

Day – 1

Title: **The True Vine**

Text: John 15:1-2 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch that doesn’t produce fruit and He prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more.” (NLT)

Jesus was a master teacher. He often used parables to teach. He also was skilled at painting word-pictures so His disciples could understand and apply the lessons He was teaching them. John 15 is an example of one of those word pictures. Kindly read John 15, as you begin this Lenten season. Jesus and His followers had gathered in the Upper Room to share the Passover meal. After spending the evening together, Jesus concludes their time and invites them to leave. “Let’s be going.” As they leave the Upper Room, they will walk to the Garden of Gethsemane. That walk would have taken them past the Temple. Across the wall of the Temple there was a sculpture of a Vine. The vine was an important image for the Jewish people.

The prophet Isaiah wrote that Israel was God’s vineyard – “The vineyard of the LORD Almighty is the nation of Israel.” God expected to find good fruit in His vineyard. But Isaiah writes that Israel had failed in its mission as God’s vineyard to produce good fruit. “He looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress” (Isaiah 5). As Jesus eyes are drawn to that sculpture, He makes the declaration that we are looking at today. I am the TRUE vine. Israel had failed to produce the fruit that God desired. As the True vine, Jesus will produce good fruit. Jesus is the Vine. But there is another figure in Jesus’ illustration: “My Father is the gardener.” It is the role of the Gardener to care for the vine to ensure that it produces good fruit. The Gardener must cut off branches that do not produce. Those dead branches will hinder the growth of good branches. They might be a source of disease for the vine. So they must be removed. But He must also trim or prune the good branches so that they will remain healthy and productive.

The Lenten season is a time for reflection and renewing our relationship with Jesus. As we begin this season of Lent, may we use this time to reflect on our effectiveness as a Fruit-bearing follower of Jesus. Am I a dried up branch, hindering the production of fruit that God desires? What in my life needs to be pruned or trimmed off so that God can use me?

- *Mark Hosler, Retired Missionary (Haiti)*

Day – 2

Title: **God's Teaching makes You Clean**

Text: John 15:3 "You have been made clean already by the teaching I have given you."

This is one of the interesting statements that Jesus made. What did He mean when He said it to His disciples? Jesus had been teaching the disciples either directly or they were learning while He taught the people at large. These teachings of Jesus were life principles that had value for everyone. These men who were common people unclean because of their stereotypical thoughts and their impulsive behavior were having a chance for transformation. The teachings of Jesus had authority and it was quite different from the teachings of the other religious leaders. It challenged them and made them think. They even questioned Jesus on several occasions to clarify their doubts about what He taught.

When Jesus washed the feet of the disciples Peter refused Jesus' action; for he did not want his Master to do the job of a slave. But Jesus declared to him that if He did not do it then he wouldn't be part of Jesus. Then Peter wanted Jesus to clean him whole. Jesus responded – "not all of you are clean" John 13:10 records it. What He meant was about Judas who would betray Jesus. He was unclean since he did not heed to the teachings of Jesus. Judas was getting ready to betray Jesus for 30 silver coins. This is so true Judas was with Jesus, but he had zero impact from Jesus. You need to allow God's word to work in you. It's not just about hearing – it is intentional listening and practicing it.

As disciples we did not have the chance of being with Jesus, but His word is so true; and it should and can transform if we allow God to use His word. For His word to work in us, we need to read the word. Often the biggest trouble is we do not take the word of God so seriously. Majority of Christians do not read the Bible though they have provisions for it. Naturally when the word of God is not in us; we remain unclean. The word of God has power to change lives for the glory of God.

May this season of Lent challenge us to set aside time to read the Bible so we consciously allow Jesus to work in our lives. Amen!

- *Marcus John, Pastor Grange Church of GOD*

Day – 3

Title: **Attachment**

Text: John 15:4 “Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me.”

With God as our vine and source of water and nutrients, He supplies us with all that we need to bear fruit. Our source of life is God Himself. Through the intricate connections to Him we are supplied with love, grace, mercy and all the fruits of the spirit. We are fertilized by His provisions and with the watering and nutrients of his love we produce fruit for all to enjoy.

