

# A New Commandment Is Given

by Conrad Mbewe

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*Jesus gives a new commandment to love one another as he has loved us, with a social, moral, and purposeful love.*

**Duration:** 1:05:25

**Scripture:** John 13:1, John 13:31, Hebrews 3:7-12

**Topics:** "Christian Love", "Selfless Sacrifice"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the last words of Jesus and specifically looks at John 13:1 as the starting point. The sermon emphasizes the theme of love and how Jesus showed the full extent of his love for his disciples. The preacher highlights the importance of action and engaging in social and moral actions for the welfare of others, just as Jesus did by laying down his life for his enemies. The sermon also emphasizes the intimate and loving relationship that believers have with Jesus, which is unique to Christianity.

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## Transcript

Please stand with me to John and chapter 13, John chapter 13. We're looking together this afternoon at the words of our Lord Jesus that we have already looked at before in a different context. On the 4th of May 2003, which is a good two and a half years ago, our attention was drawn to a series that I called the one another passages of the Bible.

And on that particular Sunday, we were looking at love one another. And this was the text that we looked at. So we're coming back to it, but this time we're coming back to it under a different series.

We're looking through the last words of our Savior, especially from the angle of John chapter 13 and verse 1, where the Bible tells us that having loved his own who were in the world, Jesus now showed them the full extent of his love. That has set the color, the theme, the overall agenda in which we are studying the passages that are there before us. So I'll invite you then to read from verse 31 of John and chapter 13.

When Judas was gone, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little longer.

You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now, where I am going, you cannot come. A new command I give you, love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. We'll end our reading there. You will recall that as we've been making our way through this, I have said again and again that there is a very clear difference in tone between John 13, verse 31 onwards, and what Jesus had been saying before verse 31.

And the difference arises from that little phrase, when Judas was gone. In other words, before Judas left, Jesus was careful not to say things without qualifying them. And so you will notice that before verse 31, each time Jesus said some blessing that belonged to the people of God, he would be quick to qualify it by saying that, I'm saying this, but not about every one of you.

I am saying this, but it is not for all of you. I'm saying this, but I know who and so on. So he kept qualifying.

But after verse 31, he stopped those qualifications and basically just opened his heart out and poured forth his love before his people. But it's interesting that the first thing he does upon opening up his heart is to talk about himself. That in fact, what was coming, this crucifixion and all that would follow after that, for him, it was a glorification.

He's got a name, and his name is Savior. And that name was going to be merited at the cross. I think we all know that chorus, he did not come to judge the world, he did not come to blame, he did not only come to seek, it was to save he came.

And when we call him Savior, and when we call him Savior, and when we call him Savior, we call him by his name. And Jesus merited that name at the cross. He got glory at the cross by owning that name, by dying for us on that cross, by shedding his blood for us.

And so we took a bit of time seeing how God is glorified in the cross and indeed in the resurrection and the ascension. But immediately after that, Jesus turned his attention to his disciples. And that's what we saw the last time we were together.

We looked at verse 33, where Jesus says, My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me. And just as I told the Jews, I tell you now, where I am going, you cannot come.

And what I said is that from these words, we learn something of the present experience of the believer. Each and every individual who has truly come to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ is in the relationship that Jesus refers to in verse 13. And there were three things we noticed from there.

First of all, it was the loving, intimate relationship that we have with the Lord. We noticed there that it is a dear relationship. Jesus referred to his disciples as my children.

And I said that elsewhere it is referred to as my little children. It is a phrase of endearment that Jesus was using here. And I said that this is what Christianity is all about.

It is a loving relationship. It is unique to Christianity. You can go to other religions, and you will not find, for instance, a Muslim saying, My dear Muhammad.

It doesn't happen. But for a Christian, you can sing, My Jesus, I love you. I know you are mine.

You are in a loving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Then we also went on to notice that out of this, therefore, is a longing to meet with Jesus. We come to church primarily because Jesus has said, Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them.

But it is not just church. We take time alone to be with God. In our personal devotions, it is one of the signs that an individual has become a real Christian.

It is the fact that he wants to be alone with God. And if an individual is not interested in being alone with God, he is not a Christian. Just like two lovers will want to be alone together sometime.

They don't just want to be together when they are part of a crowd. They want to be alone sometime, to think together sometime, to exchange intimate words sometime. It is the same with a Christian.

