

“Love Beyond the World”

John 17: 20-26

10/9/22

Discussion Guide

Prepare

Share one thing that you got out of the message.

The Passage

²⁰ “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

²⁴ “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

²⁵ “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

1. The human tendency is, the richer a person becomes, the more powerful they are, the more privileged they are, the greater their position, the greater the tendency to become more and more self-absorbed and narcissistic. But that wasn't true of Jesus. No one is more glorious than Jesus. Yet the higher he went, the greater he became, the more fans who worshipped him, more he became our servant. Everything he did was for us, to make us great!

Reflect on this. If we took on the attitude of Jesus, what difference would it make in our lives?

2. We have become a very private people. People do not socialize like they did before. They don't join service organizations like they did before. They don't sit out on their porch and talk to their neighbors as they pass by. How has this affected your life? How private a person are you? How involved are you in your neighborhood and community? How much time do you spend serving yourself verses serving other?

3. Reflect on this statement:

“If you think you are going to come to church to get a bottle of inspiration and go home and use it in the privacy of your home, you've got another thing coming. You have to be in community with people who are after the same things you are. The people in unity with me you need to be in unity with. That's the only way I work! You are going have to be available to others, accountable to others, do mission with others, work together with others. I'm sorry but coming to me is the end of your own little private world.”

John 17: 20-26

4. Reflect on this statement: *“When we put ourselves in God’s place we took on the perspective of being god-like. We began to believe we were more important, more unique, more special, than we really are.”*
How do you see this being played out? How do you see this affecting your life?
5. Why do people equate faith in Jesus with being sent to be a missionary to Africa? Did you think that way one time? Why was that?
6. Discuss each of the ways God’s love is seen.. If you can’t remember the three ways they are: It is costly. It is impartial. It is forgiving – relationships are regenerated.

Share examples of how you’ve seen people live each out. Which one(s) do you think the Church has failed to demonstrate? Which one do you need to work on?

7. Read this passage. Do you think this is still a problem today?

“My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here’s a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “You stand there” or “Sit on the floor by my feet,” have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?”(2:1-4)

If not, what are other ways we can show partiality to others?

8. Are you investing yourself in the lives of the people around you? Are you investing yourself in your neighborhood, your community, your school, your workplace, in the lives of your friends? Why or why not? Have we become a very selfish people?
9. Jesus prayed: *“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one...” (vss. 20-21)*

How have you seen Christians/the Church demonstrate unity despite of their diversity?

How have you seen people fail to demonstrate unity in the face of diversity?

Is politics dividing believers so they can’t even find common fellowship with one another? Did you see that played out in the 2020 election? Doesn’t disunity caused by politics contradict what the Bible says: *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”* 1 John 1:7

10. What role does politics play in church? Should the church be more politically involved or less? Should the church take a stand on moral and social issues or remain focused on our mission: Preaching and showing the Gospel?

11. Reflect on this verse. It's powerful. *“Forgive just as God in Christ has forgiven you!”* Ephesians 4:32. What makes forgiveness impossible? Is there anything that cannot be forgiven? What makes it harder to forgive? What can we do to overcome bitterness and grudges?
12. Reflect on the phrase, “even as” in this passage: *“Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”* (vs. 23) What would happen in our lives if we really internalized this passage?

Here are a few mention in the message: *“It would mean the end to feeling that everyone has wronged you and ergo, owes you. It's would mean the end to defensiveness, bitterness, the negative filter that twists everything people say to you, the loser magnet that attracts you to people who hurt you, use you, who mistreat you. It's the beginning of healthier relationships. It's the beginning of getting some pride and dignity back in your life. It's the beginning of you loving and respecting yourself enough to have healthy boundaries that refuses to allow people to disrespect you or walk all over you like a doormat.”*

Do you struggle with any of these? What else would it mean an end to or the beginning of?

13. Is there anything you'd like to add to this discussion? Any questions you'd like to forward to Pastor Richard for further comment or explanation?