



## **SCRIPTURE + SHARED**

**Week 4 – John 16:25-17:19**

### **Day 1 – John 16:25-33**

*<sup>25</sup>“I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures, but will tell you plainly of the Father. <sup>26</sup>On that day you will ask in my name. I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; <sup>27</sup>for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.*

*<sup>28</sup>I came from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and am going to the Father.” <sup>29</sup>His disciples said, “Yes, now you are speaking plainly, not in any figure of speech! <sup>30</sup>Now we know that you know all things, and do not need to have anyone question you; by this we believe that you came from God.” <sup>31</sup>Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? <sup>32</sup>The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. <sup>33</sup>I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!”*

#### **Understanding the Passage:**

Throughout Jesus’ ministry, Jesus spoke in parables, proverbs, and sometimes seemingly in riddles to help his listeners understand the things that might otherwise be incomprehensible when it comes to the Kingdom of God. Jesus would invite “those who have ears to hear let them hear him.” At times this brought clarity to the sinner, while other times further confusion for the self-righteous or hard-hearted. Jesus is describing things and concepts that are not of this world but of eternity. Therefore it is difficult for us to grasp without Jesus relating to us on our own simpler terms. But this need for metaphors and figures of speech will not last much longer because one day soon we will see plainly what we have up until this point only captured glimpses of “*through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known*” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Here, Jesus is not simply promising to use clearer speech with his disciples, but to reveal the Father to them in his death, resurrection, and ascension. When the disciples hear this, they rejoice and, in their boldness, testify to their belief in Jesus. Jesus promptly challenges their convictions by predicting their coming betrayal when Jesus is arrested.

In an act of love, Jesus does not condemn them for their short-lived belief but rather assures them ahead of time that “even though you will fall away from me I will not be alone.” This is a comforting reminder to us that moments of clarity or belief are not undone by subsequent falls from grace or crises of faith. When we face doubts or persecutions, we are reminded that God is in charge and we can rest in his grace.

### Questions for Discussion and Reflection:

1. Have you ever struggled with a scripture that you wished was clearer in its meaning? What are some things that could contribute to its clarity?
2. When was a time in your life that you had clarity in your faith or a moment of boldness in your beliefs?
3. Is there an area of your faith in God about which you currently have doubts? Bring that into your conversation with God today.

### Day 2 – John 17:1-5

*<sup>1</sup>After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, <sup>2</sup>since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. <sup>3</sup>And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. <sup>4</sup>I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. <sup>5</sup>So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.*

#### Understanding the Passage:

Jesus’ prayer in John 17 is the final scene of the farewell discourse with his disciples. Jesus’ prayer to the Father is not the last rights or final wishes of a soon-to-be-dying man, but rather a declaration of glory for the events that are about to occur. Nothing that has transpired to bring Jesus and the disciples to this point has happened outside of the work and purpose of Jesus Christ. The Father has given the Son authority to grant eternal life to all who believe in him, and in the glorifying of Jesus, he will in turn glorify the Father by completing the salvific work that he was sent here to do.

This is a beautiful scene where the disciples, and the reader, are essentially invited to listen in on the conversation between God the Father and God the Son. This prayer establishes that the humanity of Jesus has been given power and authority from the Father who sent him, and that the finishing of that work is now at hand. John 17:5 reveals to us that Jesus’ time on earth is not all that makes up his existence; the humanity of Jesus may be confined to his time on earth, but the God-ness of Jesus was there with the Creator in the beginning before the world existed as the Word of God (John 1:1).

### Questions for Discussion and Reflection:

1. Do you ever find it difficult to understand the nature of God as three persons and yet one substance (God)?
2. Why is it important that Jesus was both God and human?
3. In your prayer time today ask God to give you a deeper understanding of God’s love and purpose for your life.

### Day 3 – John 17:6-10

*<sup>6</sup>“I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. <sup>7</sup>Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; <sup>8</sup>for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. <sup>9</sup>I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. <sup>10</sup>All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.*

#### Understanding the Passage:

This passage is a continuation of the prayer that we read yesterday and further solidifies Jesus’ coming glorification through his life, death, and resurrection. Jesus’ words about the relationship between himself and the Father now mirror the relationship between the Father and the disciples. “*For the words you gave me I have given to them and they have received them and know the truth and have believed.*” (verse 8). Those to whom the Father gave to Jesus, now Jesus is giving back to the Father.

In the first verse that we read today, we see Jesus referring to “those who you gave me from the world,” implying that it is God who seeks us first and not the other way around. This is important for us to remember as followers of Jesus. Through Jesus’ salvific work, God has been pursuing us even before we were capable of knowing God. We did not earn God’s love, God loves us and offers us grace from our sins even before we recognize them as sins. That grace extends beyond mere knowledge of our sinfulness, it inclines us towards a heart of repentance and then onto a continual sanctification and holiness as we grow to be more like Christ.

