



BURUBURU COMMUNITY CENTRE CHURCH OF GOD NAIROBI

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LOVING OTHERS AS JESUS LOVED

TEXT: JOHN 13:31-38

Sermon preached by Rev. Bonface Nyangolo on 5th July 2020.

Introduction

A pastor once asked his congregation, "What do you do with the instructions in the Bible?" A member of the congregation raised his hand and answered, "I underline or highlight them in green."

Okay, but then what do you do with them? Underlining and or highlighting all the instructions in green may help you spot them as you read your Bible. But the point of the instructions in the Bible is that we **obey** them, not just underline or highlight them. If we were to rate ourselves on a scale of 1-10 on how well we obey the biblical command to love others, probably most of us would put down a 7 or 8. Maybe a few would dare to score a 9. But when you stop to think about the fine print in Jesus' command, your ratings will drop. He said (John 13:34), "**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.**" Jesus demands us to love others, "*even as I have loved you.*"

On rare occasions, we may succeed in loving others as Christ loved us, but none of us live there consistently. It's the same as Paul's command (Ephesians 5:25), "**Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.**" You never reach a point where you can say, "I've got that one down! Let's move on to other things!" *These are commands that we've got to keep working on.*

Leviticus 19:18 commands, "... **you shall love your neighbor as yourself.**" The entire Old Testament law is summed up by the two commandments, *love God and love your neighbor.*

So how is Jesus' command *new*? I agree with most scholars who say that the newness of Jesus' command is the new standard that He gives, "*even as I have loved you.*" Jesus' sacrificial love in going to the cross for us is the new standard. So the main idea of our text is fairly simple to state, but impossible to live out consistently apart from the power of the Holy Spirit:

1. Jesus' love was costly love (John 13:31-32).

John 13:31-32 "**Therefore when he had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately.'**" This statement takes us back to John 12:23, where after hearing that some Greeks were seeking Him, Jesus said, "**The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.**" As the context there makes clear, He was referring to His death on the cross. The cross glorified both Jesus and His Father (John 12:28).

On one level, the cross was the epitome of humiliation and shame. There was no worse way to die than to be stripped naked, flogged, and then nailed to a cross and hung up to suffer a slow death as a public spectacle. But in



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another superior sense, the cross was the epitome of glory both for the Father and the Son. To glorify God is to magnify or display His perfect attributes. At the cross, God's love, righteousness, justice, mercy, and grace were magnified as at no other occasion in history. At the cross, God's justice was upheld as His sinless Son bore the awful penalty that His justice demanded for all sinners. But His love and grace shine forth as He offers eternal life to all who will repent of their sin and trust in Jesus alone.

John 13:32 refers to Jesus' resurrection and ascension: **"... if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately."** The resurrection was God's stamp of approval on Jesus' death. Jesus' ascension into heaven exalted Him again to God's right hand, **"far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come"** (Eph. 1:21).

But the point is, **Jesus' love as seen at the cross was costly.** That theme is repeated over and over in the Bible: (John 3:16; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 5:2, 25; 1 John 3:16).

I realize that it was for the joy set before Him that Jesus endured the cross (Hebrews 12:2). Through the cross, He would bring many sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10). But still for Jesus to go to the cross was an act of supreme self-sacrifice. **It was costly.**

2. Jesus' love was caring love (John 13:33).

John 13:33 **"Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.'" We see Jesus' tender care for His disciples here in two ways. First, He addresses them as "little children." It was a word of tender feelings, much as a father has toward his little children who need his help, care and protection.**

Second, we see Jesus' tender care for His own in that He explains to them that He will be leaving them soon. They could not follow Him to heaven at that time, although, as He explains to Peter (John 13:36) and to all (John 14:1-3), they will follow later. The picture again is of a caring father explaining to his children that he has to go away for a while, and they can't accompany him. But he promises that they will be reunited later. The point is, **Jesus' love was filled with tender feelings for His disciples.**

Paul would later express his love to the brothers at Thessalonica as follows: (1 Thess. 2:7-8), **"But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing *mother* tenderly cares for her own children. Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us."**

3. Jesus' love was commanded love (John 13:34).

John 13:34: **"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."** In going to the cross, Jesus was obeying the Father's commandment (John 10:18). Now He commands His followers to love one another, even as He has loved us.



