**“Can We Love One Another? 2016 04 24**

**John 13:31-35 Pr. Hitoshi Adachi**

Note: No Edit was made… I apologize this rough English.

May Grace and Peace of Jesus Christ be poured into the hearts of people who listen to this message!

When I was in the first grade, I remember one mysterious memory. I had about 40 classmates.  I was one of boys who could be good friends with everybody.  .

However, there was one classmate whom I did not want to play with. One Sunday afternoon, I was surprised that Tomita and his mother came to our house to play with me. My mother called me that “Katuo and his mother arrived at the door.”

At that time, my grandmother was with us and she was the faithful Russian Orthodox Christian grandmother. I shared with her my honest feeling that I did not want to play with him, but she smiled at me and just said to me “Play with him,” without any accusation.  I understand that my thought was wrong and followed what she said.. And I could play with him outside.

Let’s dive in to the Gospel text today.  After Judas went out the upper room, Jesus gave a new commandment to the 11 disciples. “Love one another.” Judas was the one who betrayed Jesus Christ by letting Roman soldiers know where Jesus was, and instead he received the money.

Other disciples left him when noticed that Jesus would be crucified. The Peter, who said Jesus was the Messiah, denied him three times.

The Jewish leaders could not accept that Jesus was God and took advantage of Roman Empires to let him be crucified. The crowd shouted “Crucified him.”  Jesus died on Friday.

However he was resurrected on Sunday. Jesus appeared and did not accuse the disciples at all but breathed the Holy Spirit. At the time he was crucified, Jesus accepted what they were doing and prayed his Father, “Please forgive them since they did not know what they were doing”.

Even for Judas, he did not accuse him and ordered him to continue doing what he was planning to do.

Jesus is forgiving people everywhere, even though those people were trying to kill him, and Jesus would suffer. Jesus loves people consistently and unconditionally. His love is to love the most unlovable person.

In the night before Jesus was crucified, Jesus was telling the future leaders of the church, “I will give you a new commandment, love one another.” And he said, “If you love one another, all people will recognize that you are the disciples of mine.” As you know, by then, followers of Jesus were saying each other that who would be the greatest…

When we look around, in Christian church bodies, or congregation levels, it is true that we are still seeing those discussions who is the greatest or whose understanding is the greatest.  As a result, a part of the body of Christ is severely injured. However, we should remember that God is forgiving people who injure the church.

Jesus talked about the most important commandment, “love your neighbors as yourselves.” However, here in the today’s Gospel, Jesus gave the new commandment, “Love one another.” I believe it is important that love is not just one way direction. You’d need to be a being, who would be loved by people did not like you or kill you.

You might say, “Since I am not God, I cannot do such a thing.”  Is that true? I think it is possible. To be a Christian is to become an instrument of God, God’s love. To be a Christian is to receive God’s unconditional love.

According to St. Paul, “you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you.” Christian is a dwelling place of God, God’s love. Therefore, you are to love one another and people seeing you may realize that they are receiving God’s love also. Amen.