

“Let them praise the name of the Lord,  
for God’s name alone is exalted.” AMEN!

“What’s love got to do,  
got to do with it?

What’s love  
but a sweet old-fashioned notion?

What’s love got to do,  
got to do with it?

Who needs a heart  
when a heart  
can be broken?”

I don’t sing it as well as Tina Turner,  
but the song came to mind in  
my studies this week.

When first considering the meaning  
behind the song one might conclude  
that the lyrics promote promiscuity instead  
of true love.

Kind of like, it feels good  
so just go for it!

What's love got to do with it, anyway?

But a closer look, I think, reveals  
that the song points to a different and  
more troubling problem and tragedy  
that happens sometimes in relationships.

That is that someone who continually  
proclaims in words, "I love you," but  
their actions and behavior reveal  
something else entirely.

For the person saying "I love you," in word  
is abusive in action.

So the words "I love you" are meaningless.

In this case, "what's love got to do with it"  
when your actions hurt, abuse, and break hearts? (Pause)

Today, we sit in this tension between  
interpretations that are present in  
the text from John's gospel.

You're familiar with it, I know.

Jesus' issuance of the new commandment.

It is set within the context of

the washing of the disciple's feet,  
which is set in the context of betrayal  
and denial from two of Jesus' followers.

In our experience with this text today,  
we have it assigned to us (this time)  
within the Easter Season.

“What's that go to do with it,” you ask.

Well, this post resurrection context  
that we find ourselves in,  
allows us to linger here a moment,

and gain permission to interpret what Jesus said  
a little differently than we would have when  
we read them on Maundy Thursday.

Hearing Jesus' words, then,  
within the pain and confusion of  
the night of Jesus' arrest is different

than hearing his new commandment in  
the season of His resurrection.

As Jesus spoke about loving one another  
the way He loved them,  
we come to understand just what Jesus knew.

He knew the time for glorification had arrived.

He knew that he was only going to be  
with them a little longer.

And Jesus knew, they'd scatter and  
be disrupted, perhaps angry with one another,

yet, instead of pointing to their failures  
(future and past) or blaming them  
for what was about to happen,

Jesus chose to prepare them for what was to come. (Pause)

In Chapter 13 verse 1, John tells us  
Jesus knew his hour had come... and that  
having loved his own who were in the world,  
he loved them to the end.

That word from which we get "end"  
is the Greek word "telos."

The same word that Jesus proclaimed  
from the cross when he said, "It is finished."

It means "completion."

What we might say: Done-Done.

Jesus announced His work  
complete from the cross.

We wonder (or sing) “What’s love go to do with it?”

On this side of the resurrection we know...

One answer is: Jesus demonstrated love  
all the way to completion. (Pause)

Jesus, could have answered the  
“What’s love got to do with it?” question  
by pointing to their failures.

Reading their minds out loud, he might  
have chosen to shame them back into submission.

Who wouldn’t blame Jesus for  
condemning Judas right then and there  
to reveal how the awful consequences of  
his actions would be for him?

Yet, Jesus chose to speak of  
his own elevation on the cross.

You see, beloved, we know how the story goes.

We are on this side of the resurrection,  
looking back, perhaps searching

for clarity or proof,

but Jesus reminds us how everything  
that happened had to do with love.

The foot washing, the Meal, and  
the new commandment, all flesh out for us  
the meaning of loving one another.

On the one hand, it recalls  
doing the mundane things.

Service to one another even in  
the most menial tasks.

The ones where our human intellect says,  
“That’s below my station or status!  
I won’t do that!”

Yet, that’s the very example Jesus gave  
in the task of the servant with a towel  
wrapped around his waist.

And then, on the other hand,  
Jesus communicated love in a way  
that is heroic... everything but mundane.

Acts of great risk to help someone else.

Even to the point of giving one's  
life over for another.

Recalling for us Jesus' declaration:  
"For God so loved the world..."  
that God did this. (Pause)

John's gospel communicates this  
all-encompassing love from Jesus.

In John, glory or glorification is not  
about winning an award, such as  
achieving the position of top disciple...

Glory, in John's gospel, about being  
completely stripped of everything...

freedom, clothing, health, loyalty,  
dignity, and even life itself and  
then recognizing how  
God overcame all of it.

That is glory on this side of the resurrection  
we then recognize how we have betrayed  
and denied, and finding God  
overcame that, too.

Therefore we, too can love the ones  
who betray and deny.

We can be “Christ-like,” in ways that exceed  
society’s meager definition of love.

That’s glory...

Our losses, our failures, our denials and  
betrayals cannot disrupt  
God loving the world. (Pause)

God’s broken through that!

For this kind of love, in all its spectrums,  
speaks into the moment of troubled hearts.

Jesus points to that visibility.  
Never hurting, abusing or breaking hearts.

For love has everything to do with it!

It must, for this hostile world  
demonstrates abuse and heartache  
and death enough.

In these Easter season readings,  
we know for sure that  
Jesus the Christ is risen!

Our behavior will be like that of Peter’s



now, in our lesson from Acts.

Read that again later, for Peter demonstrates  
what post-Easter love looks like.

What coming together looks like.

We too cannot help but proclaim:

Who am I to hinder God?

AMEN!