**As I Have Loved You**

Based on [John 13:1-15, 34-35](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Jn13.1)

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Holy (Maundy) Thursday

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Maundy Thursday is likely named after Christ’s mandate, given to his disciples on the night he was betrayed saying, **“Love one another, as I have loved you**.” He says this is a “new” commandment and it is. It is a new commandment, because the quality of love that God has always commanded is given its new and perfect expression in the example of his Son.

The command to love, in itself, is not new. It is given in the Old Testament. In Leviticus 19:18 God commands, “**You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**” And this command to love your neighbor applied not only to friends, or family, or fellow Jews. Love your enemies, is taught by Jesus in the New Testament-- but it’s not really a new commandment.

Among the hundreds of commands given by Moses are commands prohibiting mistreatment of foreigners and even enemies. God says, “**You shall not oppress a sojourner. You know the heart of a sojourner, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt**” (Exodus 23:9). The Mosaic Law also required that, “If you meet ***your enemy’s*** ox or his donkey going astray, you shall bring it back to him. If you see the donkey ***of one who hates you*** lying down under its burden, you shall refrain from leaving him with it; you shall rescue it with him” (Exodus 23:4-5). God does not change, and He commanded love of strangers and enemies under the Old Covenant, because the Law was, is, and will always be summed up in the Command to love your neighbor as yourself.

And yet Jesus says, *“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. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

What is “new” in the command to love is Jesus himself. What’s new is the example he gives. “Love one another-*as I have loved you*”. What was lacking in the old command to love is Jesus’ own life and demonstration of it. **The old covenant did not see or hear of Jesus having compassion and feeding the five thousand, of ministering to the sick, of preaching good news to the poor.** They did not see him or hear of him suffering and dying on the cross. Those who diligently searched the scriptures had reason to know the Christ who was to come would do such things. But Christ had not yet come and done them, he had not given an example.

On the night he was betrayed, Jesus washed his disciples feet as an example of humility. Some churches hold ceremonial foot washings on Maundy Thursday. Such a practice, in my opinion, borders on frivolity. It is an object lesson as best and an anachronistic spectacle at worst. Nobody sits down to wash feet anymore, we wear shoes and have showers. Washing feet is of no help today, rather it is an empty ceremony that is supposed to convey humility. Rather than conveying humility, spend your time being humble and serving in ways that your neighbor actually needs. Food, clothing, shelter, care.

Jesus commanded them saying, “**If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.**” Jesus literally washed Peter’s feet, but he never literally washed any of ours, so we are not literally commanded to wash each other’s feet. To observe a ceremonial foot washing today is to miss the forest for the trees. But the new and everlasting command is this: “I have given you an example, ***that you also should do just as I have done to you***.” “Love as I have loved you, do to others as I have done to you” this a new command from the Lord that applies to us today and always.

So what has Jesus done to you? By his wound, he has healed you. Peter writes, “**For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.** When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.**24**He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.**25**For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

On this night in which he was betrayed, he not only gave the disciples a new commandment; he gave them a new covenant. “Eat my body under bread, and drink my blood under wine, for the forgiveness of your sins” In the sacrament of his body and blood given and shed for you, he forgives your sins…so forgive the sins of those who trespass against you. He has sacrificed his life for you; therefore Paul writes, “I appeal to, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1).