A true believer will want to be alone with the Lord. And Jesus himself here says, I will not be with you any longer. You will look for me.

We also saw that this looking for the Lord is not simply meeting with believers. It is not simply when I am alone with him in that quiet time. But it is also longing for the day I will see him as he is.

And we are learning together that song by Fanny J. Crosby that we have been trying to learn over and over again. I will see him. I will see him.

And by his side I will stand. I will see him. I will see him.

And I will know him by the nail prints in his hand. And Fanny J. Crosby says, Brethren, relationships of mine have gone into heaven. And I know that as the time comes for me to die, they will be waiting with songs to welcome me there.

But when I arrive there, I will go right past them to my Savior. And I will identify him by the nail prints in his hands. And that's the experience of the true Christian.

The longing to meet the Lord as he is face to face. Heaven is all about meeting Jesus there. For the non-Christian, heaven is about missing out on hell.

Surviving the hell fire and getting there. And that's why they won't get there. For the true Christian, it's not merely a hell insurance policy.

It's about going finally to meet the one I have been seeking. And finally we saw that in that lies the frustration. The true frustration of the Christian.

It is what Jesus says, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now, where I am going, you cannot come. In other words, ours is a Savior that has gone away from us. And we cannot go to him now.

We cannot. It's like a wife, and I'm sure I'm speaking about somebody whose name will come to your mind immediately, whose husband has gone away perhaps for studies. And you're trying to go and join him.

And the tickets are full, the planes are full, and perhaps they've closed off all the airports, whatever it might be. You might be talking on the phone and emailing each other and sending postcards, but it's not enough. I want to travel.

I want to go and be with him. But I cannot. And that's the frustration.

I cannot. I cannot fulfill my heart's desire now. And I said, that's our state as Christians.

As real Christians. That's our position. Now, the reason why I've given you that long introduction is because it provides the context for the words that we go on to study tonight.

When Jesus says, a new command I give you, love one another, what he is essentially saying is this. That look, you've got longings as believers. Longings that I could have fulfilled if I were here in body with you.

But I'm now going away. However, in going away, I would like you, listen carefully, I would like you as believers to fulfill my role in each other's lives. Let me say that again.

You are going to experience a period in which I will not be with you in a physical sense. When I was with you, I could meet certain of your needs by being physically present. But I won't be so any longer.

I'm now giving you a new commandment. And this new commandment is meant to fill that vacuum that has been created by my absence. And it is this, that you, you as believers, should fulfill the role that I would have fulfilled in one another's lives.

And that's why he goes on to say, As I have loved you, so you must love one another. As I have loved you, you are looking for me, I will not be there. But don't worry, in my place, you will have a hundred other brethren, two hundred other brethren, three hundred other brethren, who will be loving you as I have loved you.

Now when you understand the context that way then, you begin to see what is unique about this command. This new command. It is a new command in the sense that it is playing a role that was not there before.

It is a role that is about replacing Jesus, in a sense, in the lives of believers. Prior to this, Jesus himself was there. Jesus himself was fulfilling this.

But is now saying, Look, I'm going away. I won't fulfill this. Let me give you fresh instructions.

Let me give you a new commandment. Love one another as I have loved you. That's the way you are to do it.

Now, the reason becomes even a lot more plain when we go back to the beginning of the chapter. Remember, I keep saying that we are to understand John 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 from the angle of John 13, verse 1. It was just before the Passover feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father.

Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love. If you were a husband and a father and you knew that you were going to go away for a long time from your family, maybe six months, maybe a year, I don't know. What would you do? I know what you would do if you really loved your wife and children.

You would go to your closest friends, those who are your bosom friends, and you would say to them, guys, I'm going away. The last thing I want to come and hear is that there was an emergency in my family and my wife and children suffered because of the distance between them and myself. I will be saying to my wife, I will be saying to my children that if you need emergency help, ring John, ring Mary, ring whatever.

And when you ring, they will act just as I would have acted because they are my close friends. We are intimately connected. We grew up together.

My concern is their concern. Don't hesitate to contact them. Don't hold back saying, what would they think about my husband or about our father, that he's gone away when we are in this need.

Don't think like that. Other people, yes, you can think like that, but not John and not Mary. Get a hold of them immediately.

Having spoken to John and Mary, having assured the family, there is a greater sense of peace that I can now get onto this plane and go away for so long because others are playing my role. That's exactly what John 13 verse 1 is saying. He now showed them the full extent of his love.

