

Just As I Have Loved You

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Good Friday / Good Friday; Jesus' Death; Love; Jesus Loves Me / John 13:34–35
John 13:34-35 tells us about Jesus' love for his disciples.

Introduction

I am sure that many of you know the hymn, “Jesus Loves Me.”

You may have learned it in Sunday school. Or perhaps your parents taught it to you as a child during family worship.

The words of the first stanza are as follows:

Jesus loves me! this I know,
For the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to him belong;
They are weak but he is strong.

Yes, it is in the Bible that we learn of Jesus' love for us.

On the night of his last Passover meal and the inauguration of the first Lord's Supper, Jesus exhorted his disciples to “love another.”

He went on to tell them, “Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another” ([John 13:34](#)).

This evening, I would like to take a few minutes to examine Jesus' love for us.

Scripture

Let's read [John 13:34-35](#):

³⁴ “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Lesson

[John 13:34-35](#) tells us about Jesus' love for his disciples.

Let's use the following outline:

1. Jesus Loves His Disciples Unselfishly
2. Jesus Loves His Disciples Perfectly
3. Jesus Loves His Disciples Sacrificially

I. Jesus Loves His Disciples Unselfishly

First, Jesus loves his disciples unselfishly.

Jesus' new commandment to his disciples was that they love one another. He then told them how they were to love one another when he said, **“Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.”**

The astonishing thing to keep in mind is that Jesus said this to his disciples less than twenty-four hours before his death. Jesus said this to his disciples on the night of his betrayal and the day before his crucifixion.

We know that the disciples were troubled about Jesus' impending departure from them (see [John 14:1](#)).

The disciples did not understand all that Jesus was saying to them about his imminent departure. And they were understandably worried about what the future held for them.

But even during their grief and concern, Jesus was comforting his disciples.

The disciples should have been ministering to Jesus.

Instead, Jesus loves his disciples unselfishly.

II. Jesus Loves His Disciples Perfectly

Second, Jesus loves his disciples perfectly.

The apostle John gave us a lengthy report of what was said—mostly by Jesus—at that final Passover meal.

John introduced his report with these words in [John 13:1](#), “Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.”

John noted that Jesus “loved his own who were in the world.”

Jesus had a great, intense, and deep love for his faithful eleven apostles and all the other disciples who believed he was the Christ, the Son of God, and the only Savior of sinners.

Moreover, John stated that Jesus “loved them to the end.”

In the Greek text, “the end” is not merely the end of earthly life but it carries the idea of “completeness.” It is not merely a term referring to the *duration* of his love but rather to the *quality* of his love.

Jesus loves his disciples perfectly.

III. Jesus Loves His Disciples Sacrificially

And third, Jesus loves his disciples sacrificially.

At that final Passover meal, Jesus knew that he was going to the cross. He knew that he was going to die a horrible death.

A little later, during the Passover meal, Jesus said, “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends” ([John 15:13](#)).

Jesus was the supreme example of someone laying down his life for his friends.

We have read stories of soldiers throwing themselves on a hand grenade and thereby saving the lives of their friends. Or of a mother who shields her children from the abusive blows of an assailant.

Jesus, however, died for the sins of untold billions of people.

He took the punishment that should have fallen on us so that we can receive the gift of eternal life.

Jesus loves his disciples sacrificially.

Conclusion

Anna and Susan Warner lived in a lovely townhouse in New York City where their father, Henry Whiting Warner, was a successful lawyer.

But the “Panic of 1837” wrecked the family’s finances, forcing them to move into a ramshackle Revolutionary War-era home on Constitution Island on the Hudson, right across from the Military Academy at West Point.

Needing to contribute to the family income, Anna and Susan began writing poems and stories for publication.

Anna wrote “Robinson Crusoe’s Farmyard,” and Susan wrote, “The Wide, Wide World.”

The girls thus launched parallel literary careers which resulted in 106 publications, eighteen of them co-authored.

One of their most successful joint projects was a novel titled *Say and Seal* in which a little boy named Johnny Fox is dying.

His Sunday School teacher, John Linden, comforts him by taking him in his arms, rocking him, and making up a little song: “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so....”

The novel became a best-seller, second only to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*; and when hymn writer William Bradbury read the words of John Linden’s little song (written by Anna), he composed a childlike musical score to go along with them.

“Jesus Loves Me” soon became the best-known children’s hymn on earth.

Despite their success, the Warner sisters never seemed able to recover from the staggering financial reverses of 1837.

Years later a friend wrote, “One day when sitting with Miss Anna in the old living room she took from one of the cases a shell so delicate that it looked like lacework and holding it in her hand, with eyes dimmed with tears, she said, ‘There was a time when I was very perplexed, bills were unpaid, necessities must be had, and someone sent me this exquisite thing. As I held it I realized that if Jesus could make this beautiful home for a little creature, he would take care of me.’ ”

For forty years, Susan and Anna conducted Bible classes for cadets at West Point, and both were buried with full military honors.

They are the only civilians buried in the military cemetery at West Point.

To this day, their home on Constitution Island is maintained by West Point as a museum to their memory (Robert J. Morgan, *Then Sings My Soul Special Edition: 150 of the World's Greatest Hymns Stories* [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010]).

“Jesus loves me! this I know, / For the Bible tells me so.”

How does Jesus love me?

Jesus loves me unselfishly, perfectly, and sacrificially. Amen.