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The fact that Jesus commands us to love one another means that we can do it. There are no excuses if we fail to love other believers. We can't do it in our own strength. Love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, produced in us when we walk in dependence on the Spirit's power ([Gal. 5:16, 22](#)). But just as Jesus obediently sacrificed Himself to go to the cross for our salvation, so we are obediently to sacrifice ourselves for others' ultimate good.

4. Jesus' love was conspicuous love (John 13:35).

John 13:35: **"By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."** Jesus wasn't just talking about having nice thoughts toward others, which no one else can see. He was talking about love that can be seen. It stems from the heart, but it's seen in outward actions. It's the sort of love that stands out conspicuously in this self-centered world. They should see the way that we Christians love one another and say, **"They must be followers of Jesus!"**

Sadly, the church is often known more for its fighting and divisions over petty issues than it is for its love. Friends like to be with Friends. Graduates like to hang around other graduates.

The problem is, that principle is completely contrary to the New Testament! Paul wrote ([Gal. 3:28](#)), **"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."** In the church ([Col. 3:11](#)), **"there is no *distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.*"** The church is the family of God and God has designed families so that there are young and old together.

So, Jesus' love was costly, caring, commanded, and conspicuous. Finally,

5. Jesus' love was committed love (John 13:36-38).

John 13:36-38: **"Simon Peter said to Him, 'Lord, where are you going?' Jesus answered, 'Where I go, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow later.' Peter said to Him, 'Lord, why can I not follow you right now? I will lay down my life for you.' Jesus answered, 'Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny me three times.'"**

There are so many messages that focus on Peter's failure and restoration. I'm not going to focus here on the many messages that can be gleaned from Peter's failure, except to say that while Peter thought that he was fully committed to Jesus and in many ways, he was, his failure stemmed from not recognizing his own weakness. Trusting in his own loyalty rather than in the Lord set him up for his colossal failure.

But here I want to focus on Jesus' commitment to Peter and to the other ten disciples in spite of their failure. Jesus knew that Peter would deny Him and He predicts it here. He knew that all the disciples would flee for their lives when He would be arrested later that night, in spite of their protests to the contrary ([Matt. 26:31, 35, 56](#)). But, He didn't cast them off because of their failure. He loved them to the end (or uttermost; [John 13:1](#)) and He showed that love by restoring them and using them after His resurrection.



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Love means being committed to the other person's highest good. The highest good for all people is that they would become more like Jesus Christ by growing in holiness and living to glorify Him. That commitment to the other person's highest good is the glue that holds a marriage together. As Paul says (Eph. 5:26-27), a husband's love for his wife should aim at sanctifying her so that she would be holy and blameless. That same commitment should cause church members to work through pandemics, epidemics and conflicts and seek to preserve the unity of the church in the bond of peace.

Bringing together these five elements of Jesus' love, we can hammer out a definition of biblical love: **Love is a self-sacrificing, caring commitment which, in obedience to Jesus, shows itself in seeking the highest good of the one loved.**

The **costliness** of love means that we have to sacrifice our selfishness for others. The **caring** aspect of love means that we should never be calloused or rude. Love is kind. The **commandment** facet of love means that we do it in obedience to our Savior, who gave Himself for us. The **conspicuous** part of love means that it doesn't consist just of nice thoughts, but of visible actions. And, the **commitment** of love is to see the other person become more like Christ, which is his highest good and for God's glory.

Conclusion

I recognize that this kind of love is the ideal and we live in a sinful world that presents us with many difficult situations that require prayerful wisdom to obey Jesus' command. I can only offer a few seeds for thought here on how to apply this.

Growing in love requires lifelong effort. You will experience many failures. But your aim should be to love others even as Jesus loves you.

Application

How do we love others as Jesus did?

1. By sharing the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ (The Verdict is in: By Wendy Sayers)
2. By praying for them (From Darkness to Light: By Edgar Rac)
3. By being patient with others (Unseen-The Prince Warriors: By Priscilla)
4. By seeing the best in others and helping them to realize their potential and achieve their dreams (Dynamic relationships by Jacqueline Stavros)
5. By providing food, clothing and shelter especially to members of the household of faith who are less advantaged, and extend the same to the community (New Steps in Religious Education: By Michael Keene)

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