

## Sermon: Obvious & Undeniable

**Text: John 13:34-35**

### Discussion Questions:

This might seem like an odd launching point for our study today—but let's begin by discussing:

- **What are the differences between a robot and a human being?**
  - What can robots do that humans can't?
  - What can humans do that robots can't?

I think we would all agree that the technology involved in the building of robots has increased exponentially in our lifetime. I can remember my childhood, watching TV shows such as "The Jetson's" and "Lost in Space." (OK—I know this totally dates me!) Both of these shows tried to imagine a far-distant future, where robots were a natural part of every-day life (one in cartoon form, the other with an actual crudely-functioning robot). And while we're not yet inhabiting distant planets (which is the case in both of these shows), we ARE living in a time where computer-generated robotics are a part of our every-day lives.

But no matter how PRECISE and PRODUCTIVE computer-generated robotics might be, there will ALWAYS be a missing piece—the human heart. The spark of life. A heart of flesh. Emotions and feelings. The capacity to care, and be generous, and exude passion, and LOVE.

Throughout Scripture, love is singled out as the highest of all emotions and actions. It's the greatest of all things.

- Read or quote **John 3:16**. What role does love play in this verse? What does love CAUSE God do?
- Read **Matthew 22:36-40**. What role does love play in these two commands? What does it actually look like to love God with all your heart, soul and mind? How do we actually go about loving our neighbor as we love ourselves?

### Examination:

- Read **John 13:31-35**:
  - Judas has just left the upper room—off to find the Jewish leaders in betrayal of Jesus. It's fascinating that as soon as Judas leaves (setting off the fall of dominoes that will take Jesus to the cross), Jesus declares: "NOW the Son of Man is glorified." Why do you think Jesus waits until this moment, in the wake of Judas' departure, to say this?
  - What do you make of verse 32: "If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once." What do you think it means for Jesus to "be glorified in himself"? And why the reference to this happening "at once"?
  - Think for a minute about Jesus' use of the term "My children." Jesus is only 33 years-old. Some of the disciples could well have been twice his age. Why do you think Jesus calls His disciples "children"? What does this say to you?

- When He states that He will be going to a place that the disciples can't go, Jesus is obviously referring to the fact that He will be returning back to heaven. Do you think Jesus was looking forward to returning to heaven? What does this say to us about how we, as followers of Jesus, should view death?
  - For three years, Jesus has been preparing His disciples to carry-on following His return to heaven. He's leaving them with the task of taking the Gospel to the very ends of the earth. From an observer's perspective looking in on this beleaguered group of eleven men huddled in an upper room—is this the group of people you would imagine who would go out and change the world?
  - This moment in time is crucial—Jesus is leaving His disciples with parting words. He's summing things up, and giving final marching orders. What, as we see in verses 34-35, are those final marching orders?
  - Why is love the bottom line? Why is love the sum of it all? What manner of love were they to imitate? WHO were they to love? Why is loving “one another” so important? Why is LOVE the evidence of discipleship?
  - Before we leave our discussion of this text—let's get crystal clear on WHO Jesus is commanding us to love. When Jesus says “one another”—is He referring to all other human beings alive on earth? It sure doesn't appear that way. Judas has now left the room—and Jesus is talking directly to the eleven. The “one another” almost certainly implies the other disciples in the room. Would you agree?
- Read **1 Corinthians 13:1-8a**:
    - Imagine, for a moment, a person who is supremely eloquent and well-spoken—possessing even the capacity to speak in the tongues of angels. This person is wise, perceptive, and knowledgeable beyond human capacity—able even to see the future. And they have supernatural power to accomplish supernatural things. Moreover, this person is world-renown for their humanitarian efforts, willing to suffer greatly in their efforts to help the poor and suffering around the globe...
      - How would a person such as this be viewed in the eyes of the world?
      - What kind of power and influence might they have?
    - Is it possible that a person such as this would be motivated by something other than love? If not love, what might be their motivation?
    - Jesus told us **in John 13:34-35** that, as His disciples, we are to love one another. In other words, we are to love other disciples—people we attend church with. In fact, loving one another (fellow Christ-followers) is THE PRIMARY mark of a disciple: “By THIS everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”
      - Is it possible to love other Christ-followers if you don't even know who they are?
      - Is it possible to love other Christ-followers if you attend church once...maybe twice a month...and come and go without getting to know anyone?
      - What does this say about our current cultural view of Christianity?
      - What does this say about the importance of getting into an L3 Group?

### Application:

Take some time this week to truly consider the implications of Jesus' words. Take some serious inventory of your life. Open your heart to connecting with fellow believers on a deeper level.