

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (FOR JANUARY 10, 2021) For Community Groups or Personal Study

We were created to connect with others. And yet there is so much that divides us: politics, personal beliefs, ethnic backgrounds, economic status, what movies or music we like or don't like. Some seek a connection with others based on a shared passion: a sports team, the same school attended, golf, cooking, gaming. What connects Christians (which we call unity) is based on something (Someone) quite different. As we move further into the New Year we are also moving further into our study of the 2021 Church ... One Church. Unity among Christians, including those of us here at Grace of Christ, is not optional, it is expected. Jesus calls His people to unity. How can we talk of unity when there are so many denominations? When there are certain truth claims that cause us to separate from others? Even when divisions occur, even as Christians gather in different locations, if we are genuine in our desire to love Him, follow Him, honor Him, we will passionately pursue unity. Christian unity is not about personal preferences, about who we like or don't like. Unity for Jesus followers is built on the understanding that what connects us, unifies us, defines us, is stronger, bigger, more important, than anything attempting to pull us apart. Unity for us is all about Jesus.

At Grace we are called to love and respect others. So much so that we willingly give up what we prefer in order to love those around us. At the center of EVERYTHING is this world's One savior, and ours, Jesus.

2021.CHURCH

SERMON PASSAGE: JOHN 17:6-10

"I have manifested (made known) Your name to the people whom You gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they know that everything that You have given me is from You. For I have given them the words that You gave Me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. All Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them."

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. What did Jesus mean when He prayed "I have made Your name known"?
2. How did the people in Jesus' day know more about the Name and character of God because of what Jesus said and did?
3. How might those who first heard this prayer (Jesus' disciples) have felt when Jesus prayed, "You gave them to Me" ... and "I am praying for them"?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

4. How does this passage (verses 6-10) describe the relationship between Jesus and our heavenly Father?
5. If someone asked, "Can you explain how Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit, are distinct and yet all One God" how would you respond?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

6. How does the truth that we belong to God, and that He prays for us, change how we face the difficulties, doubts, and troubles that come our way?
7. In our day-to-day life how are we making "known" the Name and character of God to others?

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 know Him by knowing Jesus. Ask Him to give you the courage to make Him known to others in ways that invite people in rather than keep people out. He will help us! We belong to Him!