

**LOVING THE LORD AND LOVING ONE ANOTHER
FOR THE ORGANIC BUILDING UP OF THE CHURCH
AS THE BODY OF CHRIST**

(Saturday—Evening Session)

Message Six

**The Lord's New Commandment Given to Us—
That We Love One Another**

Scripture Reading: John 13:34-35; 1 John 2:7-8; 3:11, 23

I. In John 13, after the Lord Jesus washed His disciples' feet to show them that He loved them to the uttermost (v. 1), He charged them to do the same to one another in love (v. 14); then He said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (vv. 34-35):

- A. The commandment in verse 34 is the new commandment given to us by the Lord in the New Testament, which is different from the old commandments in the Old Testament:
 - 1. The New Testament commandments of the Lord (John 14:15, 21; 15:10, 12; 1 John 2:3, 4, 7, 8; 3:22, 23, 24; 4:21; 5:2, 3; 2 John 4, 5, 6) are not merely injunctions; they are His words, which are spirit and life as a supply to us—John 6:63.
 - 2. We should love God and His children with the divine love that is conveyed to us through the words of the Lord to become our experience and enjoyment.
- B. A way to receive, experience, and enjoy Christ is by keeping His new commandment to love one another for the expression of His love that all the people may know that we are His disciples—13:34-35:
 - 1. Real love is the issue of enjoying the processed Triune God in the divine dispensing—2 Cor. 13:14.
 - 2. When we are in the fellowship of the divine life (1 John 1:1-3), that is, in the enjoyment of the Triune God, the outcome of this enjoyment is the divine love with which we spontaneously love others; in particular, we love all those who are organically related to our begetting Father (5:1); this love is possible only because we have had the divine birth (John 1:12-13; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:4, 18).
 - 3. Here we have a triangular love involving God, ourselves, and all those born of God, which is in the organic union with the Triune God who is love (4:8, 16).

II. The love of God is God Himself; love is the inward essence of God and the heart of God—vv. 8, 16:

- A. The love of God is the source of salvation—John 3:16; Eph. 2:4-5; Titus 3:4-5.
- B. God's predestination of us unto the divine sonship was motivated by the divine love—Eph. 1:4-5.
- C. The love of God accomplished salvation for us; God's giving of His only begotten Son to us that we may be saved from perdition judicially through His death and have the eternal life organically in His resurrection was motivated by the divine love—John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10:
 - 1. In the love of God, the Son of God saves us not only from our sins by His blood but also from our death by His life—Eph. 1:7; Rev. 1:5; Rom. 5:10.

2. God loved us and sent His Son as a propitiation for our sins in His judicial redemption with the intention that we might have life and live through Him in His organic salvation—1 John 2:1; 4:9-10; John 6:57; 14:19; Gal. 2:20.
 3. God's excelling love is seen in His becoming a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins and the propitiation place for us to meet and be infused with God; God as love meets with us and speaks to us in the propitiating, redeeming, and shining Christ so that we can be infused with Him as love, mercy, and grace for His effulgent and radiant glory—Rom. 3:24-25; Heb. 4:16; Exo. 25:17, 22.
- D. The love of God causes us to obtain salvation (2 Cor. 5:18-20; Matt. 22:3; Acts 5:32; 2 Tim. 3:15) and become His children (1 John 3:1).
 - E. The love of God leads us in our living—2 Thes. 2:16-17; Heb. 12:6.
 - F. God has poured out His love in our hearts with the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5), who has been given to us, as the motivating power within us, so that we may more than conquer in all our tribulations (8:37 and footnote 1).
 - G. The love of God works for us eternally—Jer. 31:3; John 13:1; Rom. 8:38-39.

III. In 1 John 2:7-8, relating to the Lord's commandment in John 13:34, the apostle John says, "Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you but an old commandment, which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you heard. Yet again a new commandment I am writing to you, which is true in Him and in you because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining":

- A. The commandment regarding brotherly love is both old and new: old, because the believers have had it from the beginning of their Christian life; new, because in their Christian walk it dawns with new light and shines with new enlightenment and fresh power again and again—1 John 2:7-8; 3:11, 23; cf. John 13:34.
- B. The fact that the old commandment is new is true in the Lord, since He not only gave it to His believers but also renews it in their daily walk continually; it is true also in the believers, since they not only have received it once for all but also are enlightened and refreshed by it repeatedly.

