

March 9, 2008 – 5th Sunday of Lent

Jesus, In Every Way Like Us

“Ever Wonder What You Would Say If You Knew You Were Sharing A Last Meal With Friends?” (part 2)

John 13 -16

“Ever wonder what you would say if you knew you were sharing a last meal with friends or family?”

When Tom came home for dinner he was in Big trouble because he forgot his wedding anniversary.

"Tomorrow there better be something in our driveway that goes from 0 to 200 in two seconds flat" Karen, his wife told him angrily.

The next morning Karen looked outside and saw a small package in the driveway. She brought it inside, opened it and found a brand new bathroom scale.

Tom's Funeral has been set for Saturday.

On a more serious note; a friend of mine was dying and in his last days he had words of love and wisdom to share with each person who came to see him. He told me at the time to continue to study for the ministry and learn from the pastor I was serving under, that I might be prepared to serve the Lord in ministry.

Last week we looked at the first three things Jesus told His friends (and us):

1. Be a servant
2. Love one another
3. Never stop trusting Jesus Christ, stay hopeful, keep the faith.

The fourth thing Jesus told His disciples at the Last Supper was:

4. Pray (in Jesus name)

(John 14:12-14 NLT)

"The truth is, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, because the work of the Son brings glory to the Father. Yes, ask anything in my name, and I will do it!"

To pray in Jesus' name is to pray in union with Jesus and according to His purposes. We have the promise of answered prayer here, but we must understand the context. It is our request to do the same works that Jesus has done, especially the work of bearing fruit for the Kingdom of God. That is, making disciples. We see this in the next chapter: (John 15:4-5 NLT) "Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful apart from me.

"Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing."

When Jesus says we can ask for anything, we must remember that our asking must be in His name - that is, according to God's character and will. God will not grant requests contrary to His nature or His will, and we cannot use His name as a magic formula to fulfill our selfish desires. As John wrote in his epistle (1 John 5:14-15 NLT) "And we can be confident that he will listen to us *whenever we ask him for anything in line with his will*. And if we know he is listening when we make our requests, we can be sure that he will give us what we ask for." If we are sincerely following God and seeking to do his will, then our requests will be in line with what He wants, and He will grant them.

(based on The Life Application Commentary Series)

Praying in Jesus' name doesn't mean tacking that phrase at the end of our prayer. It means we have a relationship with Him, we are one with Him, and we want what He wants. He wants us to pray, because we have this relationship with Him.

5. Obey (receive the Spirit of Jesus)

John 14:15-21 NLT

"If you love me, obey my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, who will never leave you. 17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world at large cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you do, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. 18 No, I will not abandon you as orphans--I will come to you. 19 In just a little while the world will not see me again, but you will. For I will live again, and you will, too. 20 When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. 21 Those who obey my commandments are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them, and I will love them. And I will reveal myself to each one of them."

Jesus talked about loving one another, now He talks about loving Him. Jesus was about to leave His disciples, but He would give them another Counselor, another just like Himself, who would never leave them, He is the Holy Spirit. The evidence that you have the Holy Spirit is that you love Jesus and the evidence that you love Jesus is that you obey Jesus. Love Jesus and obey Jesus and He will give you the Holy Spirit, who will be with us forever (14:16); He lives with us and in us (14:17); He teaches us (14:26); He reminds us of Jesus' words (14:26; 15:26); He convicts us of sin, shows us God's righteousness, and announces God's judgment on evil (16:8); He guides into truth and gives insight into future events (16:13); He brings glory to Christ (16:14).

(based on The Life Application Commentary Series)

The Holy Spirit will help you to obey Jesus. The key question is not what to do, what not to do, or how to do it, the key question is this: Do you love Jesus?

6. Bear Fruit (Remain in Jesus)

(John 15:4-5 NLT) "Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful apart from me.

"Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.

We must remain in Jesus to bear fruit. Just as there must be that invisible life within a tree moving out to its branches for the branch to produce fruit, and the fruit is the evidence of the health and life of the tree, so only by having the life of Christ in us, and staying attached to Him, will we produce fruit. This fruit could mean new converts to Jesus, the fruit of the Spirit, or both. We could accomplish neither without remaining in Jesus. In what ways must we remain in Jesus that we may remain fruitful?:

Receive Him as Savior and Lord; Remain a believer that He is God's Son; Remain doing what God says; continue to believe the gospel; continue to relate in love to the community of believers, for they are Christ's body; remain in prayer and in the Bible having times alone with Jesus.

7. Hated by the world (as Jesus was hated)

John 15:18-21 NLT

"When the world hates you, remember it hated me before it hated you. 19 The world would love you if you belonged to it, but you don't. I chose you to come out of the world, and so it hates you. 20 Do you remember what I told you? 'A servant is not greater than the master.' Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you! 21 The people of the world will hate you because you belong to me, for they don't know God who sent me.

Jesus is keeping it real here. It will not be easy to be His follower. We should expect and welcome rejection. If they hated Jesus, they will hate those who are following Jesus and seeking to be like Him. Why does the world hate Christians:

Christians' values contradict the values of those who do not follow Jesus. The further the world gets from Biblical values the stranger and more hated will be those who want to live by them. Live like Jesus and people will reject you as they rejected Him.

Christians submit to God in a world that deifies submitting to anyone. The world sees freedom as pleasing oneself, and doing whatever they want, and so despise Christians who see freedom as living to please God.

Christians believe in absolutes, the absolute and unchanging authority and standards of God's Word, in a world that does not believe in divine standards or any absolute truth.

Christians return love for hatred, they love their enemies, they forgive those who hurt them. Christians who show Jesus' kind of love are misunderstood and hated even more.

(Based on ideas from The Life Application Commentary Series)

In John 16:12-14, 33 NLT Jesus says, "Oh, there is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth...He will tell you about the future. He will bring me glory by revealing to you whatever he receives from me.... (v33) I have told you all this so that you may have

peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."