

Read through the Bible



John Week 5



A Ministry of the Live Love Nation

Monday, March Twenty-Second

Welcome to Week Five of our six-week journey through the book of John! Like His disciples, you can probably sense that the end of the road is coming for Jesus in His journey to the cross. This week, we will be reading through some of Jesus' final thoughts that He gives to His disciples before He is arrested. As you read these words of comfort and promise, may your time spent in the Bible bring you thankfulness to God for His infinite wisdom. - Pastor Chris

Read: John 14:5-14

Reflect: Use the passage in John to work through these questions

- Thomas asks a seemingly astute question – “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” (v. 5). How does Jesus respond? (see verse 6)

Is Jesus *really* the only way to the Father? Don’t *all* paths and “faith journeys” lead to God? Jesus is clear on this issue – “No one comes to the Father *except* through me” (v. 6). While this may seem “exclusive” to our current culture, we must remember in our witness to others that salvation through Jesus is completely inclusive. All who believe in Him will be saved (see John 3:16-18).

- Jesus tells His disciples that if they know Him, they know the Father as well. What is He proclaiming about Himself in regard to His deity (i.e. His divine status)? (see verses 7-11)

The disciples were still trying to figure out what Jesus had made clear to them – He is God. He is not simply a human prophet nor a Greek demi-god like Hercules. Philip, wanting proof, asks Jesus to show them the Father. Jesus’ response demonstrates that He is that proof – He and the Father are One (v. 7).

Respond: Apply what you’ve learned in prayer and action

In light of this passage, how might you respond to someone who finds Christianity to be “exclusive” in terms of salvation?

Tuesday, March Twenty-Third

“Simba, let me tell you something my father told me. Look at the stars. The great kings of the past look down on us from those stars.” “Really?” “Yes. So, whenever you feel alone, just remember that those kings will always be there to guide you. And so will I.” This exchange from Disney’s *The Lion King* highlights what people and cultures have tried to answer over the centuries – what happens to those who leave us? Were they just a part of our story, or do they become a meaningful part of who we are? While many of these explanations are often convoluted and muddled, Jesus gives a clear explanation in our passage today of Who would be sent to His followers once He leaves them to return to the Father.

Read: John 14:15-31

Reflect: Use the passage in John to work through these questions

- Who does Jesus say He will leave with His followers when He goes? (see verses 16-17)
- What does the Holy Spirit do in the lives of Jesus’ followers? (see verse 26)

It’s often difficult when people we look to for authority and direction leave us. Teachers retire. Pastors take calls elsewhere. Coaches make a career change. You can imagine how Jesus’ disciples must have felt when He told them He would be leaving them soon. But He provides them reassurance with the Holy Spirit – a “Counselor” who would be with them “forever,” and who would “teach” and “remind” them of Jesus’ words (vv. 16 and 26). Jesus assured them they would not continue their journey alone.

- How does Jesus identify those who love Him? How does He respond to those who love Him? (see verse 21)

Respond: Apply what you’ve learned in prayer and action

In light of verse 21, would you say that you love Jesus according to the criteria He has laid out? Spend some time in prayer on this.

Wednesday, March Twenty-Fourth

Post-pandemic, a friend invites you over to her Gulfport bungalow for dinner. After the meal, she takes you outside and shows you all of the plants and trees in her garden. She then points to a big, tall tree in the middle of the garden and asks you if you know what kind of tree it is. As you look at it, you notice the tree has rotted through, there are no leaves, and many of the branches have fallen off. As a result, you find yourself unable to answer her question. But suppose you looked up at the tree, and it was filled with apples and bright green leaves. Right away, you’d be able to identify the tree as an apple tree because of its fruit. In today’s passage, Jesus tells His disciples how a person can identify one of His followers.

Read: John 15:1-17

Reflect: Use the passage in John to work through these questions

- How does a branch bear fruit? What happens to branches that do not bear fruit? (see verses 4-6)
- How does a person “show” oneself to be Jesus’ disciple? (see verse 8)

Jesus makes it clear to His disciples that His followers don’t just say they are followers. They show it through their actions. Because we are in Christ (the true vine) and we are the branches, we cannot bear fruit apart from Him. When we Live Love with others, we do so with the strength, direction, and compassion of Jesus.

- Who are Jesus’ followers to love and what does that love practically look like? (see verses 12-14)
- What are the old and new identities of Jesus’ followers? (see verse 15)

What a joy it is that Jesus calls those who remain in Him friends!

Respond: Apply what you’ve learned in prayer and action

Take some time to consider if it is evident to others by your fruit that you are Jesus’ disciple. How can you ‘remain’ in Jesus?

Thursday, March Twenty-Fifth

Fan base biases are everywhere. “Red Sox fans are all so rude!” “Lakers fans are always so obnoxious!” “Poor Browns fans...” Oftentimes, we ascribe traits and feelings towards fan bases because of who they are associated with. If your team keeps getting pummeled by an opposing team, you may start to associate all of their fans in a negative fashion. If you had a bad experience with an opposing fan, you may start to assume all of that team’s fans are like that. In our passage today, Jesus reminds His disciples that people will ascribe traits and feelings towards them because of who they are associated with.

