

Trust and Fear
[Genesis 12:1-4, John 3:1-17](#)
Rev. Curtis Bablitz
April 2, 2026

We know a lot about love. The Beatles told us that All you need is Love; Burt Bacharach said that What the world needs now is Love, sweet Love; the great philosopher Meat Loaf declared that he would do anything for Love – but he won't do that. We've heard that Love is a many splendoured thing, Love is like oxygen, Love makes the world go round – for thousands of years, poets and philosophers have told us over and over again everything there is to know about Love.

So when you think about it, today's gospel reading is a little strange. Jesus has been leading and teaching his disciples for years now, and even though they don't realize it yet, their time together on earth is almost over. They've gathered for one last supper together, because later that night, Jesus will be arrested, put on trial and sent to die on the cross. And here at this last supper, Jesus takes the opportunity to give them one last lesson, and he tells the disciples that he has a new commandment to give them. A New Commandment?! After all these years together, something new, something Jesus hasn't taught them yet? What could it be? Maybe he's going to tell them how he did that trick turning water into wine, or directions on how to fight the Romans, secret battle instructions for infiltrating the local garrison. You can bet the disciples all pulled out their note pads and leaned forward in their seats, pens at the ready so they can

all write down this amazing new commandment that Jesus has for them. A New Commandment! And the New Commandment is ... Love one another.

Love one another? That's it? Well, that's great, very important, but it isn't exactly NEW, is it? I mean, all the way back in Leviticus, God told the people of Israel that they were to Love their neighbour as themselves, and all the way throughout the Old Testament, every prophet hammered home the same message to the people – you are to Love each other, you are to love your neighbour as yourself. All the disciples had heard this commandment a million times, so it's obviously important, but it's not New. Why would Jesus think that Love one another is a new commandment?

But Jesus isn't finished. Jesus said "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." And that's where the New part comes in. Yes, the disciples need to love their neighbours – but Jesus is telling them how, he's getting more specific about what that love is supposed to look like, and the new commandment is that their love for one another is supposed to look like Jesus' love for them.

So how does Jesus love his disciples? Well, he gives them this commandment on the same night that he will be arrested and tried and tortured for their sakes, right before going to the cross out of love for them and for all of us. Jesus shows his love for us by dying for us, and then he tells us that that's how we're supposed to love one another, and if that

sounds intimidating, just wait, there's more. Later in this same conversation, in John chapter 15, Jesus tells his disciples that "as the Father has loved me, so I have loved you." So if the Love that God the Father has for Jesus is the same kind of Love that Jesus has for us, and the kind of Love Jesus has for us is the same Love we're supposed to have for each other, that means that we are supposed to love each other the same way that God the Father loves Jesus Christ, his beloved son. And *THAT* is a new commandment. We're supposed to love in the same way that God loves, and no-one can love like God loves, because God IS love. This is like being told to play hockey like Connor McDavid, to paint like Picasso and dance like Beyonce and write like Shakespeare and run like Usain Bolt. This isn't just a new commandment – it sounds like an impossible one. Maybe Jesus can love in the same way the Father loves, but how are we supposed to love that way? How can we possibly keep this commandment?

But before we give up, we have to take another look at what Jesus is telling us. Jesus gives us this commandment right before he goes to the cross, right before he dies for his disciples and for all of us, and that doesn't just show us how much Jesus loves us or show us how we're supposed to love the people around us. By giving himself on the cross, by dying for us, Jesus makes it possible for us to keep this new commandment, Jesus makes us capable of this new kind of love. In this same passage, Jesus promises his disciples that "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever – this is the Spirit of truth – you know him because he

abides with you and he will be in you. I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.” In Jesus Christ, the Love of God the Father is made accessible to humanity – by giving himself for us on the cross, by rising again to new life, that love is available for all of us, not only to receive but to give, to share. In Jesus Christ, through the power of his Holy Spirit, we can be joined to God’s love, we can enter into the intimacy of the Trinity, the eternal bonds of love that existed before time began. We can Love the way God loves, we can be conduits for the presence and passion of our saviour and Lord.

And it doesn’t happen all at once. We need to grow into that love, to be shaped and guided and built up into people who can share God’s love with everyone around us in the same way that Jesus shared that love with us, by giving what we have and all that we are so that the world around us will know God’s love. And one of the ways that growth and transformation happens is through this table, through the elements that we will share together tonight, through bread that is Christ’s body, through a cup that is the new covenant of love between heaven and earth. Every time we share in these elements, every time we remember Christ’s great gift of love for us, we are being prepared more and more to love in that same way, to love like Jesus loves us, like the Father loves Jesus. Through the cross, through the Spirit, we can truly love one another the way we were always meant to love.

In Jesus Christ, we can share the love of God. In the name of Jesus Christ -
Amen.

.