When a branch is cut off from its vine it is disconnected from all water and nutrients it needs to thrive and continue to bear fruit. If we fall away from the vine; we cannot survive but will wither and die. When we are drawn away from the vine by the temptations and trials of this world our leaves and fruit shrivel up and fall off and we become hard and brittle.

It is only through His love and Spirit that we are supplied with everything we need. Remain in his word daily and lean into his blessings. Pray and talk with God and listen for His guidance. With this we can bear the Lord’s beauty and life-giving fruit for the world to see and bring them into the fold of His grace.

- *Megan Piszker, Registered Nurse @ Penn Highlands*

Day – 4

Title: **Remain in GOD**

Text: John 15:5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” (NIV)

This verse tells us that we are an extension of the True Vine Jesus Christ. We are the branches and we receive our fruit which is His Word from Him. As long as we remain in communion with Him, He will be with us. As a result, we will be able to bear fruit which is His word and we should take that out into the world and share it with others. We can do all this because He is with us. And separated from Him and His word we can do nothing.

God gives us everything we need to grow. It gives us opportunity to spread His gospel to others who we come in contact with every day and everywhere we go. With this Word of God that is in us we can share it with people at work, at home, or anywhere where the opportunity presents itself to show case His love. We should always remember this and go find ways to share Jesus with everybody in our lives. Start an inhouse prayer study or a prayer circle at work with fellow Christians. Or if we have the chance simply pray for and with others. By doing this we create more branches from our Vine Jesus Christ and continue to grow in Him.

Father, I pray that we remember that you are our True Vine and we are the branches. Help us to bear fruit and always remain in You and tell others about You and Your love for us. Amen

- *Briana Copeland, Food Processor @ Stello Foods*

Day – 5

Title: **Apart from God we Depart**

Text: John 15:6 “Those who do not remain in me are thrown out like a branch and dry up; such branches are gathered up and thrown into the fire, where they are burned.”

What a profound analogy Jesus had used to describe the relationship that one has with Him. If relationships are to be nurtured then we need to be intentional about it. In India for the Moringa tree which is a medicinal plant vegetative propagation works well. I have done it and when I found it growing well and bearing flowers and then fruit I was thrilled. At the same time if one of the branches is cut and thrown down it would dry in no time. Nevertheless, when it still has the moist in it, it can be put back to the main tree and it would grow eventually.

It is the same with the relationship we have with Jesus. If we quit relating with Him thinking that we could do everything by ourselves we are on the loss. We need Jesus and apart from Him we can do nothing. Without Jesus we will lose out in every area of life. It might look like we are doing great, it is a deception. Somehow when we examine deep down we will struggle with the void that nothing can fill. We can be successful in everything gaining the whole world but what is the thrill if we lose out on our soul. This is Jesus' view of life. Real life finds meaning in Jesus alone.

If we have strained our relationship with Jesus and still wants to be connected to Him; we are not like the Moringa branch that can dry quickly and once dried cannot be put back to propagate. We still have hope to get restored if we are serious about it. Jesus never turns anyone down. But it is our initiative to get back to Him. If we do so we are good if not we remain departed.

Apart from God you depart. Amen!

- *Marcus John, Pastor Grange Church of GOD*

Day – 6

Title: **Remain in God's Word**

Text: John 15:7 "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, then you will ask for anything you wish, and you shall have it."

This is one of my favorite scriptures in the Bible. It has such fond memories because I memorized this verse when I attended VBS probably as a sixth grader. Jacob a young man was my teacher and he explained the importance of reading the Bible. He emphasized on memorizing some verses and claim them in our prayers. John 15:7 was one such verse and I have used it even to this day in my prayers.

Why is this verse so important? You cannot remain in God if you do not know the Word of God. It is God's word that helps us understand who He is. It reveals His power and His potentials. It shows us how people like us trusted His word and overcame all hurdles of life. No one remembers when Sir Isaac Newton was born it is not a concern but everyone would remember his fourth law of motion because we see it in action in our everyday living. So is the Word of God, if you know it you know Jesus and His power.