And one of the major signs of that love is this, I'm giving you a new commandment, love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. Now, the question obviously is, how has Jesus loved us? Because that's what he's saying there.

As I have loved you, so you must love one another. How has Jesus loved? I dealt with this previously, if you will recall, I mentioned that English is not as rich as Greek in words for love. Greek has many words.

And in this particular case, Jesus is deliberately not using the word phileo, he's using the word agape. And agape is a purposeful, social and moral love. In other words, Jesus is not saying, like one another.

Because liking is also love. But that's not what Jesus is saying. Jesus is not speaking about develop affections for one another.

Develop feelings for one another. It's got absolutely nothing to do with that. What he is saying is, is look, you must engage yourselves clearly into action.

Action that is social, action that is moral, action that's going to work out for the welfare of others. That's the way you're going to do it. Now that's helpful.

Because what Jesus is saying is that that's exactly what I have done. I have from the very beginning committed myself to the well-being of my very enemies. That's what you, my disciples, have been from the beginning.

I have laid down my life for my enemies in order to turn them into my friends. In order to turn them into my little children. And I have consequently given my very life and is about to give himself in death for you.

And you are to see what I have done as an example. Often times we are extremely superficial about this and therefore it's important for us to really give it some serious thought. What Jesus did in loving was that he left heaven and came on earth.

He left glory and took on human flesh. He came into the sewer pipes of life from his rainbow sacred throne in order to bring about our well-being. And Jesus is saying that's what you should also do for one another.

We are not even talking yet about dying. We are talking about climbing down from our celestial places, our pedestals, coming down in order to raise people up. And what I am saying friends is that we must think like that when we are talking about loving one another.

It is so easy in a church to form groupings according to our levels. Those of us who are in top management positions living in the low density upper class areas that is where we have our fellowship. That's where we enjoy ourselves.

That's where we play golf. And then those who are there at the bottom struggling to try and itch out a living they are also there in their own struggles in their own little fellowship and so on. Similarly those of us who are married those of us who have children and we are taking them to private schools etc.

again we have our own holy club and we are going about life that way. Those who are young those who are struggling with mathematics or geography in school or school fees or transport money and so on are also struggling at their own level etc. and there is no real sense of the privileged who know that these are gifts from God coming down in order to lift others out of those situations they are in and bring them up.

And what I am saying is that if that is the atmosphere that develops in the context of the church then we are completely failing in what Jesus is saying here. Love the way I have loved you. And that's the way it should be with us.

It becomes a shame when the church fragments into social classes so that the have's become one group and the have not's become another. Rather the have's must come down into the lives of the have not's and consequently become integrated into one. I repeat that is what Jesus did.

I said it is a social moral purposeful love. One that aims for the well being of those who do not have what I have. Going down into their lives to lift them that they may be something of what I am.

We often say the son of God became a son of man. That we the sons of men may become sons of God. That's his love.

That's his love. The question is are we loving like that? Are we? If I can quickly apply this in the sort of elderly young people category. To me it's sad that we who were once young we believe we still are young so let's not take that away from us too much.

But we were younger and we knew how we were longing for elderly couples to take us under their wings. To talk to us about life. To care for us in a real relationship.

So that we could actually open up to them concerning our inner struggles. We were longing for that. I remember when I was at UNSA specifically saying to one couple that you know I've been here for so long you've never invited me to your home.

What's the problem? And in the process he said to me well I'll do something about that and he tried to invite me the following weekend but I was already invited elsewhere. But you see that longing is there. And now you grow up those who are now where you once were and they are filling up your church like sardines tinned sardines and you're now passing them by as if they were trees thorn bushes you've got absolutely nothing to do with them.

It's a quick hike and you've gone by. Who is there who is going to play the role that Jesus would have played had he been here? In his physical presence who? The inevitable result is that they start now depending on one another and they've never been anywhere ahead and consequently they are cheating one another with so-called wisdom which is no wisdom at all. And Jesus is saying look I lift the heights of heaven to come among you.

Take care of one another. Take interest in one another. Especially in those who are lower than you whether it's age or social class climb down and enter into their lives.

But also Jesus' love was in terms of teaching. For three solid years he had been telling these disciples about God about the kind of God who is there and how they ought to live in order to please him. That was Jesus' life.

