

Love Like Jesus Matthew 22:34-40; John 13:34-35

Bottom Line: What should we do? Love like Jesus.

Theme: Jesus said that love is to be our highest priority and our defining characteristic, Is it?

X=Advance slide

(SHOW TITLE SLIDE) Personal (introduction)

(SHOW SLIDE 02)

Your Vision – Renewing our community through the Gospel.

What do we mean by the Gospel?

- Many may assume that it is talking about evangelism – telling people the good news about Jesus. Certainly part of it.
- But, as you know, the gospel is more comprehensive than just sharing our faith and introducing people to Jesus.
- It should encompass all we do as a church, from our exaltation and service to God, to our attitude toward our society, how we interact with our community, and how we relate to each other.

Central Baptist has gone through a lot in the last three years.

It is easy, when you are going through that kind of turbulence to get disoriented.

I want to encourage and challenge you this morning as you move forward as a church by thinking about what may be the most critical aspect of being Christ's church here today. (Main thing...)

(SHOW SLIDE 03)

If we were to go into the community around this building and ask people what Central Baptist Church is known for, what do you think they would say?

If we were to ask those same people what Christians are known for, specifically evangelical Christians, what do you think they would say? What would be the first thing they would think of?

There are people all around us who have been terribly wounded by churches in their life. (Perhaps some of you.) Sometimes it was a misunderstanding or their own fault. Too often it is because of lack of love, or even abuse.

How can this be? How can the Body of Christ on earth, the earthly representatives of the Lord who loved most, not be loving?

If this church is the earthly Body of Christ, his hands/feet/heart/voice, with Jesus as your Head, how does he want you to be known?

So this morning, I want to talk to you about what is at the core of renewing your community through the gospel.

We are going to focus on two passages this morning where Jesus reminds us of his vision for his church.

As we work through these passages, I'm going to extract five things that Jesus teaches us about love.

(SHOW SLIDE 04)

Matthew 22:34–40 (NIV)

³⁴ Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. ³⁵ One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” ³⁷ Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Ranking the laws and debating which laws were more important, was a popular theological pastime.

When Jesus was asked what was the most important commandment in the Bible, he bypassed all of the 10 commandments, and all the ceremonial or moral laws, and talked about love.

(SHOW SLIDE 05)

Jesus on love...

1. Loving God and others is God's highest priority for us and expectation of us.

- A. Love is the first and greatest commandment.
- B. What does he mean by love?
 1. Where my parent's generation may have used words like responsibility and commitment when talking about love, we turned it into a feeling, a tingle
 2. When we reduce love to a feeling, we weaken and distort it.
 3. When the Bible talks about love, it is much more solid and robust. It portrays love as an attitude, and actions.

(SHOW SLIDE 06)

1 Corinthians 13:4–7 (NIV)

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

That's what God wants from us – toward him and toward others. It is our highest priority. Jesus expects that kind of love to be true of us.

(SHOW SLIDE 07)

2. Love fulfills the law.

- A. All the commandments are tied up in this.
- B. ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

3. **(SHOW SLIDE 08)**

- A. The Apostle Paul said it similarly: ¹⁴ For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Galatians 5:14, NIV)
- B. It all comes down to love. What an interesting concept.
 - 1. We tend to think of the law as rules and restrictions.
 - 2. God says the law is about love.
- C. That doesn’t mean that all those other commands don’t matter; that it is ok for me to exploit you, lie to you, steal from you, commit adultery with you or even kill you, as long as I have fond feelings for you.
- D. The key is love
 - 1. If I love God with all my heart, soul, and mind, I won’t have other gods, or allow idols in my life, or treat him disrespectfully.
 - 2. If I love others I won’t exploit them, lie to them, steal from them, commit adultery with them, kill them, or be jealous of what they are and have.
- E. But the flip side is also true – if I don’t do all those things to you, but for some other reason besides love, I am not fulfilling the law. I’m basically keeping the rules. Love is the key.

(SHOW SLIDE 09)**The second passage: John 13:34-35**

Context – Last Supper.

In less than 24 hours, Jesus will be dead and his disciples will be shattered, scattered and hiding for their lives.

He has already shocked them by washing their feet, then by telling them that one of them was going to betray him.

Then he talks about love.

John 13:34–35 (NIV)

³⁴ “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

(SHOW SLIDE 10)

Notice the repetition: phrase love one another (three times)

- 4. **(SHOW SLIDE 11)** We have a special responsibility to love each other.
 - A. Jesus identifies this as a new command, even though the command to love others goes all the way back to Leviticus.
 - B. There are a couple innovations in this command. The first is that he specifically says that we are to love each other.
 - 1. That doesn’t mean that we don’t have to love our neighbor.

2. In other places we are told to love our neighbor, parents, spouse, our friends, even our enemies who are bullying and persecuting us.
3. But we have a special responsibility to love each other.

C. Paul:

(SHOW SLIDE 12)

Galatians 6:9–10 (NIV)

⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. (Covid verse)

¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

D. Central – Jesus expects you to love each other

5. **(SHOW SLIDE 13)** Love is to be our defining characteristic.
 - A. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.
 - B. We are to show the world what real love is.
 - C. No matter how ugly and hateful it gets out there, this congregation should be an oasis of love.
 - D. Jesus' desire is that when we go out on the street to ask people what they know about your church, that they would talk about your love.
 - E. That when people think about your church, they think about love.
 - F. Wouldn't you love to be part of a church like that? You are the church.
6. **(SHOW SLIDE 14)** Jesus shows us what love is.
 - A. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.
 - B. Jesus upped the game when he said this. Called this a new command.
 1. Old command – love others as we love ourselves.
 2. New command – love others the way I love you.
 - C. He reinforces that a couple chapters over (same night).

(SHOW SLIDE 15)

John 15:10 (NIV)

¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love.

(SHOW SLIDE 16)

John 15:14 (NIV)

¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command.

- D. Notice the emphasis on keeping Jesus' commands. Obedience isn't an option for the Christian.
- E. Between them he tells us what those commands are that we will keep if we love him and are his friend.

(SHOW SLIDE 17)

John 15:12–13 (NIV)

¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

(SHOW SLIDE 18) As we look at these five things from Jesus on love, there are a couple of things that stand out to me.

- 1. What a challenge this kind of love is.**
 - A. The greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul and mind. All.**
 - Lifetime journey of transformation.
 - B. Loving others the way Jesus loves us is also a huge challenge.**
- 2. What a difference this kind of love will make.**
 - A. That's the kind of love that people will notice.
 - B. That's the kind of love that is the hope of the world.

(SHOW SLIDE 19)