Whatever my teacher Jacob taught me in VBS to pray with the verses was reiterated a few months ago when I went to Billy Graham Training Center. My friend Mike Bobula would journal every verse and convert it into a prayer and prayed it every morning. I thought that was pretty neat and I adapted it. The Lord did speak to me specifically about few things and I saw it come through. I wrote those scriptures and prayed it. It was the best prayer ever than saying and asking some random things to God.

God's word is powerful and if we pray the scriptures as prayer nothing like it. As a church we have this event called S.H.O.P (Sweet Hour Of Prayer) every last Friday and we pray the Psalms. It is incredible. If we are disciples of Jesus, then we have no choice but to remain in God's word. His word is our hope a boost to our being. Let us find ways and means to hold to this Word of GOD. Amen!

- *Marcus John, Pastor Grange Church of GOD*

Day – 7

Title: **Bearing Much Fruit**

Text: John 15:8 “This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”

In this verse, Jesus explains that the purpose of a believer’s life is to bring glory to God by bearing spiritual fruit. He speaks these words to His disciples to show them that faith is not just something we say we have, but something that can be seen in how we live.

Jesus teaches that bearing fruit does not come from our own strength. Earlier in the chapter, He describes Himself as the vine and believers as the branches. Just as branches need the vine to live and grow, we need a close relationship with Jesus. When we follow and obey Him, our lives are filled with the fruits of the spirit. When Jesus says this brings glory to the Father, it reminds us that we are representatives of God. Bearing fruit is not about impressing others or comparing ourselves to them. Instead, it shows how God affects us and changes us. In everyday life, bearing fruit looks simple. It can mean choosing kindness instead of anger, forgiveness instead of bitterness, and honesty instead of taking shortcuts. These choices may seem small, but they reflect Christ’s character and honor God.

Jesus also connects fruitfulness with discipleship. A fruitful life shows that a person truly follows Him. While we are saved by grace, a changed life is the natural result of walking closely with Christ. Our fruit does not make us disciples, but it shows that we are. In conclusion, John 15:8 encourages believers to stay connected to Christ and live in a way that honors God. It invites us to look at our lives and consider whether they reflect our relationship with Jesus. When we remain in Him, our lives will produce fruit that glorifies God and shows that we are His disciples.

- *David Kunselman, Bio-Major Sophomore @ Penn State University*

Day – 8

Title: **Remain in God's Love**

Text: John 15:9 "I love you just as the Father loves me; remain in my love."

Jesus is the representation of the Father God. None can get to the Father except through Jesus since He is the way, the truth and the life. As human beings we long for love. We love it if we know we are loved. Often the love we encounter in this world is a lot based on expectations. When the expectations are unmet there seems to be a tangible difference in the way people relate with us. But this is not so with the Lord Jesus. He still loves the way we are that doesn't mean after having a relationship with Him we need to remain unchanged. It will never be like that. His love in us is transforming. We cannot but change since His Holy Spirit would begin work in us. If that kind of a change does not seem evident then we can be sure that the relationship has got issues.

Jesus' declaration is so prolific – I love you just as the Father loves me. What kind of love does the Father have on Jesus? A love that is beyond imagination. A love where Jesus has an equality with God the Father (Philippians 2:5-8). A love where Jesus became the image of the invisible God the firstborn over all creation (Colossians 1:15). This love of the Father upon Jesus is immeasurable. So is the love that Jesus has on us and that is why He wants us remain in His love. The love of Jesus is portrayed so well by the words of the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 3:18 – "and may you have the power to understand as all God's people should how wide, how long, how high and how deep His love is." A love that gave His life as a ransom so we could live well.

So, what stops us from remaining in this love? Simply the things of the world. All that the world offers is lucrative. The truth is they are deceptive, temporal and fleeting. But it is truly attractive, seductive and exciting. The love of God is holy, perfect and eternal. It is unattractive because it throws light into the mess of our life not to condemn but to make us holy. We know it all but we consciously avoid it. Let us examine and decide to remain in God's love. The love that never fails. Amen!