That's how he loved them. And it was in real situations. At one time for instance they were quarrelling among themselves as to who was the greatest and Jesus standing among them got a little child and stood with that child and said he who is going to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven must be like this little child.

Of course that embarrassed them completely. Because that's the last thing that you think about in the world. But that was Jesus' teaching among them.

Again and again he taught them the way God wanted them to live. And especially as they were showing signs of worldliness he stood before them and taught. He taught against hypocrisy.

You remember in Luke chapter 12 he stood among them and said Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy. There is nothing hidden which shall not be disclosed. There is nothing you are saying in hidden places that will not be shouted out from rooftops.

Don't waste your time in hypocrisy. It is a total disaster in the end. Everything will be made known.

Don't. And he wasn't preaching that to those who were not his disciples. Read Luke 12.

You will discover he is actually teaching that to his disciples. It is to them he is giving this warning. Jesus is saying Love the way I have loved you.

Are we doing that? Are we doing that? You can see that a brother is going the wrong way. You can see that a sister is going the wrong way. They are getting into wrong company.

They are beginning to engage in activities that are injuring their lives. What do you do? For many of us it is and we just pass the other way. As though to expect Jesus to come himself physically and tap that brother or sister on the shoulder and say sit down you.

What you are doing is simply going to injure your soul. It will destroy you. Sit down.

Listen. Stop it. But Jesus won't do that.

He won't. That's why he is turning to us as his disciples and saying love one another. The way in which I have loved you.

Look at the way in which I have been concerned about your individual lives. Look at the way in which I have put in a word in season among you. Do the same for one another.

Watch over one another's lives spiritually. But are we doing that? The pastor was telling me just this week he goes to another church. He pastors a church elsewhere rather.

And he said that you know he has really been encouraged by somebody. He didn't tell me what that person's name is. But he said this.

That each time there is a call out and he goes to try and deal with a problem in the church in somebody's life the same name keeps popping up that this brother has already been there. And he said this brother is not even an elder. He is not even a deacon.

And during the services you can't even think that this person is doing anything. But he says brother by the time I get there he has already been. But I wonder whether we can speak like that about you.

There are individuals who are members of this church who have not been in this church for more than three months. Never stepped through that door. Have you been to them? Have you? Have you gone to speak to them? Or have you said that's none of my business? Or have you said well look Pastor Mbewe will pay me salary.

I mean that's his job. So all I'll do is we've got a members meeting in January. Or is it February? Under AOB I'll raise my hand and say you know we haven't seen Sister So-and-So for a while.

Elders can you tell us where is he or where is she? Jesus is saying look at what I've done while I've been with you. I've been watching over your lives. Do the same for one another.

You know Hebrews chapter 3 makes this point so well that we really need to look at it. Hebrews chapter 3 I'll read from verse 7 but my interest is in verse 12. So as the Holy Spirit says Today if you hear his voice do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion during the time of testing in the desert where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty days saw what I did that is why I was angry with that generation I said their hearts are always going astray and they have not known my ways so I declared on earth in my anger they shall never enter my rest.

See to it brothers now this is my interest there and he's not saying see to it elders see to it brothers that none of you none among you has a sinful and unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. How are you to do it? Well here is the positive. Encourage one another daily as long as it is cold today so that none of you may be hardened by sins deceitfulness.

That's our responsibility towards one another. If you know that your brother is backsliding you know that your sister is backsliding move in there quickly before they are hardened by sin. Put in God's word put in the warning employ your brother in love tell them the truth in love that they might abandon the ways of sin and come back to the narrow way.

Jesus is in heaven he will not come down and do that on our behalf. He has left that responsibility to us as a moral responsibility towards one another. You know that brother is not working well with the Lord that sister is not working well with the Lord.

Ring them up and say can I come and see you today after work? And of course you know when you get there the first day you will bounce because he is running away from you. That's alright. Set an ambush the following day.

Instead of waiting for him at home wait for him just outside his office. Just coming out and say I bounced yesterday but I thought today let's go we need to talk. And talk it over.

You've been missing from church for a while. Now you are saying you are busy I am busy but how come me I find time? You've been missing from the home group for some time. Why? You've been seen with that lady for some time.

Why? No she is just a friend. Talk it over. I haven't seen you at the ministry meeting for some time.

It's not like you. Where is the zeal you had in your college days in your university days? Where is that zeal? Talk to one another implore one another before sin hardens. Why should you wait until the person is excommunicated and then you are now saying yeah it's long over Duke when? The things we were seeing we were just saying I think the elders now really don't care anymore about standards in this church.

