man be proud after God has been humbled?”(Richard Sibbs)

“Shall man not love when Christ loved us sacrificially?”

Let us approach the table confessing our sins and examining our lives.

Today's message is about Christ's love towards humanity.

“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (13:35). I

In the early third century, Tertullian wrote,

“It is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us! ‘See,’ they say, ‘how they love one another ... see how they are ready even to die for one another.’”<sup>6</sup>

In the earliest church the social caring and commitment of Christians to one another was a profound testimony in a Roman world with its sharp social divisions.”<sup>7</sup>

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Let us approach the table in humility and a broken heart.

Let us examine ourselves:

**<sup>28</sup> Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup.** (1 Cor 11:28 NIV11)

We are the followers of Jesus.

By this testimony they will know that we are the disciples of Jesus.

Let us approach to the table.

1. Collin Hansen & Jonathan Leeman, *Rediscover Church*, p 105

2. Gary M. Bruce, *NIV Application Commentary Gospel of John*, p369

3. Two weeks ago we spoke about how important is **to confess** to each other.

We confess to God for forgiveness of our sins. But we should confess to each other for healing; we sinned against each other; we should not cover that; confession to each other is part of the healing for the broken relationship.

**That builds the body.**

4. Gary M. Bruce, *NIV Application Commentary Gospel of John*, p377

5. Gary M. Bruce, *NIV Application Commentary Gospel of John*, p387

6. Tertullian, *Apology*, 39, cited in Hendricksen, *John*, 254.

7. Gary M. Bruce, *NIV Application Commentary Gospel of John*, p388