

Sunday School Lesson for the Month of March 2018

How Can You Identify a Disciple?

(John 13:34-35; Mark 12:28-34)

Sunday, March 4, 2018

“Which is the first commandment of all?” [Mark 12:28] How would Jesus answer the question? The question was a familiar one, for it had often been raised in professional circles. The law was loaded with commandments. One rabbi said there were 613 commandments, 248 affirmative and 365 negative. What would Jesus say to the scribes who asked the question?

Jesus’ answer to the scribe is a master piece. “The most important one, answered Jesus, is this, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” The second is this: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no commandment greater than these.

This answer by Jesus came from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. Both the first and second commandments demand the exercise of love. We must love both God and fellow humans if we are Christians. No one can profess love for God and hate one’s fellow human. The Apostle John said, “If a man says, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brothers also” [1 John 4:20-21].

In fact, Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if we have love for one another” [John 13:35]. If we would be known as disciples, we must be distinguished by that which distinguishes Jesus – love for others!

Sunday, March 11, 2018

I. Love is a New Commandment from the Lord (John 13:34)

Why is it called the New Commandment? Is it not simply the old commandment, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself?” I think not! It is a command to love one another as disciples. Hatred among Christians is un-Christian. We love one another because of our union with Christ and because of mutual devotion to His will. Jesus said that our Christ-like love will show that we

are His disciples. Do people see petty, bickering, jealousy, and division in our church? Or do they know you are Jesus' followers by your love for one another? Love is more than simply warm feelings; it is an attitude that reveals itself in action. How can we love others as Jesus loves us? By helping when it's not convenient, by giving when it hurts, by absorbing hurts from others without complaining or fighting back. This kind of love is hard to do. That is why people notice when you do it and know you are empowered by a supernatural source.

Sunday, March 18, 2018

II. Love is the badge of discipleship

- a. Christians love God
 1. Christians love God with the whole of their affections – “all thy heart.”
 2. Christians love God with their whole life – “all thy life.”
 3. Christians love God with the whole realm of thought – “all thy mind.”
 4. Christians love God with the whole energy of their beings – “all thy strength.”
- b. Christians love one another. Christians are not known by the way they dress, a long face, a pious whine, a negative attitude, wealth, or by learning but by love for one another. The unbeliever does not love. The devil does not love because the essence of his nature is malice, envy, hatred, and revenge. Christians take on the nature of Christ – they love one another.

Sunday, March 25, 2018

III. Love is the pattern of living for Christians

Christ walked in love, and the Christian must do the same. Paul said, “be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” [Ephesians 5:1-2 NIV].

Christ showed the way for his disciples. He set an example of walking in love. One of Jesus' disciples betrayed Him, but Jesus still loved him. Another disciple denied Him, but Jesus loved him all the more. One disciple disbelieved His identity and resurrection, and Jesus asked him to put his fingers into the nail prints.

Hatred is positive proof that one is not a disciple. Love is the pattern of living for Christians.

- a. God's greatest gift to us is Jesus Christ. God's love for man is revealed in Jesus Christ [John 3:16]. Paul said, "but God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" [Romans 5:8].
- b. Love for God is our greatest gift to God. Paul listed for us the gifts given by the Holy Spirit: Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, Healing, Miracles, Prophecy, Discerning of Spirits, Tongues, and Interpretation of tongues [1 Corinthians 12:8-11]. Paul concludes 1 Corinthians 13 with these words, "And now these three remain, faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love" [1 Corinthians 13:13 NIV].

Let us obey the commandments of God: Love Him, love disciples, love our neighbors.