When we baptize infants in the Methodist Church, we are not only agreeing as a community to be in covenant with each other to raise up that child in the Lord, we are also pointing towards the prevenient grace that God is already working in the life of that child. John Wesley once wrote, “*God works in our lives so that we can work with God, God works in our lives so that we should work with God.*” We should always remember that it is because of Jesus and God’s pursuit of us that we can be reunited with the creator, and then actively participate in the work that God is doing in us and in this world.

#### **Questions for Discussion and Reflection:**

1. How does it feel to imagine that God wanted you before you even knew God was there?
2. Can you look back in your life and identify moments to which you would point as God pursuing you?
3. How would you answer the question: “how have you grown in your relationship with Jesus over this past year?”

#### **Day 4 – John 17:11-13**

*<sup>11</sup>And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. <sup>12</sup>While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. <sup>13</sup>But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves.*

#### **Understanding the Passage:**

This portion of Jesus’ prayer is touching because we see the depth of love that Jesus has for his disciples. Jesus knows that he is about to leave them, and while that’s good news for them because of the coming Holy Spirit, Jesus takes time to ask the Father to protect them after he leaves. The reader can almost sense a touch of sadness in Jesus’ voice as he is about to leave his friends behind. Similar to how a parent who is leaving her child in the care of another for an extended period of time would, regardless of how capable that person was, lovingly ask that they take good care of what is most precious to them. Jesus has not only instructed those whom God has given him, he has loved and protected them.

I once heard a mentor of mine say that she was praying for someone to come into her children’s life and show them the love of Jesus in a meaningful way. She prayed this prayer because, as she put it, her children were no longer willing to listen to her about Jesus once they had gotten to a certain age. Having children myself, I thought about how difficult of a realization that must be for a parent. The idea that my children may enter a time when everything dad says is challenged by their adolescence is a scary thing for a parent and pastor. I admire the faith this person had to trust that God loved her children and would fill in the gaps of their spiritual development when she simply could not. It is a comfort to me to know that even though my children will leave their parents one day and shape their own journeys of faith. I can trust that the same God who positioned people in my life to reveal Jesus to me, will also pursue the people I love as well.

### Questions for Discussion and Reflection:

1. Have you ever trusted anyone else with someone or something that you cherish?
2. Can you trust God with someone or something that you cherish this week?
3. What would it look like for you to turn over something to God that you have been hanging onto? What hesitations do you have in letting go?

### Day 5 – John 17:14-19

*<sup>14</sup>I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. <sup>15</sup>I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup>They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.*

*<sup>17</sup>Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup>As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup>And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.*

### Understanding the Passage:

The world is described by Jesus in today's passage as being in opposition to God's word, creating a sharp distinction between the things of God and the things that belong to the world. Because Jesus is from the Father, the world has rejected him. Now that the disciples have God's word, they too shall be rejected by those who hate God. When Jesus asks the Father to "sanctify them in the truth," he is asking them to be set apart for the work of God's ministry. Jesus is not asking the Father to simply remove the disciples from a world that hates them, but to use them in the transformative and salvific work that God is enacting on the world. Jesus knows that his beloved disciples will be hated and persecuted for his name's sake, but instead of leaving a world that they no longer belong to, Jesus asks for them to be set apart and protected from the evil one so that they can join in the work that God is doing.

Similarly, as followers of Jesus we should not simply hope to escape the world but join in the work that God is already doing to redeem the world around us. Some have viewed salvation like escaping a house that is burning down and, in the process, trying to get as many people to come with you out of the doomed house as possible. Typically, the Wesleyan tradition sees salvation more like God is repairing the broken house and all that live in it. This world is being redeemed and as the church we are called to be a part of that redemption.

### Questions for Discussion and Reflection:

1. Should the culture around us influence the Church, or the Church influence the culture around us? What seems more likely to be the reality to you today?
2. Have you ever been hated by the world? What does it mean to you to be in, but not of, this world?
3. When you look around the world today, where can you find evidence of God's redemption breaking into the brokenness?

### Video Discussion Questions:

1. When you think about Jesus laying down his life for you, how does that make you feel?
2. Is your relationship with God individualistic (you, God and your Bible) or do you feel that your faith is weakened if it is not in community?
3. What do you think some of the obstacles to true, Christian friendship are?
4. What are the markers of friendship and community? What must be there for it to be a fruitful, Christian friendship?
5. How are we doing this well as a church? How could we do better? What is your role in this?
6. What is different in your life when you love the way that Jesus loved? What does the world see and know about Christianity when they see Christians loving one another?