

LIVING THE RESURRECTION

APRIL - MAY 2021

HOME GROUP & DEVOTIONAL MATERIAL

“We are Yours – Similo Sanqela – 16.5.2021

Sermon link: Listen on #SoundCloud
<https://soundcloud.com/gracepointsa/we-are-yours-by-similo-sanqela>

Scripture : John 17:6-19

Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God’s word to you.

Observation

Chapter 17 of John’s Gospel contains the longest prayer in the whole of the New Testament. It is Jesus’ own prayer – for Himself, His apostles and His followers for all time. His words contain His own consecration as the supreme sacrifice for humanity; His prayer for all people – and His prayer for unity. Within the following verses we witness the oneness of Christ and the Father through this intimate conversation.



Spend some time in worship.
“Our Father”(Click on the video)

In this passage Jesus says He has revealed the name of God to His followers. In those days the name of God was so sacred it was only spoken by the High Priest when he was in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. Jesus removes this barrier when He says He has told His followers God’s name which can be spoken from then on by anyone who follows Christ. A person’s name in the Old Testament described the whole character of that person as far as anyone could know them and so Jesus also declares in these words that He has revealed God’s true nature to His followers. As a result of knowing His name, those who follow Christ know they can trust God. (Psalm 20:7).

Jesus continues praying aloud so that His disciples could hear, record and pass on His words to those who were to come. This is as much a prayer for 21st century believers as for those seated around the table on that night. Jesus says that the Father has given Him each disciple and through them Jesus Himself has been glorified. Each one has been commissioned to the task Jesus has given him or her. He sends them out into the world to lead people back to God, just as the Father has sent Jesus out. Jesus offers His disciples joy and gives them a warning – that they would be hated by those who do not respond to their invitation to follow Christ. Jesus then makes the greatest claim He ever made. All that He has belongs to the Father, and all that the Father has belongs to Jesus. In this way Jesus emphasises His oneness with God.

Jesus did not pray that His disciples should escape from the world but that they would be victorious in the world. Christ-followers are to live in the 'rough and tumble' (Barclay) of the world. Their faith is the means to equip them to live life well and to face and conquer the troubles and challenges that occur in their lives.

Jesus then prays for unity amongst His disciples. Anywhere where conflict, exclusivity, or division occurs is a place where Jesus' prayer is hindered. It is impossible to preach the Gospel where there is disagreement or competition within the Church of Christ.

He goes on to pray for the Father's protection over those who follow Him; that those who do follow may be different to those who do not respond to the call to follow; He asserts that each one is called for a specific task and equipped by the Father with the qualities required to carry that task out. God has chosen each one of those who respond to His call to love and obey Him and to lead others to do the same. In doing so He has equipped people down the ages to fulfil this task.

Icebreaker:

When and where have you experienced people of different denominations or cultures; ages or nationalities coming together and celebrating some event in harmony and unity? How did that event make you feel?

Application

- How do you deal with conflict or disagreement about anything, whether mild or passionate?
- How does your response vary (if at all) when the disagreement or conflict is in regard to issues of faith?
- Where have you seen different denominations, or even churches, working together in the name of Jesus Christ for the good of others?
- What is more important to you – to stick to the 'rules' of your particular church denomination, or to seek reconciliation with other Christ-followers in response to Jesus' prayer that you may worship together? Why do you respond in this way? Consider the following if you have trouble thinking of such instances:
 - Infant or adult baptism
 - The means of baptism
 - The number of sacraments considered holy by different denominations
 - The need for confession in the presence of a priest
 - The belief around purgatory, limbo etc.
 - The need to speak in tongues to be certain a person is born again.

(Do not discuss all of these. They are just suggestions for discussion if you need them.)

- What can you, as an individual or as a group, do to reconcile differences in faith, doctrine or principles with those who do not believe in the same way as you do?
- Pause for a moment and ask Jesus what He is saying to you about any action He would like you to take. Share any response with the group.
- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

Prayer

Pray for one another in regard to the issues that have been raised during your discussion time, and in regard to other needs of the group. Read Jesus' prayer aloud together, as a prayer.

Service

During this coming week read John 17:6-19 every day, with an emphasis on verse 11. Be aware of situations where there is disunity or disagreement and pray Jesus' prayer for oneness over that situation. What results do you see? Be ready to share any responses with the group next week.

Bibliography

Barclay, William. The Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of John Volume 2 chapters 8-21 The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh. 1981

Coffman, James Burton. "Commentary on John 17". "Coffman Commentaries on the Bible". <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/bcc/john-17.html>. Abilene Christian University Press, Abilene, Texas, USA. 1983-1999.