



In this series, we've explored core truths which drive how we live. We've seen:

- God's big plan is to bring all things under Jesus;
- Life is short, while eternity in heaven or hell are long; and
- The cross is the centre of Christianity.

In this study, we're looking at the central Christian ethic: love.

## Death cleaning<sup>1</sup>

In John 13 we see Jesus preparing to die. He is having his last dinner with his close followers before his death. At the dinner, he prepares for his death by doing some cleaning...

Read John 13:1-20 & 31-38.

1. In these verses, Jesus is described as 'knowing' many things. List them below, writing what each of them means in your own words.

Jesus knows...

meaning:

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<sup>1</sup> Have you heard of Swedish Death Cleaning? It's a cleaning approach where a person clears out/gets rid of unnecessary belongings, anticipating that one day (perhaps in the distant future) you will pass away and so you get rid of unnecessary things now to save someone else having to do it later.

2. From this passage, list all the things Jesus wants Peter and the rest of his disciples to know/understand.
3. Re-read John 13:1. How had Jesus already 'loved his own who were in the world' and how was it he 'loved them to the end'?
4. Re-read John 13:31-35. What is new here? In particular:
  - a. What is about to happen according to these verses?
  - b. The Old Testament law could be summed up as 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and strength, and love your neighbour as yourself'. So, what is 'new' about the commandment Jesus gives in verse 34?

## Going deeper

5. What words would you use to describe the love which Jesus is modelling, commanding and foreshadowing in this passage?
6. How does this picture of love contrast with pictures of love which the world/society has?

## Implications for life...

7. Who are we to love 'as Jesus has loved' us?
8. Choose one person whom you find it 'easy' to love at the moment. What could it look like to love this person *in the way* Jesus models/foreshadows in this passage?
9. Choose one person whom you find it 'hard' to love at the moment. What could it look like to love this person *in the way* Jesus models/foreshadows in this passage?
10. Why would loving people this way help 'all people' know we are learners (i.e. disciples) of Jesus?

## Pray together

## Leaders notes:

Aim: See that Jesus life & death gives us a new road map for how to live - we are to love his way - this involves re-evaluating what we think love is and whether we are actually showing it.

It could be helpful to use a **whiteboard/butchers paper** for questions 1 & 2, and perhaps 5.

You may like to do **question 9 in pairs**/smaller groups if this would help people to be comfortable to share.

What's so new about the new commandment?

- To love one another - *as I have loved you*. This whole chapter is planted at the foot of the cross. The cross gives a new (and ultimate) expression of love which sharpens what love looks like for us - sacrificial, for God's glory.

What does society say about love?

- Sexualised. Or must be grounded in feelings. If I don't feel it, then it's inauthentic. Lifts up romantic love as the ultimate expression of love.
- Love is conditional upon the other person's reciprocal treatment of you/ transactional. I will love somebody as long as they make me feel good. In this passage we see Jesus love Judas and Peter, knowing the betrayals they are about to commit.
- Love is driven by self-fulfillment. I love others in order to express myself/be satisfied. I may express and display my love more publicly than privately so that others will admire me. Vs love driven by God's glory/servant heart
- Love will make me feel great and make life easier. Vs Love is costly. Could make life harder.
- Limited love: I love those who agree with me, meet my standards or fit my 'group' vs Jesus' example (also taught elsewhere) of loving enemies (Judas)

Who to love?

- The immediate focus on this passage is 'one another' - i.e. it was how the disciples were to love each other. The love of the people of God for each other was to be a distinctive pointing to Jesus. This priority is echoed in the NT (e.g. Gal 6:10, 1 John 4). But Jesus also commands us to love our enemies (e.g. Matt) and so this passage helps give a shape of Christian love in our wider relationships too.