

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES FOR JANUARY 3, 2021

For Community Groups or Personal Study

We are in year 5781 according to the Hebrew calendar (marked from the creation of the world), the year 1442 for the Islamic calendar (marked from significant events of that faith), and 4718 in the Chinese calendar (from the date the emperor of that time invented their calendar).

For most of the world it is now the year 2021 (Pope Gregory in the 16th century established the Gregorian calendar making minor alterations from the previous Julian calendar).

We are three days into the new year. It is currently fashionable to mark time as BCE or CE (Before Common Era or Common Era) with the intent to remove the offense of BC (Before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini: Year of our Lord) However one designates the years there is One who stands at the pivot of BC and AD, of BCE and CE, and all other calendars too, Jesus. It is the year of our Lord, 2021. At Grace we have sensitivity and respect for the beliefs of others, while holding unwaveringly to our convictions. One of those convictions is that all of human history, all of the hopes for men, women, children, in every country and corner of this world, hinge on this world's One savior, Jesus.

Our January - March sermon series will challenge us to see Grace of Christ/Gracia de Cristo, as One church, His church.

FIRST SUNDAY OF 2021 (2021.CHURCH)

SERMON PASSAGE: JOHN 17:1-5

“When Jesus had spoken these words, He lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, ‘Father the hour has come; glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You, since You have given Him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I glorified You on earth, having accomplished the work that You gave Me to do. And now, Father, glorify Me in Your own presence with the glory that I had with You before the world existed.’”

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Chapters 12-18 in John's gospel (gospel = good news) cover a one-week period of time beginning with Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem and ending with His betrayal by a friend and arrest by the church. The first communion (Lord's Supper) is found in chapter 13, parables and teachings fill most of the rest. Chapter 17 is a prayer. It is the longest recorded prayer of Jesus. He offered this prayer for his friends and followers, and for “all who would believe in Him because of their word”. We believe because of their word. That means this prayer is for us too!

1. In this prayer what did Jesus mean when He said, “Father, the hour has come”? (Read also John 2:4, 7:30, 8:20, 12:23, 12:27, 13:1)
2. According to this prayer, who will receive eternal life, and how does Jesus define eternal life?
3. What did Jesus give up when He entered human history that first Christmas to rescue and save us? (Read Philippians 2:1-11 and Colossians 1:15-20)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

4. Knowing what was coming in the hours ahead (His arrest, the abuse He would experience, His death on the cross) why did Jesus calmly and firmly stay on course, rather than go into hiding or go on the offensive?
5. From this prayer, knowing what will happen in the hours and days following, what was the “work” Jesus was sent to accomplish? Read John 19:30 (Jesus' last words while on the cross) how does this relate to Jesus' “work”?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

6. How would you describe your prayers (easy, difficult, occasional, moving ...)? What happens when you pray? How does Jesus' prayer in this chapter help us as we pray?
7. If you were asked by someone with no connection to, or knowledge of, Christian faith, “in one minute tell me, what is the church and why are you a part of it?” How would you answer them?

Notes: _____

Spend time in silence, praying (even if just for a minute or two). Prayer is simply a conversation with God. Be honest. If you don't know how or what to pray admit that and ask God to help you pray. In your prayer ask God to help you experience and know how much He loves you. Ask Him for the strength and courage to complete the work He has for you to do (loving and serving others). He will help us! He has promised to never leave us.