



Sermon Reflection (10 minutes)

What in the sermon encouraged you to read, know and live Scripture? What in the sermon convicted you? What in the sermon pointed to the good news of the gospel? What in the sermon made you curious to know more?

Scripture Study: John 15:1-17

The Bible finds its center in the person and work of Jesus. The death and resurrection of Jesus with all that it accomplishes in reconciling God and humanity, defeating death, forgiving sin, and making all things new, offers us the good news that we desperately need. In telling the story of the Son of God, the Bible offers us four portraits of Jesus that we know as the New Testament books (or gospels) of Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John. Each of these books was inspired by the Holy Spirit, is true and authoritative as God's Word, and offers us insight into what Jesus has accomplished on our behalf, and how we are now called to live as His followers.

The Gospel of John presents an intimate portrait of Jesus. The author, along with Peter and James was a part of an inner circle among the disciples who witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus. Much of the material in John is unique compared to what we find in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John includes a lengthy conversation Jesus had with his disciples the night before his crucifixion in John 13-17. This section is sometimes called the Upper Room Discourse. In it, Jesus gives an encouraging charge to his followers, exhorting them to keep his commandments and remain in him, while also promising his continued presence and power that will come through the Holy Spirit.

John 15:1-17 portrays the life of a disciple of Jesus as being grounded in the act of "abiding" in Christ (15:4). Jesus illustrates this idea of abiding by picturing smaller branches that remain connected to the larger trunk of a vine. Abiding in Christ includes actions that put our faith

into practice (e.g., reading, meditating, and memorizing Scripture, prayer, fasting, gathering with believers, telling others of Jesus, and acts of loving service). The point of these practices in John 17 is not to gain something it is to recognize that these are ways of experiencing and putting into action the reality of our life or connection with Jesus so that our lives produce the outcome Jesus desires from us: love that makes God's reputation great.

How personally do you practice "abiding" in Christ? What does that look like for you in this season of life?

Are there ways of abiding that you need or want to include in your life?

The passage includes several warnings expressing the loss and destruction that comes when we fail to abide in Christ. How in your life have you experienced pain and loss during seasons when you have not practiced abiding in Christ? Keep in mind this could be a season of actively sinning, or it could be a season of being apathetic and passive in practicing your faith.

Notice some of the things associated with abiding in Christ: praying in line with God's will and receiving what we ask (15:7); lives that make God's reputation great or bring glory to God (15:8); love for others and a life that looks like the life of Jesus (15:9-10); joy and gladness in Jesus (15:11). Which of these outcomes are you most drawn towards or which one do you find the most appealing in your heart and soul? How does that deep longing encourage you to practice abiding in Christ?

Prayer (25 minutes)

Share prayer requests and pray as a group.