- *Marcus John, Pastor Grange Church of GOD*

Day – 9

Title: **Obedience out of Love**

Text: John 15:10 When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love.

Obedience is the very best thing to show that you believe.

Doing exactly what the Lord commands doing it happily,

Action is the key immediately joy will receive.

Obedience is the very best way to show that you believe.

These lines are lyrics of a song sung to the tune of "Hooray its Holiday" by Boney-M. It was taught to the children in Sunday School to bring them the idea of obedience.

If we examine ourselves, we do not know how well this lyrics might fit us. We would like to believe God without obedience. Obedience is the most difficult thing not just for us it was hard even for the prophets and people of the Bible. Jonah is a classical example. He knew God so well but did not want what God wanted him to do. It didn't go well with his ego and emotion. Nevertheless when you look at the life of Jesus He came in obedience to the Father. It was a total surrender. Jesus obeyed God even to the death on the cross.

Sometimes people obey God for various reasons to evade fear, to overcome ignorance, to gain good health, to live successful, to receive blessings and other things. The list is endless. However God wants us to obey Him in love. Jesus obeyed the Father because He loved Him and He knew the Father loved Him too. Obedience out of love will never be a burden, it will be a joy of accomplishing the purpose of the loved one. Therefore as disciples of Jesus we are called to obey Him in everything. That is willing to leave our comfort and get out to serve His people for His glory. Let this season of Lent help us to see what we have been disobedient about.

- *Carole Brosius, Director of Worship*

Day – 10

Title: **I'd rather be joyful than happy...**

Text: John 15:11 "so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!".

The definition of Joy is a state of being that allows one to experience feelings of intense, long-lasting happiness and contentment of life. Happiness is a temporary, external emotion from good events (like a new car), while joy is a deeper, lasting internal state of contentment, purpose, and connection that persists even with challenges, often described as a choice or attitude, not just a feeling. Anhedonia is the inability to experience joy, feel numb or less interested and It's a common symptom of many mental health conditions like depression.

Nehemiah 8:10 says "for the joy of the Lord is your strength." How can we acquire and experience this boundless joy?

The simple formula for His overflowing joy which is full and complete is simply by abiding in Him constantly and following His commandments. In John chapter 15 from verses 1 to 10 the sentence "abide in me" is repeated 5 times and "abide in my love" is repeated 3 times in order to emphasize its importance.

Keeping HIS commandments + Abiding in his love = His joy that will be in us + Joy may be full/complete/perfect. Let us examine if we are happy or joyful. If we are happy we are excited about the momentary happenings that is not bad at all however we need to have the joy which only the goodness of God can provide. It results as we follow His commands. Let us request the Holy Spirit to help us to fix all that which pulls us away from abiding in Jesus and to experience the gift of His joy.

- *Hannah John, Registered Nurse @ UPMC*

Day – 11

Title: **Love One Another**

Text: John 15:12 “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”

In this verse, Jesus gives a clear and powerful command to His disciples to love one another. This is not a suggestion or a recommendation, it is a direct instruction. Jesus puts His love for others at the center of everything He did and taught. This shows us that true discipleship of Him is marked by how we treat others.

Jesus sets the standard for this love by pointing to His own example. When he said “As I have loved you” it reminds us that His love is selfless, patient, and sacrificial. He loved His disciples even when they failed, doubted, or misunderstood Him. Eventually, he was even betrayed by them, but He never stopped loving them. As his followers, we are supposed to show unconditional love, just like Him. This kind of love is not always easy. Loving others the way Christ loves us requires humility, forgiveness, and grace. It often means putting others before ourselves and choosing compassion even when it isn’t deserved. Through our love, believers show the heart of Christ to the world.

In everyday life, obeying this command may seem simple, but it is still impactful. It can be shown through acts of kindness, encouragement, forgiveness, and service. Loving others is not only shown through words; it is also shown through our actions. Jesus connects this command to a life of obedience and relationship with Him. Loving one another is part of having faith in Jesus. When believers choose love, they show that they are choosing to follow what Christ taught.

