

Sermon #93 — John's Gospel

Title: **CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE**

Text: John 13:15

Subject: *Lessons from the Foot Washing*

Date: Sunday Morning — August 21, 2010

Tape: John #93

Reading: *1 Peter 2:1-24*

1 PETER 1:1-24

“1 ¶ Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord [is] gracious.”

“4 ¶ To whom coming, [as unto] a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, [and] precious, 5 Ye

also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe [he is] precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders

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disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, [even to them] which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. 9 But ye [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 Which in time past [were] not a people, but [are] now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. 11 Dearly beloved, I

beseech [you] as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by [your] good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

“13 ¶ Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; 14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do

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well. 15 For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: 16 As free, and not using [your] liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. 17 Honour all [men]. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. 18 Servants, [be] subject to [your] masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. 19 For this [is] thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what glory [is it], if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take

it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer [for it], ye take it patiently, this [is] acceptable with God. 21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed [himself] to him that judgeth righteously: 24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto

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righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. 25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the

Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”

(1 Peter 2:1-25)

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INTRODUCTION

What is the believer's rule of life? — By what standard must our lives be governed, as the children of God in this world? — How should we behave? What principles are we to live by, as we walk before God and men in this world? — By what law are we to live?

These are questions which concern all of God's children. **None of God's people are lawless, rebellious antinomians.** All who trust Christ want to honor God. All who are born of God want to do the will of God. We want to do what is right before God and men. — The grace of God experienced in the soul teaches us to live "*soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*" (Titus 2:12). — As we are admonished in Holy Scripture, saved sinners want to "*be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world*" (Philippians 2:15).

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A man or woman who is chosen, redeemed, and regenerated by the grace of God has a principle of godliness and righteousness created in his or her heart. Such a person wants to live in a manner that will be pleasing and honoring to God, for the glory of Christ. **If you do not love God's law you neither know God nor love God. Your religion is a refuge of lies. Your pretense of faith is a delusion.**

ANTINOMIAN SLANDER

Because we preach the Gospel of God's free and sovereign grace in Christ, declaring incessantly and everywhere that salvation is free, that grace is unconditional, and that God's elect are free from the law, that God will never charge his own with sin, as the Scriptures everywhere assert, we are slandered by religious legalists as antinomians, as promoters of licentiousness. These work-mongers, who had already crept into the church in Jude's day, have multiplied through the ages. Pretending to preach the grace of God, they attempt to mix law and grace together and blasphemously assert that the preaching of free grace leads to licentiousness (Jude 1:4).

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“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(Jude 1:4)

Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. The Gospel of God is the Gospel of godliness. It teaches all who know it to “*lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty*” (1 Timothy 2:2). It is “*wholesome doctrine which is according to godliness*” (1 Timothy 6:3).

THREE STATEMENTS

Let me show you three things, three things I want you to see for yourself in the Book of God. Here are three things we need to learn, as we seek to live in this world for the glory of God our Savior.

1. **Believers are not under the law, period.**

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There is absolutely no sense in which believers are under the yoke of bondage. We are not under the ceremonial laws of Israel. We are not under the civil laws given to Israel. We are not under the dietary laws given to Israel. We are not under the economic laws given to Israel. And we are not under the moral law, the Ten Commandments, that was given to Israel.

- The law was given to Israel alone. — No one else was commanded, or even allowed, to observe the Jews sabbath days, ceremonies, and ordinances.
- The law was given to point to Christ.
- The law was a schoolmaster unto Christ.

The law is not our rule of life! We have no commitment to the law, no curse from the law, and not constraint by the law (Romans 6:14-15).

(Romans 6:14-15) “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.”

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The law promises reward for obedience and threatens punishment for disobedience; but God's saints are not mercenaries! We do not serve our God for gain, or because of fear. God's elect are not motivated by such things. Our service to God is motivated by love, grace, and faith. God requires and accepts heart obedience. He will not accept the mere outward, pretentious show of the hypocrite! — The Almighty sees through the Pharisee's show!

Did you hear the Scriptures? — “We are not under the law, but under grace!”

- The law makes men slaves. It produces bondage and bondage creates strife.
- Law work promotes pride, self-righteousness, and judgmental attitudes.
- We are expressly and repeatedly warned not to be brought in bondage to the law (Romans 7:1-4; Galatians 3:24-26; Romans 10:1-4; Galatians 5:1-4; Colossians 2:14-16).

(Romans 7:1-4) “Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he

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liveth? 2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to [her] husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of [her] husband. 3 So then if, while [her] husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. 4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, [even] to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” (Romans 7:1-4)

(Galatians 3:24-26) “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster [to bring us] unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:24-26)

(Romans 10:1-4) “¶ Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might

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be saved. 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ [is] the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Romans 10:1-4)

(Galatians 5:1-4) "¶ Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. 2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. 3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. 4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." (Galatians 5:1-4)

(Colossians 2:14-16) "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15 [And] having

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spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

16 ¶ Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath [days].” (Colossians 2:14-16)

2. We are not under the law of Moses; and, second, God’s people in this world must not allow themselves to be ruled by the self-righteous standards, traditions, laws, and customs imposed by religious men (1 Timothy 4:1-5; Romans 14:5, 11-17).

