

³⁴A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for **one another.**" John 13:34-35NKJV

Jesus knew that His death was imminent. He had come from the high of raising Lazarus from the dead and riding into Jerusalem on a donkey to adoring crowds with palm branches cheering him as the "King of Israel!" Yet He knew that His kingdom was not an earthly one, but a spiritual eternal one and that He would be the sacrificial Lamb to be slaughtered as a final, once-for-all sin offering for all of mankind.

Now He comes into an intimate space with His disciples, the young men He had been walking with and preparing for this day. He had just finished demonstrating how they should be serving one another, and now He gives them His final, most important instruction. He is emphasizing the importance of them loving one another. He drew their attention to His own example and said they must emulate Him in this too. He was their rabbi that they were following and wanting to become like in every way. He said if they love one another, other people will recognise that they are His disciples because they will look just like Him!

Later on that night, He repeated this and explained it further by saying, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13) and "These things I command you, that you love one another." (John 15:17). He had also told them, "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them." (John 13:17)

Love is the distinguishing mark of followers of Jesus. John also wrote about this in 1 John. Is it a distinguishing mark in your life?

- 1) What does this passage teach us about God? How does it apply to you?
- 2) Can others tell by the way you love people that you are a disciple of Jesus?
- 3) What are you willing to sacrifice to help a friend in need?

Based on today's reading, what is one thing God is saying to you?