

Week of April 29-May 5

NEW?

Scripture Reading: Read John chapter 13

Have you noticed that you can't buy a "used" car anymore or at the very least it's difficult to do so? Why? Oh, it's not primarily because of the "Cash for Clunkers" program that eliminated many of the older inefficient vehicles several years ago. Nope, it's because many dealerships no longer sell "used" cars. Huh? "I see used cars all the time at dealerships throughout the area. What do you mean they don't sell used cars?" Really? Most of the dealerships I see now sell "preowned" vehicles. Somewhere, someone determined that "used" carries a negative connotation. If it's used, it must be run-down, old, and rusty. "Preowned" seems more positive to many people and, so, with a flick of a pen, we move from "used" cars to "preowned" vehicles with the hope that sales will go up!

My dad used to say, "Son, if it walks like a duck, swims like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's...a duck." The same is true with "preowned" vehicles. You can call them preowned if it makes you feel better, but, bottom line, they're still used cars.

In today's chapter reading, we head to the upper room with Jesus for his final meal with his disciples prior to his arrest and crucifixion. We witness him wash his disciples' feet and teach them a lesson on humility. We see him celebrate the Passover and reinterpret it in light of his death. We hear him give the disciples a new command: "Love one another."

Wait a minute! A "new" command? What's so "new" about "love one another." That command has been around since the time of Moses in the wilderness when God gave his people his laws at Sinai. In Leviticus 19:18, Israel was commanded to, "love your neighbor as yourself."

In addition, just days earlier, when Jesus was confronted by the religious teachers about his interpretation of the greatest commandment, he had answered that to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength was the greatest commandment. The second greatest was to love our neighbor as ourselves.

So, is Jesus really giving a "new" command or is it a "used" (excuse me, "preowned") command? If we keep reading in John 13:34, we discover that this command is, indeed, radically new, for Jesus goes behind "love your neighbor as yourself" to love one another "as I have loved you." Whoa! Love as Jesus loved us? He loved me enough to die on the cross for me. In fact, the apostle Paul says that God demonstrated his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). Love like that? Yes! There's nothing "used" about it. It's brand new!

Action Step: Read Ephesians 5:1-2 in light of today's devotional. Reflect on areas in your life where such love has not yet been manifested.

Prayer Focus: That the Lord would teach you to love as he loves you.

Take-away: *To love others as Jesus loved us is not a "preowned" command. It's brand new!*