IV. In 1 John we see that the practice of the divine love is the outcome of our enjoyment of the Triune God as the all-inclusive Spirit, the One who is moving and working within us as the anointing in the fellowship of the divine life to saturate us with all that the Triune God is, with all that He has done, and with all that He has obtained and attained—1:3; 2:3-11, 27:

- A. If we would experience and enjoy the divine love and have it become the love by which we love others, we need to know God experientially by continuously living in the divine life—vv. 3-6; Phil. 3:10a.
- B. In order to practice the divine love as a virtue of the divine life, we need the divine life that has been sown as the divine seed (1 John 3:9; 2:29 and footnote 7) into our being; we also need the divine Spirit (3:24); the divine life is the source, and the divine Spirit is the One who actually carries out the matter of loving others.
- C. We should love God and His children with the divine love and not with our natural love, which must be put on the cross; one difference between God's love and our natural love is that it is very easy for our natural love to be offended.
- D. Our living in the love of God toward one another is the perfection and completion of this love in its manifestation in us—4:11-12; 2:5.

V. The church life for the organic building up of the Body of Christ is a life of brotherly love—4:7-8; 2 John 5-6; John 15:12, 17; Rev. 3:7; Eph. 5:2; cf. Jude 12a:

- A. The one who loves God and the brothers is enjoying the divine life; the one who does not love is abiding in the satanic death—1 John 3:14; cf. 2 Cor. 11:2-3.
- B. Just as the Lord Jesus laid down His soul-life that we might have the divine life, we need to lose our soul-life and deny the self to love the brothers and minister life to them in the practice of the Body life—1 John 3:16; John 10:11, 17-18; 15:13; Eph. 4:29—5:2; 2 Cor. 12:15; Rom. 12:9-13.
- C. We need to lose our soul-life by not loving the world with its pleasure; instead, taking in God and expressing God as love in the church life of brotherly love should be our joy, amusement, entertainment, and happiness—1 John 2:15-17; Matt. 16:25-26; cf. 2 Tim. 3:4; Psa. 36:8-9.
- D. Brotherly love in the church life is expressed practically in our caring for the necessities of the needy saints without any self-serving purpose or outward self-display; in the sharing of material things with the needy saints, the grace of the Lord's life with His love flows among the members of the Body of Christ and is infused into them—1 John 3:17-18; Matt. 6:1-4; Rom. 12:13; 2 Cor. 8:1-7.
- E. Loving to be first in the church is versus loving all the brothers—3 John 9.
- F. Loving one another is a sign that we belong to Christ (John 13:34-35); if we desire to have the ability to influence people concerning the Lord and to bear fruit, we must have love for one another and become one in the church life; the best way for us to bear fruit is to love one another by taking Christ as our person and life (v. 35; 17:21, 23).
- G. The genuine preaching of the gospel is a matter in fellowship (Phil. 1:5) because it is a matter of the Body; the branches of a tree bear fruit in a way of fellowship (John 15:5, 12, 17); the more we live in the Body life and have the reality of the Body life, the more we will be fruitful.
- H. The condition of the vital groups in the church life is that of loving one another in oneness and with one accord; for the practice of the vital groups, the saints need to be trained how to have fellowship that is altogether based on oneness and one accord—Acts 1:14.
- I. In the church life of brotherly love (Rom. 12:10; 1 Thes. 3:12; 4:9; 2 Thes. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:22; 4:8), we receive one another (Rom. 15:7), have the same mind toward one another (v. 5), pursue the things for building up one another (14:19), bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2), bear one another in love (Eph. 4:2), comfort and build up one another (1 Thes. 5:11), confess our sins to one another and pray for one another (James 5:16), forgive one another (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13), and are subject to one another (Eph. 5:21).
- J. The proper church meeting is a "one another" meeting, a "round-table" meeting, in which we speak to one another (v. 19), teach and admonish one another (Col. 3:16), consider one another and exhort one another (Heb. 10:24-25), and listen to one another (1 Thes. 5:20); we need to learn to have a proper mutual care in the meetings (1 Cor. 12:25-26).
- K. We need to be dealt with and built up by the Lord (8:1) so that our administration of the church and our ministry of the word will result in the brothers and sisters spontaneously loving one another for the building up of the church; when the saints genuinely grow in their spiritual life, the experience of the divine life will result in an increase of love, because love is the issue of life (1 John 3:14); this will cause the church life to be living, prevailing, functioning, and powerful.