

John 15:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

Analysis

Jesus gives His commandment: 'This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you' (haute estin he entole he eme, hina agapate allelous kathos egapesa hymas). While the Torah commanded neighbor-love (Leviticus 19:18), Jesus' command is new in its standard: 'as I have loved you.' The aorist egapesa points to specific demonstration - supremely the Cross. The command is singular entole (commandment) though it encompasses everything - love fulfills all law (Romans 13:10). The quality of love is defined by Christ's example: self-sacrificial, humble, forgiving, persevering. This mutual love within Christian community is to reflect Christ's love for the church. It's not sentimental affection but committed action for others' good, patterned after Christ's self-giving.

Historical Context

This repeats the new commandment from 13:34 but within the vine metaphor's context - branches loving one another as they abide in the vine. Early church's mutual care astounded pagans. Christian charity toward poor, sick, imprisoned, and even enemies marked the church. Tertullian reported pagans saying, 'See how these Christians love one another.' House churches practiced economic sharing (Acts 2:44-45, 4:32). Persecution intensified community bonds - martyrs' courage strengthened others. Medieval monasticism attempted communal love through vows and shared life. Reformation emphasized Christ's love as both example and empowerment - we love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). Modern

individualistic culture struggles with this commandment. Yet wherever authentic Christian community exists, this love remains compelling apologetic.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's love as the standard transform commandment to love from legalistic burden to gospel privilege?
2. Why is mutual love among believers (rather than love for all humanity) specifically commanded here?

Interlinear Text

αὕτη	ἐστὶν	ἡ	ἐντολὴ	ἡ	ἐμή	ἴνα	ἡγάπησα
This	is	G3588	commandment	G3588	my	That	I have loved
G3778	G2076		G1785		G1699	G2443	G25
ἀλλήλους	καθὼς	ἡγάπησα	ὑμᾶς				
one another	as	I have loved	you				
G240	G2531	G25	G5209				

Additional Cross-References

1 John 4:21 (Love): And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

John 13:34 (Love): A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

Romans 12:10 (Love): Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

1 John 3:23 (Love): And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

1 Peter 4:8 (Love): And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

Ephesians 5:2 (Love): And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

1 Peter 3:8 (Love): Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

1 Peter 1:22 (Love): Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

1 Thessalonians 4:9 (Love): But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

1 Thessalonians 3:12 (Love): And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: