

Goodbyes. Movies have given us all types. Illness or tragic accident separates young love. War drives distance between two people. Old age brings a sad end. No matter how it's done, we've seen every goodbye. Each is hard. Goodbye means at least for now not seeing each other. Goodbye means at least for now separation. It's hard and sad. But goodbyes aren't just in movies. Goodbye is real life.

The goodbye Jesus gave to his disciples was all of those rolled into one event. It was a time for sadness. Jesus was leaving. It was a time for tearful joy. They still had a little more time to soak in. It was a time for Jesus to give them his last teachings and last pep talks. But this man, this God, this Jesus who was both, was giving them more. It was a new command centered on love.

The setting of Jesus' goodbye could bring a tear to your eye too. This Jesus, who the disciples had come to know so well and who we really have come to know so well, faced the toughest part of his life. A chain of events was set in motion that he seemed unable or unwilling to stop. It's the chain of events that will bring him glory. In that moment, recorded in the gospel, the...

**Glorified Savior gives his new command**  
**Reminds us of his sure love**  
**Reminds us to show love**

He left without really saying goodbye. The next time Judas Iscariot would see Jesus would be the Garden of Gethsemane. He would betray his master and friend with a kiss. Judas was the betrayer. His leaving was the beginning of something. The rest of the disciples kept eating not realizing what just happened. Jesus put it into perspective. **"When he was gone, Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him.'"** Jesus had talked death a lot lately. Talking glory was welcome relief. The disciples had no idea what was coming.

Jesus was confident in glory to come. But it came only through intense personal suffering at the hands of his betrayer, his judge, and his executioner. Shortly Jesus would stand before a Roman courtroom accused of all sorts of heinous crimes, none of which were true. It wouldn't be long after that when nails would get pounded into his flesh. Not long after that some friends of his would take his body, wrap it, and place it into the tomb. So much for glory. Jesus would be dead in less than 24 hours.

If all you knew about the story of Jesus was his terrible death by crucifixion and a less than grand burial you too might think there was no glory there. Suffering like he went through was no way to get glory. We constantly struggle to put off suffering, to avoid it, or ignore it if possible. I've done so many sinful things to avoid suffering I'd be embarrassed to mention them, too ashamed. You probably have too. Anyone who suffers is someone we pity and probably downgrade. "I guess they weren't as great as we thought. Look at them now. Figures, they got what was coming to them." Without even hiding it we put ourselves above those who suffer. Glory is in greatness, not suffering or humiliation.

For Jesus, suffering was the glory. It was the sacrifice of himself that reminds you and me of his sure love. It's his overwhelming and overpowering love. It's a sacrifice made on your behalf, completely and totally for you. Only through suffering was Christ Jesus able to end the reign of Satan. **"It is finished."** Suffering gives Satan strength against you. Fear and sin allow Satan to rule. But no longer. Sin is paid for. Fear is taken away. Jesus defeated our enemy with a show of love, his suffering and death. As the perfect substitute Jesus went places to do things you could never do. Suffering in hell only to return. Suffering the wrath of God. Suffering abandonment by God. **"If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once."** Jesus returned for glory, glory through suffering.

Listening to Jesus he speaks about his suffering and glory as if it's already accomplished. Really it was before it began, sitting there in the low light of a Passover meal with his disciples who had no idea what was coming. **"My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now; where I am going, you cannot come."** Jesus speaks the same way about your life. You will be glorified in the Savior. It's promised. You might suffer however. Jesus only found glory through suffering. We should expect no different. No matter what suffering you face, you know glory waits because of the resurrection. Jesus came alive again. He is not dead, he lives, he is risen. We're saved through Christ. Now we have opportunities to see the love of Christ in worship and Bible study. Our confidence grows that Christ's love is sure. God's glory only comes through Christ's glory and we've been reminded of his sure love for us.

At times "old" is the new "new". Old looking pixelated computer games are new again. Old comic book heroes are new movie blockbusters. Old styles in homes and clothes have come back and are new again. The love Jesus showed for all people including you and me on the cross and inside the tomb and in his resurrection, that love is never old. It is always new. The command Jesus gives sounds new to the disciples but really is old. Moses received it from God. The Israelite leader told the people all the commands God gave. The book of Leviticus records, **"Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord."** Jesus wasn't commanding something completely unheard of. The "new" command was old. Love your neighbor. It's a reminder to show love.

If Jesus had to command it, then it must be hard. You know how mean people can be. People don't love you so why should you love them? People hate and ignore and it hurts. Those that hate are hard to love. Logic says hate them back. People don't show at all that they care. They disagree with no regard for personal feelings. Disagreement like that is poison to you. Love for such a person is impossible. Love is hard. So we break down and we say we love. We talk because talk is easy. Loving actions are hard. Love can even grow cold. Familiarity, closeness, and personal struggle means we may have stopped caring.

**"A new command I give you; Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."** Jesus loved you first. He died for you, he lives for you, he's forgiven you. In one sense this command is new. Jesus now provides the new motivation for this new command to love. Christ's love is your motivation. His love of you, not just saying it, but showing it. Jesus doesn't demand something from you. Jesus leads you to love by loving you and serving you. He loved by action. He loved us by the cross. He faced suffering, showed he loved us, and made us followers of his love.

Now loving is as natural as breathing. The Holy Spirit fills us with Christ's love and with the gospel. **"By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."** That love must find expression. Listening and providing a shoulder to cry on. Expressing the gospel freedom we have in Christ and letting that shine to the world. Loving strangers and friends alike. We join in loving with other believers in our national church body. Right now people you don't know are preparing to graduate from Martin Luther College as teachers and staff ministers. Right now young men are preparing to graduate from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary making themselves available as pastors. Right now individuals in Hong Kong are learning to be pastors to their own people. Right now children on the Apache reservation in Arizona are hearing the gospel. Right now children in our own school are preparing for the last month of classes. These are gifts of love that you participate in. Around the world, right down the hall, across the fence, at work or school Christ's love for you shows itself in love for others.

The glorified Savior was saying goodbye. There may have been tears or just shock on the part of the disciples. But Jesus was not surprised. He said goodbye knowing what was coming. Glory. But glory through suffering. So the glorified Savior gave a new command to his followers. He motivated them to love. He reminded them and us of that new command to love because of his own love. He reminded them and us to show love because he first loved us.