(1 Timothy 4:1-5) “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, [and commanding] to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God [is] good, and nothing to

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be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: 5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.” (1 Timothy 4:1-5)

(Romans 14:5-17) **“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day [alike]. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.** 6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth [it] unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard [it]. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. 7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. 8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s. 9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. 10 **But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.** 11 For it is written, [As] I live, saith the Lord, every knee

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shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. 12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. 13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in [his] brother's way. 14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that **[there is] nothing unclean of itself:** but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him [it is] unclean. 15 But if thy brother be grieved with [thy] meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. 16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of: 17 For **the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.**" (Romans 14:5-17)

It is customary in our day for men to set themselves up as judges of other men's spirituality, dedication, and devotion. They call it "fruit inspecting". But the standard by which they judge is a very faulty one. It changes from one place to another, from one time to another, and from one circumstance to another. — You can be sure of this: — **Anything that is right is**

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always right. Anything that is wrong is always wrong.

- What does he wear?
- How does he comb his hair?
- What does he eat?
- What does he drink?
- How much time does he spend in prayer?

True godliness is a matter of the heart. The fruit of the Spirit is heart fruit (Galatians 5:22-23). — “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*” (Galatians 5:22-23)

3. **Yet, we are not left without law.** We have a law by which to live (1 John 3:23; 2 Corinthians 5:14-16).

(1 John 3:23) “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.”

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(2 Corinthians 5:14-16) “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15 And [that] he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. 16 ¶ Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we [him] no more.”

Now, turn to John 13:5. **We have an Example of that law of love in John 13:15.** I realize that such frail creatures of the dust as we are need some example by which to live, some pattern to copy. Our sinful flesh requires that we be ruled by some law. We do not suggest that every man do that which is right in his own eyes. But what example are we to follow? What law must we submit to and obey? What is the rule by which we must live? The answer is found right here.

(John 13:3-15) “Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he

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was come from God, and went to God; 4 **He riseth from supper,** and **laid aside his garments;** and **took a towel,** and **girded himself.** 5 After that he **poureth water into a bason,** and **began to wash the disciples' feet,** and to wipe [them] with the towel wherewith he was girded. 6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? 7 Jesus answered and said unto him, **What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.** 8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, **If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.** 9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also [my] hands and [my] head. 10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash [his] feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. 12 **So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?** 13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for [so] I am. 14 If I then,

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[your] Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For **I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.**" (John 13:3-15)

My subject is **CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE.** — We read earlier that the Lord Jesus Christ, our blessed Savior, "*suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in his steps*" (1 Peter 2:21). **If I want to know how to live in this world, I need only to read the four gospels, look to Christ my Example and follow him.**

- What kind of father should I be? — Look to Christ.
- What kind of mother should I be? — Look to Christ.
- What kind of child should I be? — Look to Christ.
- What kind of friend should I be? — Look to Christ.
- What kind of husband should I be? — Look to Christ.
- What kind of wife should I be? — Look to Christ.
- What kind of neighbor should I be? — Look to Christ.

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- How should I treat my enemies? — Look to Christ.
- How should I pray? — Look to Christ.
- How should I forgive men? — Look to Christ.
- How should I deal with men in business? — Look to Christ.
- Should I pay my taxes? — Look to Christ.
- How can I know the will of God? — Look to Christ.
- How can I overcome temptation? — Look to Christ.
- How should I treat the poor? — Look to Christ.
- What is humility? — Look to Christ.
- What is sin? — Look to Christ.
- How should a believer suffer? — Look to Christ.
- What is faithfulness? — Look to Christ.
- How much should I give? — Look to Christ.
- What is patience? — Look to Christ.
- How much of this world's good should I seek? — Look to Christ.
- What is it to live by faith? — Look to Christ.
- What is love? — Look to Christ.

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If you have any other questions pertaining to life in this world, look to Christ. And if you would learn how to die, when your life is over, look to Christ. **In all things, Christ is our Law, our Teacher, our Guide, our Example.**

Proposition: All who want to live in this world for the glory of God need only to follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In our text we have one of the most teaching and most instructive incidents in the earthly life and ministry of our Lord. Here we see the Son of God washing his disciples' feet.

Divisions: I want to call your attention to two things, and I'll be done.

1. This picture of Christ washing His disciples' feet is a picture of our Lord's constant love to us.
2. This picture of Christ washing His disciples' feet is an example of love for us to follow.

CONSTANT LOVE PORTRAYED

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This picture of our Lord Jesus Christ washing His disciples' feet is **a picture of our Lord's constant love toward us.** Really verse one is a text for the sermon which our Lord acted out in verses 2-17. Here we see our Lord acting as a gracious Host to his disciples. He gives them bread to eat and wine to drink. He even takes a towel and a bowl of water and stoops down to wash their feet!