They don't. Why wait until then? Wouldn't it be a defying to your elders if by the time they come there that person is able to say so and so was here and so and so was here and so and so was here the things you are telling me are the things they have been saying to me over and over and over again. Wouldn't that be an encouragement? Brethren, Jesus will not come down to deal with us individually.

The full extent of his love has been manifested by putting us in the company of other believers. It's the same with our marriages. Before elders know that this marriage is really in serious trouble you yourselves know who are close to one another.

You know. Why wait for the elders? Just say to your wife let's go and talk to those and go and sit down with one another and talk things over. The problems you are having we don't kill each other over it.

Let's have a bible study here and help one another with the truth. Jesus is saying that's the way it ought to be. Encourage one another with the word.

Because I won't do it in terms of coming back in the flesh. Encourage one another with the word. Let me put it negatively and I hope it will drive home the point.

Instead of encouraging one another in fact we often harm one another. As someone said the church can be the most dangerous place on earth. And often it's extremely careless statements.

You go to a sister and say what are you waiting for? What's your problem? Now is that going to help the sister? I'm asking. Is that going to help the sister? Of course not. Should I find maybe it's a brother now who is saying you've been single for too long can't you see the sisters? Can I get one for you? Let me just go and pull one.

Is that what Jesus was doing for the disciples? Matchmaking. Is that what he was doing for them? Is that the way he showed love for them? But is it the kind of things we do so insensitive where we ought to be sensitive we are not and instead we are insensitive over areas where we ought to be sensitive. Jesus is saying as I have loved you love one another.

Let the brethren feel that Jesus is still with us in person through the brethren through the body of believers. Just one more area in which Jesus has loved and I think this is probably the one you are all thinking about and it is in terms of sacrifice. Sacrifice.

Even the coming from heaven to earth was sacrifice. But ultimately it was in death he was willing to lay down his life for us. John chapter 15.

Verse 12 My command is this love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this that he lay down his life for his that he lay down his life for his friends. You see if your Christianity in terms of your commitment to your brethren reduces itself to a convenience it is very sad.

It is very very sad. Where there is need to sacrifice brethren sacrifice for one another. Jesus is not here to do it for us.

We must do it for one another. Sacrifice. I have used this illustration before concerning the division of sacrifice.

Let me use it again because it drives home the point. That sacrifice is not a mere contribution. Sacrifice is painful.

You can see the dent where you have sacrificed. And it is that story about the pig and the chicken who over Christmas wanted to do a big favor to the orphans. And they said what shall we do for these orphans who are in such great need.

And the chicken said I have got a very good suggestion. On Christmas morning let's give them bacon and eggs. The pig said that is unfair because for you it will be a contribution.

But for me it will be a sacrifice. In other words for you you simply lay the eggs and offer. But me, I will be walking on three legs after that.

The other leg would have been choked and eaten away. Now you see for most of us our Christian life is a contribution. It is not a sacrifice.

When a brother or sister is in need and we can see it it is not like we are in us rather ignorant. We can see the need. We don't say let's cut back on our eating let's cut back on our projects let's cut back on whatever else that we have in order to meet that need.

No, no, no, no, no. The agenda goes on as usual. The question is this month have we got anything to spare? We don't have anything to spare.

Sorry. No, that's not the Christianity of the Bible. That's not what Jesus is talking about here.

There is absolutely no need and I mean it for the young people in our church to fail to pay school fees. Absolutely no need. We should not only be able to help but we should be willing to sacrifice.

Absolutely no need. But you know we look the other way because we don't have spare money. It does not... I'm speaking also about ministries.

I know ministries are not largely about individuals at least not individuals in the church but friends we can do so much for one another. So much. I remember one of our missionaries coming to tell me he was almost in tears that day.

He's a man but he almost wept. It was during the annual conference and he said when they were talking and one of the members was sort of just finding out how things are going and so on and so forth and he thought it was just that conversation. The following day the same church member said let's go.

They went to game and he said look choose a computer here. I'll pay for it. Now when you put together the amount of money involved in that computer it must have been as much as 8 million kwacha or something.

But you know that brother has never been the same again. He never ever thought that he would ever own a computer. And that's not because the person who bought it for him had so much money to throw around.

