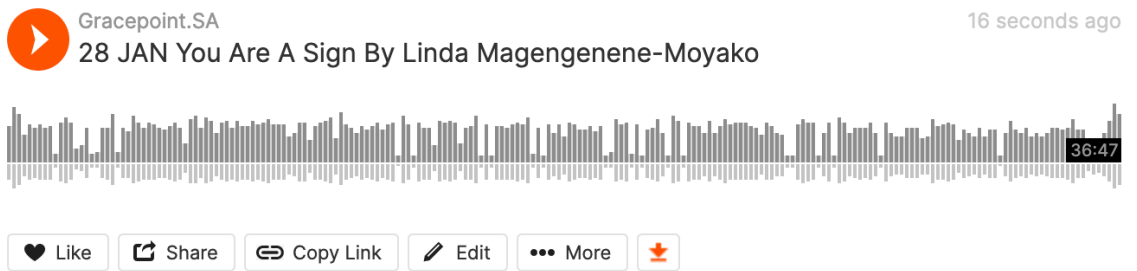




MENTAL HEALTH, GOD & GRACE - JANUARY 2024

"You are a Sign" - Linda Magengenene-Moyake - 28.1.2024



Scripture

John 7:37-38

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.

NB: You will need a sheet of paper and a pen/pencil for each person present.

Observation

This event took place on the last day of the eight-day long Feast of Tabernacles. For the first seven days of the feast water had been carried from the Pool of Siloam in a golden pitcher and was poured out at the altar of the temple to remind people of the time when the water God provided in the wilderness saved them from dying of thirst. It seems that on this, the eighth day, no water was poured out, but prayers for water were offered to remind the people of their arrival in the Promised Land. This day was not actually part of the feast. People had been living in tabernacles (make-shift structures to remind them of their time in the wilderness) and now that came to an end. It was the final day of the final feast of the year.



Spend some time in worship.

It was also the last feast Jesus would celebrate in Jerusalem and the last time He would speak to many of the people before His crucifixion. His words were important for several reasons. He raised His voice so as many people as possible could hear what He said; He pronounced them on the last day of Tabernacles, after the water ceremonies of the previous seven days; and He spoke whilst standing in the temple courts, right outside the temple itself.

Developing the Old Testament theme of God providing water for anyone who came to Him, Jesus now invites people to come to Him to satisfy their spiritual thirst. His invitation was not limited to Jews only. It was extended to anyone who is thirsty – who is aware of an emptiness within themselves.

His claim to satisfy their thirst was made even more impressive by the fact that no water was poured on the eighth day. Jesus explained that the person who would drink from Him was one who put their faith in Him, trusting and relying on Him for all eternity. Jesus promised such a believer an uninterrupted stream of living water – life and abundance – flowing from their inmost being. They would become channels of His grace.

Whilst John does not mention specific Old Testament scriptures, prophecies such as those contained in Zechariah 13:1 and 14:8 as well as Isaiah 44:3 and 55:1 all speak of the water God would make available for His thirsty people.

Icebreaker:

What is the most amusing sign you have seen on your travels? Why did it make you laugh?

Application

- What, in your opinion, identifies you as a Christ-follower to the world?
- Take one of the sheets of paper and write your name on the top. Spend a few moments in silent prayer asking for God's discernment. In silence, hand the paper to the person on your left. Each one is to write what they think the sign would be for the person whose name is at the top of the sheet in their role as a Christ-follower. Fold the paper in such a way that what you have written is not visible to anyone else. Then hand them on to the left again and repeat the exercise. Do this until everyone has had a chance to write each person's sign and you have your own paper back. *Do not open them yet.*
- How do you feel about having significance in the world?
- In a few words describe God's personal will for your life? How are you called to be a channel of God's grace to others? How do you live out this calling?
- What would you like to be remembered for?
- Open up your sheet of paper. Spend a few moments in silence as you read what people have written. What does this mean to you? How do other people's answers compare with your own? What is God saying to you through His people today?
- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

Prayer

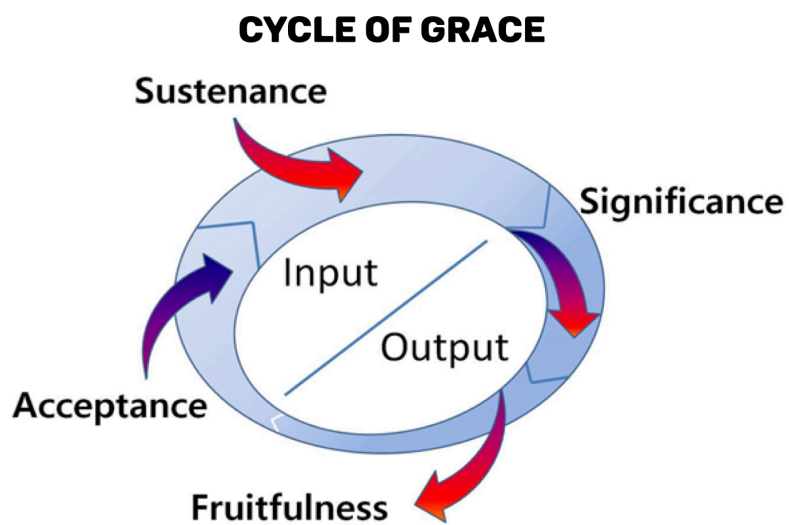
Pray for one another in regard to the issues that have been raised during your discussion time, and in regard to other needs of the group.

Service

How can you be a sign of God's grace to your world this week? Be prepared to share with the group next week as to what you did that was a sign of His presence in your life.

If possible watch the video clip for week 3 this week and see the diagram*:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLtQZjRXFUwyEeNibVB-GFiyISDow0U1mA>



***Week 3: Significance**

This is the first output dimension of the Cycle of Grace. It looks at what Jesus' life signified. So often we focus on producing results but we need to consider what our lives reflect and ask ourselves what sign we are. We are to signify God's love in the world – and Jesus does this through His 'I am' sayings:

I am the bread of life	John 6:35
I am the light of the world	John 8:12
I am the gate	John 10:7
I am the good shepherd	John 10:11
I am the resurrection and the life	John 11:25
I am the way, the truth and the life	John 14:6
I am the true vine	John 15:1

We want our lives to signify something so we need to identify what words we would use to describe our own unique way to be in the world. Ministry is not only what we do but also who we are. People will remember this. The way we are is a gift of grace from God to the world. Each one has a song to sing and a special way of ministering to the world.

Bibliography

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/john-7/>

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLtQZjRXFUwyEeNibVB-GFiyISDow0U1mA>