

The commandment of love



John 13:31–38

We recapitulate the contents of the previous lessons.

Before Jesus Christ was taken prisoner, he said to his Apostles: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

We ask the children to relate experiences in which they felt this love or did something in love for others.

The children feel the great love emanating from Jesus Christ.
They are encouraged to pass this love on to others.

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veryone prayed for us

Before my little brother was born, my mother felt very ill. Everything she ate made her nauseous and she became steadily weaker. We were very worried about her, and my father and I prayed a lot for her during this time. We asked the Lord to make her healthy and well again. The rector and many members in the congregation also prayed for us. We were not alone—many wanted to help us. Several brothers and sisters visited us and comforted my mother whilst others helped us with the household chores. Thus we could experience much love in this difficult time.

In the meantime my mother has regained her health, and my little brother was born healthy too. We thank the dear Lord for this.

Recognizing God's help

My father found work on a tropical island and consequently our family had to move there. At first everything was very strange for me and I found it difficult to adjust. I could not understand the language and had no friends. I prayed to the Lord every day for help, and to be able to understand all the new things around me. In church, too, everything was very different to what we were accustomed to back home. But the brothers and sisters were very kind and friendly and

I soon felt happy there. Slowly I also learned the language. So everything went well.

But my fear of the sea remained. I often prayed about it to the Lord. While I stood shaking and trembling on the beach, my classmates swam around in the water like fish. They did not tease me, but showed me, time and again, how to swim. Despite all their efforts and help, I still did not dare to go into the water. Then one day they formed two long rows in the shallow water and said I should swim between them. They promised to hold on to me. Then I overcame my fear and made my first serious attempt at swimming. And with all those helping hands, it worked... While my friends cheered me on, I even managed to swim a few strokes by myself. At home I knelt down in my room and prayed: "Dear Father, I thank you that you have helped me overcome my fear through these children. Please reward them for all their help and let me always be kind and loving to them in return."

Old and young

Sister Bradley often feels very lonely since her husband's death. Her house seems so terribly empty to her. She also often feels the frailties of old age. A little thing like tying her shoelaces, for instance, has become an agony for her. There are days on which she can only thank the Lord with sighs. Yesterday she experienced such a day. But today, on opening her letter-box, she finds a letter. She opens it. And there, written in clumsy letters, it says: "Dear Sister Bradley, we wish you a very pleasant day today. The Sunday-school

children.” Seven colourful signatures and a beautiful floral border decorate the short note. Sister Bradley is overjoyed with this unexpected greeting. Lovingly she remembers each and

every one of the children.

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The Lord Jesus taught: “A new commandment I give unto you: Love one another, as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples.”

3

1 We look at the pictures of the last two lessons with the children. The children recount what has particularly impressed them. We revise the following points once more:

- The Lord Jesus purges the temple

The Lord Jesus exerts himself in seeing to it that his Father’s house is kept holy and pure. Today’s temple is our heart. We want to keep it pure and holy.

- Jesus washes the disciples’ feet

In great humility and love the Lord Jesus washes his disciples’ feet. He serves each one as if he were their servant and not their master.

This humble attitude and ministering love is an example to us.

2 Before the Lord Jesus returned to his heavenly Father, he gave his disciples a new and important commandment. We read and discuss with the children the text in their book. (Love unites all the children of God. This love shows others that we are children of God.)

3 We discuss the photographs. They show that children, too, can love, help and bring comfort:

- The sad ones: comfort / show that one understands / bring a little happiness and joy ...
- The sick: visit, bring joy ...
- The aged: listen attentively, relate something / do their shopping / perform a small task which has become difficult for them, like picking something up or handing them their stick ... / read something aloud to them if they can no longer see well ...
- Parents: bring joy, be trustworthy and obedient / help at home with the chores / look after one’s little sister or brother ...
- In church: sing in the children’s choir or play in the children’s orchestra / offer ...
- Friends: take time to listen to their worries / share their happiness / help ...

The children can relate their own experiences, which we supplement with the examples mentioned.

4 The children consider what they can do to make someone happy.