

BFF360 the New Commandment

Scott: Welcome to the "Building Faith Families" podcast with Steve Demme. I'm your host, Scott Moore. Thanks for joining us. Good morning, Steve. How are you today?

Steve: We're recording this on Easter Week, and I thought I'd talk about something to do with Easter Week, but let's just say that the people who're listening will have already experienced Easter. This will be a good refresher, by the way how's Henry?

Scott: Growing and growing. Thank the Lord.

Steve: I checked on the CaringBridge the other day for an update, and I saw that everybody was happy even though he'd lost a little bit of weight because he had these things called "diaper blowouts."

Scott: It's amazing how you take all this stuff for granted. When he's that little, nothing is taken for granted. It's very important that he's functioning in all ways.

Steve: This past week, I was in South Carolina, and it was really wonderful to be there, and I was asked about Henry because of the podcast.

Scott: Awesome.

Steve: People are praying out there, listening to the podcast, praying for Henry.

Scott: Thank you. Thank you. It is much appreciated.

Steve: Your daughter's doing OK?

Scott: Yeah, she had a bout of mastitis, but is recovering from that now and almost 100 percent.

Father, thank You for Henry's improvement. Thank You for showing up in our situation, in our home. Thank You that even if we don't see the results that we want, we still know that You're God and You're good and we draw near to You this morning, believing in Your goodness, believing in Your nearness. We honor Jesus' blood to make us near unto God through Christ.

I pray that You'll give us spiritual ears and spiritual sensitivity, so we can understand what the Spirit is saying to us today. In Jesus' name. Amen.

To begin I'm going to read some portions from John 13 and then we'll talk about it. "Before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own, who were in the world, He loved them to the end." I love that verse.

"During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son to betray Him, Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands and that He had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. "He laid aside his outer garments and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with a towel that was wrapped around Him. He came to Simon Peter who said to Him, 'Lord, why do You wash my feet?'

"Jesus answered him, 'What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward, you will understand.' Peter said to Him, 'You shall never wash my feet.' Jesus answered him, 'If I do not wash you, you have no share with Me.'

"Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.' Jesus said to him, 'The one who has bathed does not need to wash except for his feet, but it's completely clean, and you are clean, but not every one of them.' For He knew who was to betray Him, that was why He said, 'Not all of you are clean.'

"When He had washed their feet and put on His outer garments and resumed His place, He said to them 'Do you understand what I have done to you? You call Me teacher and Lord, and you are right for so I am. If I then, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also are to wash one another's feet.

"For I have given you an example that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent you. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."

Then he goes on to talk about Judas. After Judas left, John 13:31 "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 glorify Him at once. Little children, yet a little while I am with you, you will seek Me, and just, as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you where I am going you cannot come.'" Buckle your seat belt for these next two verses.

"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." This is the night before, as far as we can tell, He was to be crucified. There is so much packed into John 13 through 17.

John 13 introduces two thoughts. They are celebrated often in modern Church traditions on Thursday. The first one is, He washed their feet. Feet washing. We've talked about this before, but I thought it's a good review. It is a beautiful image of the Son of God actually kneeling down and washing His disciples' feet.

Then He said, "Do the same to each other. I'm the big chief. I'm the teacher. I'm the Lord, you know that, you're right. I am, but look, I'm giving you an example. You need to learn how to serve each other and not try to be the big chief."

That is so contrary to our human nature that even to this day, that sermon needs to be told over and over. We, the people that are in authority, whether we're the parents in a home, whether we're a pastor of a church, whether we're the head of a business, we need to have a servant mentality.

There's nothing like getting down on the floor, taking off people's shoes and socks and washing their feet to restore the proper order. This is God's kingdom. This is a whole new thing. Then he says, "I'm going to give you a new commandment.

"This new commandment is that you love one another just as I have loved you. If you do this, all people will know that you are My disciples." This is the mark of a disciple. Francis Schaeffer, wrote a book a long time ago called the "Mark of a Christian." This is the mark of a Christian by how much we love one another.

It's not our taste in music, or how we dress, or whether we wear head coverings, or what our theology is, the thing that will set us apart is our love for one another. The new thought in this verse is that this love is not about loving your neighbor as yourself. This love is loving one another as Jesus has loved us.

This is something that I had given quite a bit of thought to. John 15 is the chapter that changed my life 11 years ago this month. John 15 says, "As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Abide in My love."

Then Jesus says, "If you keep My commandments, you'll abide in My love." And in the 12th verse, "This is My commandment that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this than someone lay down his life for his friends."

This concept of new commandment, we often miss in the beautiful celebration of foot washing, Many churches on the Thursday night before Easter will have foot washing ceremonies, which is legitimate and wonderful and needs to be replicated.

However, not at the expense of the end of the chapter, which is the new commandment. As I understand it, this night on Thursday before Easter is called Maundy Thursday. Maundy comes from Latin, "nova mandatum," which is "new commandment."