In conclusion, John 15:12 reminds us that love should be at the center of the Christian life. Jesus calls believers to love others in the same way He has loved them. When we follow this command, we show Christ’s love and live in a way that honors Him.

- *David Kunselman, Bio-Major Sophomore @ Penn State University*

Day – 12

Title: **The Greatest Love**

Text: John 15:13 “The greatest love you can have for your friends is to give your life for them.”

Friendship is more honorable than any other relationship apart from blood relations. Abraham was called the friend of God. What made him become the friend of God? It was his obedience to God. He obeyed God on one of the most difficult things of life – offering his son as a sacrifice. This is an evidence for his genuine love and trust towards God and therefore God called him His friend.

Abraham became foreshadow of Christ Jesus since He was willing to offer His life for His friends. Who are the friends of Jesus? Those that willingly follow His teachings. Jesus was holy and blameless while all those who follow Him were unholy people. But He still called them friends. Only a friend can accept another friend with all the flaws and will love them genuinely. That is what Jesus did for us. It should also be noted that a friend can consider drastic change for the sake of friendship. The power of influence and inspiration is undeniable in friendship. Jesus inspired His twelve while one among them got lost. The sole reason is – the friend did not cherish Jesus’ relationship. He had different priority that mattered more than the friendship. Nevertheless, Jesus’ love as a friend was true, He still washed his feet and expressed His genuine love. In fact He lay down His life even for those who did not consider Him as friend. It was because of the greatest love Jesus had for everyone.

There is a popular saying, “We know who you are if we know who your friends are.” If you are friends with Jesus we certainly know who you are. You will be influenced by His virtues and as you follow Him you will obviously reflect Him. Jesus longs to be friends with us if we spend time with Him. Lenten season is one such period for us to read and reflect on His word. We can allow His word to read us and challenge us. Amen!

- *Marcus John, Pastor Grange Church of GOD*

Day – 13

Title: **Friends of Christ**

Text: John 15:14 “You are my friends if you obey me”

“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me.” We may have repeated that little saying when responding to a bully who threatened to hurt us. But it’s not a really a true statement. Being beaten will certainly bring us pain, but a harsh name can be just as painful. Being called a bad or negative name can have a devastating impact on our spirit. That impact could last a lifetime. We may make decisions or behavior that we hope will cover up the pain in our heart. On the other hand, given a positive or affirming name can also have an impact on our spirit. A positive name can give us joy, confidence, a good attitude, a peaceful heart. In John 15, Jesus is encouraging His followers to produce good fruit. He is the true vine and His followers are branches. Healthy branches will produce fruit. Branches produce fruit only when they are attached to the main vine. The vine provides the branches with water and nutrients so they will be healthy. Jesus says that branches must remain attached to the vine. If they are separated from the vine, they cannot produce fruit. What does this relationship between a branch and the vine, look like? We must fill our hearts with His words (Vs. 7). We must be people of prayer (vs. 7). We must remain in His love (Vs 9). Jesus assures us that He loves us with the same intensity that the Father loves Him (vs.9). There may be times when we are uncertain of Jesus’ love. Guilt and shame may creep in and cause us to wonder how Jesus could love someone like me. Or perhaps we go through a difficult season or experience pain. We may wonder if Jesus really does love us because of the pain we are experiencing. But we must never question Jesus’ love for us. In order to make that very clear to us, Jesus now gives us a new name. In our verse for today, Jesus now calls us His friends. In the Bible “Friend” is a term that is reserved for spiritual giants. Abraham was called a friend of God. Moses is called a friend of God. Now, Jesus elevates His followers to their level by referring to them as Friends. The evidence of friendship is sacrifice. “People lay down their lives for their friends” (Vs. 13). In the Upper Room, Jesus had demonstrated His love for His friends by washing their feet – a servant’s job. He will soon provide an even greater demonstration of His love by laying down His life on the cross. That is how much Jesus loves His followers. You are a friend of Jesus! You are no longer just an “ordinary” human being. You have been chosen by Jesus to be His friend. Never doubt that!

