



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS John 15:9-17

Read John 15:1-17

1. Sometimes what Jesus says is so intense it takes a few 'goes' to process it. ***Read 1-17 again and take note of every time Jesus says something must be 'in us'. Make a list of all the things Jesus says must be 'in us'. Then, discuss how all those things on the list are related.***
2. ***Discuss what Jesus means in verse 9a – compare this to what He says in 17:26. How would you answer someone who said, 'Of course the Father loves the Son more than me.' How do you think a human being can ever truly take on board this Divine Love? Hint: see Romans 5:5***
3. In verse 9b Jesus says that we must abide/remain in His love. ***If Jesus loves us, why do we have to 'remain in His love'? In other words, what do you think it means to not remain in His love? Look at verse 10 and discuss some of the ways we can remain in His love.***
4. ***Discuss how you think the idea that Jesus loves us so much and that we must remain in His love will revolutionise the way we read the Bible? Or, to put it another way, discuss whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Stop just reading your bible. Instead, search your Bible carefully and thoroughly in order to find Jesus and His great love for you."***
5. In verse 11 Jesus says that He has told us these things so that our joy will be full. ***Do you really think a church ought to be filled with joy? What could stop us from being filled with joy?***
6. ***Looking at verse 12-15, how do you think Jesus can expect us to love each other?***
7. "Jesus wants us to be both faithful and fruitful." ***Looking closely at verse 1-17, what verses would you use to convince someone that this is true? What does it mean to be 'faithful'? What does it mean to be 'fruitful'? HIGHER GRADE: what are the five characteristics of the fruit that Jesus is looking for?***
8. ***Spend time praying for NCC. Pray that we would remain faithful and fruitful and prayerfully depend on God – especially that the move to Balcatta would not distract us from these things.***

Leaders Notes

1. v4 'I in you'; v5 'I in him'; v7 'my words abide in you'; v10 'abide in my love'; v11 'my joy may be in you'. That these things are related is not hard to see. To have Jesus remaining in us is to have His word remaining in us. And His word is all about His great love for us. So to truly take His word deep into your inner being is to take on board His great love for you. In turn, this will produce deep-seated joy within you. Joy is the essence of love. No one who truly grasps Jesus' great love (and yes, it can take years to come to grips with it), will not feel incredible joy – because this is what our souls were designed for.
2. None of us are able to get to the bottom of this incredible statement, or rather, none of us can rise up to its true meaning. Jesus is saying that the same love with which the Father loves the Son is the same love which He loves us with. We are caught right up into the heart of the intra-trinitarian relationship of love. No one will ever be able to fathom such love! It may be a good idea to stop and ask the Spirit to do what He said He will do.
3. Sunday's sermon dealt with this but it is something we need to keep reminding ourselves about. Our hearts are suspicious of God. We doubt His love all the time. This must have been the way Satan got through to Adam and Eve. It's the way he will get through to us. He aims to make us doubt God's love for us. Every sin we ever commit begins with doubting God's love. If we were always convinced of His love we wouldn't sin against Him. We must therefore resist sin by remaining in Jesus' love. To not remain in His love is to forget His love. Like Adam and Eve we start to look around and think God is short-changing us. We will have to reach out and grab what we want because God won't give it to us – like Adam and Eve did when they reached out and grabbed the fruit. We begin to think God's desires are onerous and tedious. There's just so many things in the world more exciting and more attractive than His love. And so we disbelieve His love or devalue it. This is what it means to not remain in His love. Or sometimes we do Him wrong by choosing to believe that we are so sinful He can't possibly love us. Or we read the Bible religiously and do good deeds religiously trying to earn His love. All these are ways that we forget His love. The antidote is to keep going back to Jesus Christ in the Bible and listen to what He says and take Him at His word. As we look at the cross we will realise again that He really does love us. We can also ask God to convince us, since Romans 5:5 tells us that one of the roles of the Spirit is to fill our hearts with God's love. But above all else, verse 10 tells us that we must obey His word. No matter what else we say or do, if we disobey His word, we will have no assurance of His love. Another way to remain in His love is to keep coming to church. As strange as it seems, appreciating God's love in Christ is not an individualistic exercise. Paul prays in Ephesians 3 that the church *together with all the saints* will grasp God's great love.
4. The two mistakes Christians sometimes make is firstly, that they read the Bible but they don't see Christ. They haven't understood how the whole Bible is about Jesus. The second mistake is that they fail to see not just Jesus, but also His great love for them. Jesus Himself said that all of Scripture is about Him and all Scripture is about His gospel – His great love for His people at the cross. (for example, Luke 24:25-27). This is why 'faithful' churches sometimes don't grow. They have not centred themselves on Jesus Christ and His great love.
5. When you really love someone you want them to be filled with joy. Joy is the essence of love. To love something is to enjoy it, to delight in it. As Christ remains in us and we receive His love we experience great joy as we delight in Him and His love for us. We lose that joy when we lose sight of Jesus.
6. Again, it is only as we appropriate/grasp His incredible love for us that we are energised, empowered and encouraged to love His friends. 'as I have loved you' tells us what that love looks like. If you are really gripped by Jesus' love for you, you will love His friends. So, practically, don't study the people you are supposed to love, but study the One who loves you.

(We do this all the time when we put up with irritating mother's in law – we love them because we love their daughters!)

7. This is a kind-of summary statement of verse 1-17. Virtually the whole passage says this, but in particular the picture of the vine and non-fruitful branches being cut off are a powerful argument. In verse 16 Jesus says so quite clearly. 'Faithful' simply means to remain in His word and in His love and keep on loving each other. 'Fruitful' means to go and make disciples who show these five characteristics: 1. They remain in Jesus love in His Word. 2. They love each other. 3. They are filled with His joy. 4. They go on to make more disciples. 5. They will last forever. This is vine growth. This is what it's all about.