We're supposed to be celebrating, not only foot washing, but the giving of the new commandment because it is so significant. When I'm at a men's conference, for example, I'll say, "Give me one commandment especially for husbands." Almost every time, the men respond, "Love your wife as Christ loved the church." Ephesians 5:25."

It doesn't say, "Love your wife as you would like to be loved if you were the wife." It says, "Love your wife as I have loved you." Paul is applying the new commandment to marriage. "Love your wife as I have loved you, as I have loved the church."

This is different than loving my wife as I want to be loved, which is looking at her through my eyes or loving my neighbor as myself. It's horizontal.

The illustration I often give is that when I am sick, I do not like to be coddled, babied, I don't want anybody near me. I don't want anybody rubbing my back. Nothing. I just want to be alone.

When we were newlyweds, my wife got sick and I thought, "I'll leave her alone because that's how I want to be loved. I'm supposed to love my neighbor as myself." I always thought I was taking the high road.

I said, "I'll take care of the meals, I'll take care of all the different daily activities that you would normally do, so that you can just go rest and zone out because that's what I like to do."

Scott: How did that work out for you?

Steve: It did not work out well for me. Most of the time when I'm in a conference, men are already shaking their head just as I'm explaining this and they're going, "This is not going to work out well." As you and I know they want us to be with them and rub their back and play cards, and be present.

This is the point. I'm not supposed to love my wife as I want to be loved, I'm supposed to love my wife as I have been loved. What that does is, instead of looking at her through my eyes, horizontally, I look up and I think, "How has Jesus loved me?" It says in John 15 "He laid this life down for her."

That's the greatest expression of love. Or in Matthew Jesus says, "He came not to be served, but to serve." Or Philippians, "Esteem one another more highly than yourself because this is what Jesus did."

I made a list one time that is seven pages long of how has Jesus loved me. It seemed like I would add to it every time I read the New Testament, I'd see something else. What I'm trying to advocate here is, we need to get our eyes up and look at how have we been loved instead of how we want to be loved. By the way, of those seven pages, four of those pages, I could not replicate. They were completely reserved for Jesus. He's the one that took away my sin. He's the one that came to destroy the works of the devil, etc.

There are about three pages that I could consciously think, "This is how Jesus loved me and now I need to love my wife the same way." It's awesome when you think about it that way. That is what we're supposed to be celebrating on the time before Easter, the new commandment, the nova mandatum, the Maundy Thursday, that's what we're supposed to do. What do you think about that?

Scott: I'm astonished at how I keep hearing new perspectives on this. I've heard these passages so many times and read them so many times, and that one escaped me. Well done.

Steve: I give credit to our church. The pastor was speaking on this one Sunday, and he explained that nova mandatum, which I had been already meditating and applying and thinking about this new commandment, but I didn't connect it to Maundy Thursday.

I'm sitting there in church, and he's talking about this. I'm looking it up, and he's right. Then I was going, "Wow, there's reasons why we do stuff." I'd like to understand the why behind the just do it. Just keep Maundy Thursday.

I wonder why is Maundy Thursday so important. It's because it's the giving of the new commandment, which I think takes up what Jesus said when he said, "Love your neighbor as yourself," as one of the two biggies. "Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength, and love your neighbor as yourself."

There were several times in the Bible where he does this. Six or seven times in the Sermon on the Mountain. He said, "You have heard, but I say to you," and he took things up a notch.

I think he's taking up, "Love your neighbor as yourself," which is still legitimate and is still good and is still right. Don't get me wrong, I'm not nullifying it. I think he takes it up a notch to Christians when he said, "Look, this is something that is special, and you might not understand what I'm doing now, but it's going to come clear later."

Steve: Loving one another, as I have loved you." The fruit of it is not only do I get my marching orders from how Jesus has loved me, I get to know Him better. The more I see how much He has loved me, it makes me love Him more. It makes me know Him more, which is ultimately the greatest reward.

Scott: That probably would be a good exercise to replicate. Going through the New Testament and seeing all the ways Jesus has loved me. I can imagine that would make my heart overflow more toward my wife and kids and everybody else.

Steve: It does. I wrote a book called "Loved to Love." It's never received much traction. The whole book is about the New Commandment. We love because He first loved us. Once He loves us and quickens us, and His seed is growing in us, and we find ourselves becoming more like Him, then that's why we're loved in the first place, so we can love Him and love others, not just love Him as we want to be loved, but love others as we have been loved.

Amen. Father, thank You for loving us well. Thank You for this exhortation, this encouragement to not only love each other as we want to be loved with respect and dignity and value, etc., but help us to love each other as You have loved us.

Thank You for this celebration, this part of the Christian calendar so to speak, restore it, quicken it to us. Help us to get the point that this is not just a celebration. This is the celebration of the giving of the new commandment. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Scott: Amen. That's our show for this week, folks. Thanks for joining us for the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme. If you have a question for the show, email Steve at spdemme@gmail.com. If you have a question for me, you can reach me at scott@unsocializedmedia.com. Thanks for joining us. Have a great week.