- *Mark Hosler, Retired Missionary (Haiti)*

Day – 14

Title: **Can Jesus be my friend?**

Text: John 15:15 “I do not call you servants any longer, because servants do not know what their master is doing. Instead, I call you friends, because I have told you everything I heard from my Father.”

This is one of Jesus intimate conversation with His disciples. The disciples have been with Jesus for the past three plus years and now it was time for Jesus to wrap up. He called them to the upper room and He treated them so well that made them feel so extravagantly loved. They did not deserve the warm treatment they enjoyed. They all knew it. Just this gesture portrayed Jesus’s friendship with them. When He declared to them that they were His friends they knew it because they experienced it.

The rationale for Jesus to call them friends was indisputable. He explained to them why they were His friends. He did not want to call them servants though Jesus was the Master Teacher – the disciples were well aware. They learned from Him. His teachings were irrefutable. If Jesus remained as the Master for the rest of their journey they would have never known what He had in mind. The master does not share his mind with the slaves. He keeps everything a secret and he expects the servant to do what is told to them to do without questioning. But Jesus did not want them to be servants who will be unaware of the mind of the master. Therefore He wanted them to be His friends.

Friends do not hide anything in their friendship. They openly share everything – the good, the bad and the ugly. There is transparency and accountability. Because Jesus considered His disciples as His friends, He willingly shared the concerns of His Father to them. One of which is His gruesome death on the cross. He also explained to them that He came to fulfill the Father’s will and that they would soon have to take this mission and move on. He did not hide anything from them the implication of a task of that kind. It is a blessed work with hardship, suffering and persecution. If we become His friends we are called to do the same – fulfilling the desire of a friend who died for us. Amen!

- *Marcus John, Pastor Grange Church of GOD*

Day – 15

Title: Fruit that Lasts

Text: John 15:16 “You didn't choose me, I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name.”

Jesus was telling the disciples that they made the choice to follow Him, but it was He who chose them for the purpose of bearing fruit that will make a difference in people's lives. He has shown them His close relationship with His Father and they must remain attached to Him like a branch that is dependent on the vine. For that is where they will find nourishment to produce the lasting fruit that is pleasing to our heavenly Father. As disciples, Jesus has chosen us, as well, to bear fruit. The fruit that the Holy Spirit produces in our lives begins with love for God, joy of our salvation, peace in turmoil, patience that waits on the Father, kindness toward others, goodness of character, faithfulness in trusting God's promises, gentleness in manners and speech, and self-control over emotions and desires. When this fruit grows in our lives it reflects the virtues of Jesus' life.

It isn't always easy to display all these fruits in our life. Some are more a part of our nature than others. Some fruit may start to grow but falls from the branch and withers. Some may ripen, but when picked and left to sit and rot, never to be used. But the fruit that grows to maturity is lush and juicy, sweet to the taste. It had remained on the vine until it was completely nourished and given to others to taste. But that doesn't mean we can pick and choose the fruit that best suits us and disregard the rest. We say to ourselves, well I'm not a patient person. God didn't give me that gift but I try to be kind to most people, so God will understand my impatience when I yell at that slow driver on the road. We may think our excuses are valid but they're not. The Holy Spirit will help us learn how to grow and use these fruits of the Spirit. Disciples of Jesus reflect who He is. We learn from Him. That is why we must be intentional in daily reading and searching the Scriptures and prayer. So many times in this chapter Jesus speaks of the relationship He has with the Father and with the disciples. It's all about the connection of the vine and branch; love and obedience. Sharing the love of Jesus is the fruit that brings glory to God. Fruitfulness that is revealed through ministry, service, and love towards others. That is what gives purpose to the Disciple's life.

- *Peggy Fairman, Care Giver, Senior Assist Services*

Day – 16

Title: **Command to Love**

Text: John 15:17 “This is my command: Love each other.”

The Message Bible states the verse like this: But remember the root command: Love each other.

