

Love in a time of soundbites

By [Brian Bantum](#)

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I have found myself dreading Facebook lately. With the general election beginning to churn, the competing posts are out: "Evidence of Obama's socialist conspiracy!" "Republicans plan to inspect every woman's womb!" Some are rather scary while others I quietly cheer; still others simply draw me into grief over how little Jesus seems apparent in any of it.

But these are my friends. Or at the very least my "friends"--they are a constellation of people who have had or presently constitute parts of my life, and most of them are Christian. But how do I love in the midst of such anger? Even more, how do I not resent Christ's command to me to love?

As I read this week's Gospel I am convicted that perhaps I know less about love than I thought. I remember early in my marriage, when my wife made earnest requests for me to initiate cleaning and caring for the house, rather than simply responding to her commands. I realized that there is always some deeper hope behind such requests. If I loved my wife, I would listen. If I truly loved my wife, I would obey.

What would it mean for Christians to obey one another in such a highly politicized space? What would it mean for us to love one another? Is it possible to do this without a command and without obedience to Christ, or one another?

And what would it mean for us to be so obedient to Christ's love that we take seriously the people at the heart of others' concerns? The imprisoned? The undocumented? The unborn?