



Sermon Series: True Belonging

Sermon Title: The Final Word on Love

Date: 8/24/2025

Big Idea: Love like Jesus, and let the world know we're His.

Final words often carry weight because they strip away distractions and focus on what truly matters. Whether mundane, reflective, or profound, last words tend to emphasize relationships, peace, and love. This is exactly what we see in John 13: the night before His crucifixion, Jesus gathers His disciples for the Passover meal. Judas has already left to betray Him, and Jesus knows the cross is imminent. Yet His final instruction to His closest followers isn't a motivational speech or farewell tour—it's a command that defines life in His new community: love one another.

1. Jesus Redefined Love (John 13:34–35)

Jesus says, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." The word "new" here doesn't mean brand-new in concept; it means fresh in application. The Old Testament and even Jesus' earlier teaching commanded loving neighbors. But now the standard is redefined: love others as He has loved us—sacrificially, humbly, and to the end.

Jesus illustrates this by washing His disciples' feet, showing love not as sentiment but as costly action. True love, He demonstrates, is sacrificial, forgiving, faithful, and humble. It isn't natural—it's empowered by the Holy Spirit, poured into believers' hearts (**Romans 5:5**). His command is revolutionary: the standard of love is no longer "as you would want to be treated," but "as I have loved you."

2. The Church Lives by This Love

Jesus is clear that this love is how the world will recognize His followers. It isn't theological insight, social media influence, or cleverness; it's how believers treat one another. In a world growing increasingly selfish and divided (**Matthew 24:12**), love that mirrors Jesus stands out.

The early church lived this out practically—sharing possessions, caring for widows, praying together, and crossing cultural boundaries (**Acts 2:47**). Their love was visible and relational, and it drew others to Christ. The principle remains: love in action matters more than words alone.

3. The World Notices When We Live This Out

Living Jesus' love is public as well as personal. Small groups and Christian communities provide the context where love is practiced and perfected—through support, service, reconciliation, and shared life. Loving each other visibly is a witness to the world that Jesus is alive. It isn't optional; it's central to the mission of the church.

For those following Christ, the call is to engage actively in relationships where love can be seen—through forgiveness, service, and community. For those exploring faith, Jesus' life and sacrifice demonstrate that His love is tangible, costly, and available to all.

The invitation is twofold: first, if you belong to Christ, let love shape your life in practical ways, especially within small groups and church community. Second, if you haven't yet committed to Jesus, know that His redefining love is offered to you now.

The essence of Jesus' final words is simple but weighty: let love define us. When the world sees the church loving sacrificially, humbly, and faithfully, they see something different—they see Jesus.

You will be recognized as His disciple when you love like He loves.

Discussion Questions:

- 1. What makes Jesus' command to "love one another as I have loved you" different from simply "loving your neighbor"? How does the standard He sets challenge us?**
- 2. How does Jesus' example of washing His disciples' feet show the kind of love He expects from His followers?**
- 3. Why is visible, practical love for one another so important in showing the world we belong to Jesus? Can you share an example from your own life or community?**
- 4. How do small groups or close Christian relationships help us practice and grow in this kind of love?**
- 5. For those exploring faith, what does Jesus' sacrificial love teach you about His character and His invitation to follow Him?**