A command is an order or direction given by one in authority. In the military when an order is given to a soldier, he obeys without question. Whatever the command is, the soldier follows the order as stated. But as Christians, why do we have such a problem obeying God's commands? Somehow, we have gotten the idea that God is just giving us suggestions of how He wants us to act and treat each other. Somehow, we have lost respect for the authority of who God is. We have been given the privilege of becoming a friend of Jesus, the Son of God, to be called a child of the King. To become a disciple and bear fruit that points people to Jesus. And yet, when God gives us a command to Love each other, our fellow Christians, we say, well let me think about that. I can love the ones that I agree with, but not the ones with a different point of view. Not the ones who have hurt my feelings or look different from me. We say, I'm sure God understands why I can't love those people. But does He really say that?

God gave humans different ways to show love for each other. A natural, family affection between parents and children or siblings; a deep friendship, brotherly love like the bond between David and Jonathan; a romantic love of a husband and wife in the context of marriage. These are all good when kept true and pure to God's definition. The love God expects in the church is a pure, selfless, unconditional type of love. One that makes a choice to do good for others, even our enemies. Who does that sound like? Jesus. He traded His throne in Heaven for a manger bed. Washed the feet of the one who would betray Him. Forgave those who beat Him and mocked Him as He hung on the cross. How could Jesus endure all that He went through? Love. He loved the Father and was obedient to His will. He loves us. After seeing that, maybe loving each other isn't so hard after all. The root command of love comes from Matthew 22:37, 38. This is what discipleship looks like. Loving God, loving others. I've heard it said that the Bible is God's love letter to the human race. Read it every day. Mostly, love each other. Spend time together in Bible study and pray for each other. Pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who are persecuted and imprisoned. For we are all one body in Christ.

- *Peggy Fairman, Care Giver - Senior Assist Services*

Day – 17

Title: **Hate – Inevitable in the World**

Text: John 15:18 “If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first.”

Jesus is reminding us that if we feel that we are hated by the people of this world, it is because they hated Him first amidst of all the love that He has poured into the world - His creation.

I remember the first week of my freshman year of college where I was asked to meet with my academic advisor to verify my schedule. As my advisor looked at my schedule (I chose the classes and I had 2 classes that were suggested for upper classmen), she suggested that what I was trying to accomplish in my first semester of college would be an impossible feat. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:5 that our qualification come from God. This verse sums up the event since I was not only able to excel in all my classes but also prove to myself that the path I have chosen for my career is the right decision. All this to say that the world will hate us, but we should not let that stop us since it hated the one that gives us this power so we can glorify him.

A few ways to live when the world hates us,

- Be rooted in God to endure the hate.
- Focus on His plan for us.
- Give Him the glory as it belongs to Him

- *Tim John, Pre-med Senior @ Penn West Clarion*

Day – 18

Title: **We are Not of This World**

Text: John 15:19 "If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, the world hates you."

The oppression of Christianity and all that is of God is so evident in our current world. The division of our country, the conflict of those that are standing in the way of federal officers and defending criminals that are in our country are tangible results of the people of the world. If we voice our opinion and stand for the truth people would hate us. They cannot stand the sight of us. Nevertheless, God expects us to love these inhuman people.

Those who have obeyed God and have the call of God go places for His glory. They go to dangerous countries for one reason, to spread the word of God and His love.

We as Christians are chosen by God and therefore we are not of this world. We belong to a God who gives us peace, love, grace and mercy even in adversity and difficult times. I take heart in John 16:33 "I have said these things to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

I find such peace that my God has overcome this world. My God has chosen me and through Him I know where my future is!

I know this world is not my home, I am just a-passing through, my treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue...and I can't feel at home in this world anymore.

- *Megan Piszker, Registered Nurse @ Penn Highlands*

Day – 19

Title: True Servant Reflects the Master

Text: John 15:20 “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!”