This was a custom in the old Eastern countries. If a man had honored guests in his home, he provided them with food, wine, and cool water to wash their feet. Abraham had some water brought for the angels who visited him to wash their feet. Joseph had his servant to wash the feet of his brothers when they came to Egypt. But Christ himself so highly honored his disciples that he washed their feet!

It is yet true today that our Lord tenderly cares for our every need as our constant, gracious, loving host (Romans 8:28).

(Psalms 57:2) “I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me.”

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(Romans 8:28) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

This act of love performed by our Savior shows me three things. — **First, the Lord Jesus Christ looks after our smallest cares and concerns with great interest.** — So tenderly is his love that he even washes his disciples’ feet! He takes notice even of a little soil on their heels.

He who sovereignly rules all things
Takes care of our smallest affairs:
The almighty Lord, King of kings,
Would have us cast on Him our cares.

Second, our Lord Jesus tenderly provides refreshment for the children of His love. — In hot climates, nothing is more refreshing, after a long walk or a long day of work, than to have your feet bathed in cool water.

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There are many pools of cool water from which the Son of God refreshes our weary souls.

- His Salvation
- His Promises
- His Presence
- His Faithfulness
- The Hymns
- The Word
- Prayer

There are special, specific seasons when He refreshes us.

- Before we enter the hard labor of trial, he graciously prepares his own for the trials they must endure, with sweet refreshments of grace.
—— John and Verda Mitchell
- In the midst of our journey, our Savior comes to us, as he did to the disciples on the Emmaus Road, opens to us the Scriptures, and causes our hearts to burn within us, as he talks to us by the way!
- Even when we arrive home (Luke 12:37).

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(Luke 12:37) “Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.” — **Just try to imagine that!**

Illustration: *Robin Locke*

(Revelation 8:1) “And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.”

Third, our blessed Lord Jesus carefully tends to the spiritual welfare of each of His disciples. He washes our feet. He washes us from the defilements of the world and the soil of worldly care. — **It seems to me that the public ordinances of the gospel are especially designed for this purpose.**

- In baptism and in the Lord’s Supper, we are reminded again of our Savior’s great sacrifice of himself for us, and have our feet washed again. The blood is freshly applied by the Holy Spirit; and we are freshly washed.

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- In the Preaching of the Gospel
- In the Songs of Zion
- In the Reading of the Word
- Prayers and Praises of God's Elect

We need to be washed daily, constantly. — *“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow”* (Psalm 51:7). **And our dear Savior is always ready to wash us.**

AN EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW

That is the first thing. Our Lord's washing of his disciples' feet is a picture of his constant love toward us. **Second, this picture of Christ washing his disciples' feet is an example of love for us to follow** (vv. 12-15).

“So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for [so] I am. 14 If I then, [your] Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash

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one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." (John 13:12-15)

We do not physically observe foot washing as an ordinance because...

- Our Lord did not instruct us to do so.
- The disciples never did.
- The early church did not.
- We have no instruction about such an ordinance in the New Testament.

Our Lord did not institute foot washing as an ordinance for the church. He gave us an example to live by as a rule of life. He gave us a pattern to follow. He said, — *“Do as I have done to you.”*

Our Lord Jesus here shows us how we ought to serve one another and how we ought to allow ourselves to be served by our brethren. Some of us are too proud to wash someone else's feet. And some of us are too proud to have our feet washed by someone else. —

Three lessons are clear:

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First, we should carefully maintain love for one another (John 13:35; 1 John 4:8; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13).

(John 13:35) “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

(1 John 4:8) “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”

(1 Corinthians 13:1-13) “¶ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become [as] sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have [the gift of] prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed [the poor], and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”

“4 ¶ Charity suffereth long, [and] is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not

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puffed up, 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”

“8 ¶ Charity never faileth: but whether [there be] prophecies, they shall fail; whether [there be] tongues, they shall cease; whether [there be] knowledge, it shall vanish away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these [is] charity.”

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Second, love is serviceable. Love does not say. Love does!

- No service is too great for love.
- No service is too small for love.
- No service is too demanding for love.
- No service is too costly for love.

Third, love is the never ending, abiding law of Christ's church (John 13:34).

(John 13:34-35) “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all [men] know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

- **Christ himself shows us how to love** (1 John 3:16-17).

(1 John 3:16-17) “Hereby perceive we the love [of God], because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down [our] lives for the brethren. 17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up

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his bowels [of compassion] from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”

(1 John 4:9-11) “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son [to be] the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”

- Deeds of love and kindness are understood by all men.
- And love is all the law fulfilled and all the law needed. — “*For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*” (Galatians 5:14).

APPLICATION — Philippians 2:1-8

“¶If [there be] therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2 Fulfil

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ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, [being] of one accord, of one mind. 3 [Let] nothing [be done] through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Philippians 2:1-8)

Amen.