

## **BUMC Weekly Bible and Sermon Study**

**Sermon:** “Love” from the “Called Together” sermon series

**Scripture:** John 13:31-35

### **Key take-aways from the Scripture**

- In this section of John, Jesus is meeting with His disciples and discussing what is considered the mark of discipleship.
- In verse 31-32, we read “When Judas was gone, Jesus said, ‘Now the Son of Man is 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.’” Glorifying is to make visible.
- There are instances in the Old Testament where God shared His glory, for example in Exodus 33 with Moses. These verses in John show that the cross is the greatest revelation of God’s glory!
- Verse 33 says, “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.”
- According to the NRSV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, “Disciples sometimes called their teachers “Father,” and sages and rabbis would refer to their disciples as their “children.”
- Verses 34-35 comprise the heart of this passage, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.
- By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” Jesus is the embodiment of God’s love and we, as disciples, are called to embody Christ’s love. Also, the idea of loving others was not a new concept, however, the sacrificial love that Christ teaches us is revolutionary!

### Key take-aways from the Sermon

- We are at the conclusion of the “Called Together” sermon series. The idea of the series is that everyone who is a baptized child of God, and professes faith in Christ, is “called of God” into ministry. We can’t do it alone but in community.
- Today, we are exploring the most critical calling as a child of God...to *love*!
- Today’s Scripture reading is Jesus’ last message to His disciples and takes the role of a servant. Jesus had just predicted Judas’ betrayal and Peter’s denial. He was abandoned in His hour of need, however, John writes that all of this will glorify God. In other words, the glory of God is about to be revealed in Jesus’ sacrificial and selfless love on the cross (see also John 15:13).
- Jesus addresses these rugged fishermen as “children”. This is not a term of derision but of endearment and signifies a deep commitment between Jesus and His followers.
- In John 13:34-35, Jesus refers to this as a “new commandment”. It is interesting, as this is as old as the Torah (Leviticus 19:18). In Leviticus, the word *neighbor* refers to your family/kin/tribe while Jesus expands this to all! Even your enemies!
- Mercy does not exclude justice. They go together! “Mercy without justice is the mother of dissolution; justice without mercy is cruelty.” -Thomas Aquinas
- When the balance between mercy and justice is lost, the wicked go either unpunished or are punished with unending brutality (See Micah 6:8).
- Radicalization: the process where an individual or group embraces an extremist ideology and accepts, uses and condones violence to achieve an agenda. This is what Jesus teaches against in today’s Scripture passage (John 13:34).
- Agape: a pure, willful, sacrificial love that desires another’s highest good.
- Love is what validates our witness into the world (John 13:35). This is what makes our testimony reliable and sincere.
- Vision of BUMC: “Create a culture of love formed through relationships with Christ and others”, so that others may know us by the way we love each other.
- The work that we are doing is for love’s sake: love of God, children, neighbor, the next generation. Everybody has something at stake in this. It’s all for love’s sake!

**Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion**

- What were your key take-aways from the sermon? How can you apply this to your everyday life?
- In what ways does our Christlike love show that we are His disciples?
- Read 1 Corinthians 13. Taken together with John 13:31-35, how can we define “love”? What are the characteristics of love?
- What makes Christian love so unique?
- Why does Jesus address His disciples, these rugged fishermen, as “children” of God? What is the significance?
- In John 13:34-35, why does Jesus refer to this commandment as “new”?
- How has Jesus loved you? How can you take this and share this love with one another?

