

SACRIFICIAL PEOPLE, JOHN 15:9-17

Irresistible #5

◆ **Intro:** Guess what everyone! When Jesus came to the earth he gave a new commandment. Let's read it.

◆ *John 13:34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."*

◆ Now what if I told you that since Jesus gave us a new command, we don't need to concern ourselves with any of the ones he gave earlier, or anybody gave earlier for that matter? Would that make sense to you? I'm thinking that would be like mom coming in the kitchen and addressing the kids who are currently using her egg-beater and bowls to mix garden dirt and milk to make mud-cake! And Mom says, "Whoa there, just a minute, little missy. New rule, never bring dirt into my kitchen!"

◆ "Really mom?" say the kids. "That's the new rule? Woot woot, that means all the other rules are superseded and that therefore the rule about dropping the cat out a window to see if he lands on his feet -that one is obsolete! And once again we may burp the alphabet at the kitchen table!"

◆ You recognize this of course as nonsense. But this is exactly what some Christians teach about all God's laws. They say things like the following quote:

◆ The old covenant commands were part of the old covenant...Jesus didn't issue his new command as an additional commandment to the existing list of commands. Jesus issued his new commandment as a replacement for everything in the existing list. Including the Big Ten!"
-Andy Stanley, *Irresistible*.

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◆ There is a word for this view: it's call antinomianism. *Nomos* means law in Greek. It says that because because the religious ceremonial laws for Israel ended with Jesus' followers (and we know this because of other scriptures) that all laws and commands of God to the nation of Israel also ended. It thinks that because we are not saved by following laws but by grace through Jesus' death and resurrection, we have no obligation to follow, say, the Ten Commandments. Law, they say, is not compatible with love. No law, is "irresistible."

◆ Now for a story: "It was Wednesday morning at 10:55 A.M. we were seated next to each other at a table, joking about how we thought the large clock on the wall might be broken because time seemed to be moving so slowly. I would have never guessed that only five minutes later, we would be huddled next to each other under the same table, using a fallen chair as a shield from over 60 rounds of bullets being fired across the room. While I cannot recall every single second that played out that morning, I will always remember his left arm wrapped around me, holding me as close as possible next to him behind that chair. And amidst all the chaos, I'll always remember him saying these three words: "I got you.""

◆ That is the story of a survivor of the 2015 San Bernardino shootings, 27-year-old Denise Peraza. She lived because a man named Shannon Johnson shielded her body with his own and saved her life. I would like to suggest that this

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type of love is in fact at the root of every law God commands anywhere in the Scriptures, and is also an irresistible quality.

◆**1. There is an eternal standard for righteousness.** The laws of God are still the truths of the universe. This concept of course is not accepted by most people in our culture. We say we follow the science but then just call our preferences science. Lest we get sued for discrimination, we say what's true for me might not be true for you. Our officials tell us what they think we need to hear at the moment, true or not, and see no discrepancy in that.

◆Some folks who claim the name of Christian will also tell you, and all their friends, that it doesn't really matter what you do, or how you behave. We're all are saved by grace, not by our deeds. That means of course that God is fine with you sleeping with someone you're not married too, because God is love, and well, so it that. And you can practice same-sex activity because there's supposedly no law about *who* you love. And logically, there shouldn't be any reason to feel guilty about lying to your child if it seems to you at the time to be a loving thing to do. So, you be you. God's cool with it and so are we.

◆The natural result of this foolery, of course, is that our society is plagued with irrationality because we don't think there is any absolute truth. This fallacy has lead to...

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- ◆ Teens who can't mentally determine if they are boys or girls, perhaps one of the most basic of all scientifically clear facts.
- ◆ A president who refers to "birthing persons" instead of mothers, so as not to offend men who want to be moms.
- ◆ Cities that want to get rid of law enforcement by defunding the police, which is in essence saying, "please do not help keep our neighborhoods safe. Safety, like law, is a matter of opinion."
- ◆ A. But Christians don't believe this. Christians believe that God sets the standards for truth and righteousness. And it doesn't really matter how we feel about those standards. God's laws are the best conditions for human life for everyone, whether we like them or not. Christians do not believe "you be you". That will always be disaster. Christians believe what Christ commanded, for example in Matthew 5:48 "*be perfect like you heavenly father is perfect.*" You be... like God. In other words, what is best for the aborigine in New Guinea, and the Muslim in Iraq, and the Viking in ancient Denmark -is to obey the universal laws of God.
 - ◆ Incidentally, the Christian Church of the 2nd Century condemned as heretic Marcion, who wanted to throw Matthew out of the the canon of scripture because it stresses the call to seek righteousness (6:33), doing good deeds to glorify God (5:17) and even surpass the righteousness of the Pharisees (5:20).

