

A NEW COMMANDMENT

APRIL 5th | *READ JOHN 13:31-35*

The book of Malachi opens with God declaring that he loves his people Israel. In an astounding reply they answer, “How have you loved us?” How could Israel by any stretch of the imagination ask how God had loved them? Had they forgotten the exodus from Egypt? Had they forgotten God’s presence and provision during their wandering in the wilderness? The promised land? Prophets? If we are not careful, we can easily look right past how God has loved us too.

Jesus, in our passage, is giving his disciples a new commandment to love one another. He has already taught them that they are to love God with all that they are, and that they are to love their neighbor as themselves. What is new about this? What is new is the degree of love. Notice that Jesus states, “...just as I have loved you, you also must love one another.” The disciples are then forced to ask the question, “How has Jesus loved us?” Sounds a lot like the reply of the people in Malachi! Two people can ask the very same question but have different motives. One can ask the question for the purpose of gaining information while the other can ask for questioning. The disciples could have asked how Jesus had loved them so that they would then know how to love one another in like manner. So how had Jesus loved the disciples? He had taught them the truth of God. He had shown them how to have compassion. He had taught them what the Kingdom of heaven was like as well as many other things. What Jesus referred to in his instruction to the disciples was his servant love. The disciples were to serve one another in love. They were not to lord it over one another. They were not to wait and see who would serve them, they were to take the initiative and love one another through service. What would be the outcome of such loving service? The outcome would be proof positive that they belonged to Christ!

Brothers and sisters, when we love one another the way Jesus taught, it is a powerful testimony that we are like our Master. When we demonstrate that our loving service to one another is a reflection of Christ’s love, others will be drawn to him! Perhaps you can create a list of how you have been loved by Christ and then purposefully love another like that. We are a loved people! May we be people who love.

In Christ,

John