Read: John 15:18-27

Reflect: Use the passage in John to work through these questions

- Why should followers of Jesus expect persecution? (see verses 18 and 21)

Jesus reminds His disciples that there is a great cost to following Him. Because they “do not belong to the world,” the world will be a difficult place to carry on Jesus’ message (v. 19). In this sense, He is ensuring they are ready to do what He has called them to do.

- Why does Jesus say people have no excuse for their sin? (see verses 22-24)
- Who else is to testify about Jesus besides the Holy Spirit? (see verses 26-27)

In verse 27, Jesus again lays out the groundwork for His Great Commission (see Matthew 28:18-20). His disciples are not just to take in what they have learned from Jesus; they are to testify about Him to others. In doing so, He gives them an important responsibility to carry out once He has left them.

Respond: Apply what you’ve learned in prayer and action

Take some time to go to God in prayer and thank Him for sending His Counselor to guide you through the persecution you face.

Friday, March Twenty-Sixth

If you’ve ever been to Sawgrass Lake Park to enjoy its nature and wildlife, you’ve probably noticed a few well-placed signs warning, “BEWARE: ALLIGATORS IN AREA.” While you may not scream or run at the sight of the sign, you’ll probably find yourself walking more cautiously in that area because of it. While we can’t always foresee the dangers that will cross our paths, signs like these help us to prepare for potential encounters with those dangers. In our passage today, Jesus warns His disciples of the dangers they will face once He is gone.

Read: John 16:1-16

Reflect: Use the passage in John to work through these questions

- Why does Jesus warn His disciples about the hardships they will face? (see verses 1-4)

Imagine what it must have been like to walk alongside Jesus for approximately three years. You would have seen Him heal people of their illnesses. You would have witnessed Him meet peoples’ needs in unimaginable ways. You would have heard Him speak as One with ultimate authority from above. In many regards, you would have thoroughly enjoyed your time with Him. But imagine how you might feel if Jesus told you one day that not only was He going to leave you, but that you would face threats and hardships as a result. Would you still enjoy being a disciple of Jesus? Would you still follow this Man? How would you react now knowing that hardship and adversity await you?

- In what three ways will the Counselor convict the world of its guilt? (see verses 7-11)
- What might Jesus be referring to in verse 16?

Respond: Apply what you’ve learned in prayer and action

Take a moment to consider how you typically react to hardships in your life. Who or what do you turn to during those times?

Saturday, March Twenty- Seventh

In January of 2017, with just a few seconds left to go in the College Football National Championship game, the Clemson Tigers quarterback lofted the ball into the end zone for the game-winning touchdown. Half of the stadium erupted in cheers and chants. Watching their reactions on TV indicated they were experiencing pure joy. At the same moment, half of the stadium filled with faithful fans of the Alabama Crimson Tide looked completely depressed and dejected. Isn't it interesting how a moment of joy for some can also be a moment of sorrow for others? In today's passage, Jesus informs His disciples that while they will grieve His departure, the world will rejoice in it. But He also encourages them to fear not, for their grief will turn to joy when He returns.

Read: John 16:17-33

Reflect: Use the passage in John to work through these questions

- Based on the disciples' questions and Jesus' response, what does Jesus mean when He says He will see them in a little while? (see verses 17-20)
- Why does Jesus say His disciples should not fear persecution after He is gone? (see verses 20-24 and 32-33)
- What does Jesus predict will happen to His disciples? (see verses 31-33)

Following Jesus is no easy task. It requires patience, perseverance, and prayer. Some people wrongly assume that when they become a Christian, life will be easy for them and all of their problems will fade away. But as Jesus points out to His disciples, we will face hardship in this world. The good news, though, is that we can take heart because Jesus has overcome this broken world for us! (v. 33)

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

How does the news that Jesus has overcome the world change how you view your current struggles and hardships?

Sunday, March Twenty- Eighth

In the days following September 11th, 2001, churches all around the country opened their doors to both regulars and strangers who came in to corporately pray to God. People prayed for personal protection from the threats our nation faced. They prayed for their family members, particularly those living in New York City at the time. Many also prayed for people all over the world who were suffering in various ways and for various reasons. All in all, the days following September 11th strikingly illustrated God's people turning to Him in prayer during one of our nation's darkest moments. In today's passage, Jesus turns to the Father in prayer as He faces the reality of His darkest moment to come.

Read: John 17:1-26

Reflect: Use the passage in John to work through these questions

- How does Jesus define eternal life? (see verse 3)

While we don't know all the details of what eternal life will entail, Jesus tells us in this passage that we will know the one true God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He reminds His disciples and us that we don't worship a distant God who cares little for His creation. Instead, we worship a God who intimately and graciously cares for us. He wants to know us, and He promises that we will know Him.

- In this passage, Jesus prays for His disciples. What does He pray for? (see verses 11, 15, and 17)
- Did you know Jesus prayed for you? (see verses 20-21)

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Take some time to go to God in prayer and ask Him to prepare your heart for the coming week (what we call Holy Week). Thank Him for sending His Son who prays for us and advocates for us.

Questions? Comments? Contact Pastor Chris at chris.futch@oursaviorfl.org or (727) 531-2761.