It was because he saw the Lord's work in this brother. And as a family they said let us sacrifice. There's a lot that we can do for one another.

There's a lot we can sacrifice for one another if we can only open our eyes. If we can just stop being inward looking and stop thinking the only projects which matter are the projects I have. Jesus sacrificed.

He's saying love as I have loved you. But let me hurry on to my last point because Jesus says by this all men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another. What is a disciple? I've given this illustration before but I think it's worth using again.

Disciple is an intern. It's a person who comes under an expert to learn the art. When you finish in the school of medicine for one year and six months that's one and a half years you are not allowed to practice medicine on your own.

You are put under consultants. I think you spend six months with one consultant six months with another consultant and so on. Maybe the first one was in surgery the second one is medicine and maybe the third one is pediatrics.

I hope no one is laughing at me here. But in the process of all that you study the way this individual goes about his work and you begin to see that the theory you were learning when you were learning in university is fine-tuned by this master of the art. It's fine-tuned.

If it's in surgery for instance the way this master holds his kapel and begins to cut into people's skin and fat and muscle and ties the blood vessels and so on and does his job in there it soon begins to work into you. So at the end of the six months when now you are released to function on your own you just find that that's the way you are holding the kapel and also making your way into people's bodies. And then maybe three, four years later you've been posted to Kasama and you're working with a few other doctors and they see you cutting up a patient.

You feel good and you say, I know the one under whom you had your intention. It was Dr. Swanson, isn't it? How do you know? I saw the way you were holding that man. That's the way Chimu Dala holds it.

In other words, you are his disciple. The way you are identified is in your likeness to him. That's what Jesus is saying here.

He's saying, look, the way in which you will be known to be my disciples the way in which you will be known to have learnt of me is that the way you will be going about your lives is as though it's me who's going around these streets going into those homes looking after the welfare of others coming down from my pedestal into other people's lives indeed giving the word to the believers that they might walk in the straight and narrow and sacrificing they will be saying, yes these people are disciples of Jesus. Because what I read in Matthew what I read in Mark what I read in Luke what I read in John about Jesus is what I am seeing in these people's lives. They are his disciples.

You can't miss it. You remember the story of that Sunday school kid who, after the teacher described Jesus shouted out in the middle of the class Teacher, I know where Jesus lives. And when the teacher said where the kid said he lives down my street.

The things you've been describing is what I see in that man. That's all Jesus is saying here. He's saying, look live out my life so that people will see that I am continuing to live through you my values, my way of

life everything I would have done is still going to be done among the people of God through you.

Now brethren, I can go on until tomorrow. But I thought this time let me be a little more practical than I was last time. Last time I just sort of gave the full width.

But we really, really need to love as Jesus has loved individually to make it our so that our Saviour being absent is going to be cushioned because we are present. Let's pray. Eternal and gracious God we thank you that Jesus as he was about to leave earth wanted to demonstrate the fullness of his love for his people and consequently gave a new commandment the one we have meditated on this afternoon Oh help us to care forgive us oh Lord for the individuality that has crept into our lives that makes us close our ears from those who are suffering round about us.

Father I plead that you will make us truly loving as Jesus loved. Help us particularly to climb down from those levels that you have blessed us with to come down into the darkness and the struggles and the emptiness of other Christian lives that we might enrich them upward. Help us oh Lord to also look at those that are struggling spiritually those that are being hardened by sins deceitfulness.

Help us to be responsible enough to move into their lives and speak to them without waiting for the elders to do so. Father help us to sacrifice that in sacrificing we might show the selflessness of our savior continuing on earth. We pray that we might be like Jesus and therefore show ourselves to be his disciples that one day some young child might say they saw Jesus in us.

That our own friends may say they saw Jesus in us. Oh Father help us to destroy those groupings that we found ourselves in the church that have become comfort zones with no demand upon our Christian lives. Help us to break free from them to look across the breadth and length of the church and seek to reach out to others especially because we are a family oh God.

And that's why we are coming to the family table to share in one loaf to share in one cup to share in one meal to share in one body the body of Christ. Father as we partake of both the bread and the cup we plead that you will save us from hypocrisy the hypocrisy that eats of that which signifies oneness but leaves an over privatized life. Oh Father help us.

Bless the bread and the cup to the end that we might be more like Christ and as we eat help us to meditate upon him in whose likeness we seek to be. In Jesus name. Amen.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/16/SID16413.mp3>

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