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◆ If it is true that God's laws and ways are the best conditions for human life, then...

◆ **2. Jesus' command to love is not different from all the rest of God's commands, but is the interpretive root of all of them.**

◆ Now right away, we should note that every orthodox Christian will readily admit none of us are able to live up to the good requirements of God. In other words, we are unable to keep the law. And yes, Jesus sacrificed himself to meet God's standard of righteousness for all of us. That is why we worship Jesus! But don't you see the connection. If God's followers in Jesus' era are no longer required to follow God's laws, then why did Jesus have to die for them for breaking them? Jesus died because our failure to follow God's will, is wrong, and punishable. Grace is only a reality when something is required, but not able to be delivered. So grace does not negate the laws of God, it frees the believer from the penalty of those laws, but the positive righteousness of the law is still right, and must still characterize the life of the Christian.

◆ We must understand that Jesus' command to love is in fact the expressed root of every other law of God that we ought to obey. That's why Jesus keeps telling us to obey! If we obey him, we will be living out love.

◆ *John 14:15 "If you love me, you will obey what I command.*

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◆ *Jn 14:21 Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me.*

◆ *John 15:9-14 Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love...*

◆ People like to ask things like, "Can a homosexual be saved?" Well we might ask the same of any other sin. Can a thief be saved? Can an angry person be saved? Can a liar be saved? Can a pagan idol carver be saved? Of course they can! Salvation depends of recognizing your sin, and asking for forgiveness through Christ's merit. Salvation does not depend on your perfection but on your repentance. However, this salvation by grace does not make any of those things OK, or acceptable. Real life, the best human life puts away sin.

◆ *John 15:10-11 If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.*

◆ Where does real joy come into play? Where we are obeying God's commands out of love. A lot of the time that we are miserable, it is because we disagree with and disobey God.

◆ *Romans 6:15-16 Well then, since God's grace has set us free from the law, does that mean we can go on sinning? Of course not! Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin,*

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which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living.

◆3. **Sacrificial love is the kind of love that's really irresistible.**

◆A. What's new in Jesus' "new command"? Is it the command to love? No. Every Israelite already knew the two great commandments: love God above all else, and love your neighbor as yourself. So that's not new. Is it for Jesus' followers to love each other? No. That's already covered in the "love your neighbor" command. So that's not new either. What was new in Jesus command to love was the *manner* in which Jesus loved. It is caught in the phrase *as I have loved you*. And how did Jesus love them? To the point of self-sacrifice. It becomes crystal clear two chapters later in John's Gospel.

◆John 15:12-13 My command is this: Love each other **as I have loved you**. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

◆In other words, true brotherly love requires a certain abandonment of self-love. We call that self-sacrifice. Compare that to other types of love like "repayment love", or an "hoped-for-advantage-love", or a "love of convenience". These types of so-called love place the self before others.

◆There is no greater agreement between the love of ourselves, and the love of our neighbor, than there is between fire and water. Self love keeps all our senses bound

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in such a manner that brotherly love is altogether banished;
-John Calvin

◆ When Jesus said "as I have loved you" in the new commandment of John 13, he had just taken the role of the Jewish house-boy and washed the disciples feet before reclining to dinner. The teacher had become the servant.

◆ *John 13:12-15* When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

◆ He specifically pointed out his own authority and rightful place as Lord. It is in fact Jesus' rightful *authority* that makes his *example* a sacrificial act. If he was the house-boy, with no authority, it would have been no sacrifice for him to do his job of washing feet. But when someone who doesn't have to, or shouldn't have to puts themselves aside, that is sacrifice. In a way, obeying any command of God is the choice of self-sacrifice. It is saying, I will live/do/be your way God, not mine.

◆ **Conclusion:** The first Victoria Cross of World War II was



awarded to Company Sergeant-Major John Robert Osborn. The sergeant-major and his men were cut off from

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their battalion and under heavy attack. When the enemy came close enough, the Canadian soldiers were subjected to a concentrated barrage of grenades. Several times Osborn protected his men by picking up live grenades and throwing them back, but eventually one fell in just the wrong position to pick up in time. With only a split second to decide, Osborn shouted a warning and threw himself on top of the grenade. It exploded, killing him instantly. The rest of his company survived that battle because of Osborn's selfless other-centeredness.

◆ And here we find, I would venture, another irresistible quality of Jesus, that if followed by us, would draw people toward the savior rather than push them away. Where in your world, could you sacrifice of yourself in some big or small way in order to imitate and show the irresistible love of our Savior?