

## SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY NOTES

— January 14, 2017 —

*Pastor Les Smith*

**SERIES: Becoming True Disciples**

**SERMON: Building a Discipleship Community**

**TEXT: John 13:34-35**

### Central Message:

Jesus gives his disciples a new commandment to love one another as he has loved them. This new commandment is similar to the command to love one's neighbor as oneself, but it differs in two ways. First, the new commandment does not focus on the love people have for themselves but on the love they receive from Christ. The love Jesus gives becomes the source and standard for Christian love. Second, the new commandment speaks of loving one another, emphasizing the mutual quality of love. The new commandment is a community-building commandment. As people in the Christian community show love for one another, they express the love they receive from Christ. Jesus makes such acts of loving service a form of Christian witness. The way the world comes to know about the love of Christ is through the love that takes shape in Christian community. Jesus makes three different statements in verses 34-35, but they communicate one single message...love one another. The first statement that Jesus made was the commandment to love one another. He tells them *who* to love. The second statement Jesus makes is that the disciples should love one another as He has loved them. He tells them *how* to love. And finally, He tells them to love one another because, by doing so, they will show to the world that they are His disciples. He tells them *why* they should love.

# AMITY BIBLE CHURCH

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*"Knowing God and Making Him Known"*

**Lesson #1: Jesus has given us a new commandment to love one another because it is the definition of what it means to be a discipleship community. (John 13:34)**

In Leviticus 19:18, Moses gives the command to love your neighbor as yourself, but there was no real expectation that people would be able to do this in their own strength. In fact, the Law was given to do just the opposite...to demonstrate to us how unable we are to keep the Law. In other words, the purpose of the Law was to reveal our sinfulness and drive us to Christ.

Jesus gave this new command because they were now empowered to do that which was impossible to do apart from the Holy Spirit. Jesus was telling His disciples that the church would be unique in that it would be defined by how it loved and cared for its members.

**Lesson #2: Jesus not only told the disciples who they should love, He went further to tell them how they should love. They should love one another as He loved them. (John 13:34)**

The question that we must answer is this...how did Jesus love? We see a vivid picture of this in the first part of John 13. Jesus was in the upper room with His 12 disciples. While they were seated, Jesus laid aside His outer garment, wrapped Himself in a towel and proceeded to wash the disciples' feet. Here was the Master doing the job of a slave...a courtesy that had not even occurred to the 12. Then, Jesus went on to say that they would not understand what He had done, but they would understand it later. He told them that He had given them an example of how to love one another. Unlike most sermons, Jesus gave the illustration first. Then, in verse 34, he gave them the lesson...love others as I have loved you. Jesus was saying that the church was to be a selfless community willing to pour out its love for one another in humble service. He also made it clear in John 15 that He was the True Vine.

**Lesson #3: Jesus not only told the disciples who they should love and how they should love, but He also told them why they should love. (John 13:35)**

Jesus told his disciples that they should love one another because it would be their badge of authenticity. In other words, the genuineness of our Christianity will not be measured based on how eloquently we quote the Scriptures, or how melodic our songs of praise sound. No, the measure of whether we are a devoted follower of Christ is the extent to which we love one another in the Body of Christ. This means that we cannot discriminate based on age or gender or ethnicity, but we are to love as Christ loved. By this, all men will know that we are His disciples.