

Christ Authorizes His Followers to Love Each Other
(John 13:34-35)

Introduction:

1. Two weeks ago we studied passages that relate to "the authority of Christ."
 - a. Christ has all authority (Matthew 28:18).
 - b. He demonstrated His authority in many ways.
 - c. We are to submit to His authority (Colossians 3:17).
2. Last week we showed from the Scriptures that "Christ authorizes His followers to worship."
3. From John 13:34-35 we learn that "Christ authorizes [commands, requires] His followers to love each another."
4. To fully appreciate this requirement we must first examine . . .

Discussion:

- I. THE SETTING IN WHICH JESUS GAVE THIS COMMANDMENT
 - A. A short time before Jesus was arrested He and the apostles ate the Passover meal in the upper room.
 - B. This was the occasion when Jesus instituted His Supper.
 - C. We learn from Luke 22:24 that there was strife among the apostles.
 - D. Jesus responded to this strife by washing the apostles' feet (John 13:4-5, 12-17).
 - E. After Judas left, Jesus had many things to say to the other 11 apostles.
 - F. (vs.34-35) He commanded the apostles to love one another.
- II. ON THIS OCCASION JESUS GAVE A "NEW" COMMANDMENT
 - A. According to Leviticus 19:18, this was not the first time that love was required of God's people -- *"thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"*.
 - B. The Lord's command was new in the sense that His followers are to love another "as He has loved us."
 - C. Jesus explained what He meant in John 15:12-13.
 - D. The Lord's command is also touched on in Ephesians 5:1-2.
- III. OUR RESPONSE TO THIS COMMAND TELLS OTHERS SOMETHING ABOUT US
 - A. The Lord's true followers are to be identified as such on the basis of their love for one another.
 - B. The church in Thessalonica provides a positive example of the Lord's people loving one another (1 Thessalonians 4:9-10).
 - C. (Revelation 2:1-7) The church in Ephesus provides a negative example.
 - D. Which congregation would have been more attractive to outsiders?
- II. 1 JOHN SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL DETAILS CONCERNING THE LORD'S COMMAND
 - A. (2:10) To abide in the light we must love one another.
 - B. (3:11-14) One who loves his brother has *"passed from death unto life."*
 - C. (3:16-19) True Christian love is sacrificial and active.
 - D. (3:23) Loving one another is as important as believing on Christ.
 - E. (4:7-8) Knowing God involves loving our brethren.
 - F. (4:11-12) God dwells in those who love their brethren.
 - G. (4:20-21) True love for God includes loving His children.
 - H. (5:2) Loving our brethren is associated with loving God and obeying His will.

Conclusion:

1. We have seen from a number of verses that "Christ authorizes His followers to love each other."
2. Lord willing, this evening we will study 1 Corinthians 13, the great love chapter of the Bible, to help us understand what the Lord wants us to do.