As Jesus and His disciples make their way to the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus is well aware of what the next 24 hours will bring – suffering, condemnation and death. On the previous Sunday, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. His followers were swept up by the moment and celebrated His arrival. “Praise God! Bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hail to the King of Israel (Jn. 12:13). While there were many who sang His praises, on that Sunday journey, Jesus was aware that there was also a group of individuals who did not recognize Him as the King. Rather than embracing Him as Messiah, they were filled with hatred and contempt for Jesus. Jesus claimed to be God’s Son. That was blasphemy. Jesus rebuked these religious leaders, calling them hypocrites. Jesus said that they never really knew God. If they knew God, they would have welcomed Him and accepted Him. These leaders were determined to stop Jesus. He was becoming popular with the masses of people and was attracting many followers. The leaders determined that the only way they could stop Jesus would be to have Him put to death. Jesus knows this. But now He must warn His followers that their decision to follow Him could also result in persecution for them as well. Jesus makes an important point in His warning to His disciples. He assures them that He is ONE with them. Earlier in this chapter Jesus has emphasized that His followers must remain “connected” to Him if they were going to be able to bear fruit for Him. Now Jesus assures His disciples that He is connected to them. He warns that if His enemies persecuted Him, the disciples should expect that they too will be persecuted. Jesus’ followers should not expect to be exempt from opposition. “A servant is not greater than the master.” Many in our culture seem to feel strongly that we must defend ourselves when attacked for our faith. We must seek revenge. But we must follow Jesus’ example when we experience persecution. Jesus did not resist. He did not take up arms to defend Himself. Instead He prayed for His enemies, even while they were nailing Him to the cross. “I say, love your enemies. Pray for those who persecute you! In that way you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven” (Mt. 5:44-45). These are difficult words to hear and follow. We must pray that we will be people of grace and patience, even with our enemies.

– Mark Hosler, Retired Missionary (Haiti)

Day – 20

Title: **Beware of Magic Genie Jesus!**

Text: John 15:21 “But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.” (ESV)

Everyone likes the concept of Jesus the Savior: Someone who will fix all our problems and answer all our prayers like we want them answered. And mixed into this concept is the idea that if we do everything right, just like Jesus wants us to, then everything will be easy and go great. But that’s not really found anywhere in the New Testament. In fact, most of the people who started following Jesus lost everything they knew. He called them to leave the comfort they were used to, and instead follow Him into dangerous situations. Paul himself had a great life before he met Jesus (or more accurately, before Jesus called him). Then persecution, stoning, shipwrecks etc followed him everywhere he went.

What is missing in most modern “easy Jesus” churches is the invitation and call to follow Jesus not just as Savior, but as Lord! A magic genie or Santa Claus Jesus will always let you down as soon as things don’t go the way you want them to. Persecution comes and many fall away (Matthew 10:16-33; Matthew 13:1-23). Savior AND Lord is much more difficult because so many people want to be in control of their own lives and plans. Jesus as LORD means that I am not my own lord anymore. We are in the middle of an epic spiritual battle. Ephesians 6:12 makes it clear how we often lose focus of this fact. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Now be careful. Just because people hate you doesn’t necessarily mean that you are being persecuted for your faith. The world might also hate you because you are a jerk and deserve it. That’s not what Jesus is talking about. He calls us to love one another. So remember, you can be in the will of God, doing the ministry Jesus called you to, and doing it perfectly...and still the world will hate you because it hated Jesus first. But victory is ours in Jesus! Fear not! Strive to live like Paul did in Acts 20:24 when he said - But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

- *Mike Bobula, Pastor Latrobe First Church of GOD*

Day – 21

Title: **No Excuse for Sin**

Text: John 15:22 “They would not have been guilty of sin if I had not come and spoken to them; as it is, they no longer have any excuse for their sin.”

Jesus talks about the people of the world. He did not just teach the disciples and those who followed Him. He did speak to everyone around the towns He journeyed. Some received His teaching with joy, some rejected it and some out rightly voiced their opinion against it and waited for the opportunity to kill Him. Jesus’ teaching exposed the hypocrisy of a lot of people. Those that knew it was about them did not want to repent but decided to retaliate. That is the reason Jesus said they were not guilty of sin anymore since they knew what Jesus taught them. They were exposed to the truth and that hurt them. So they have no more excuses for sin. They would surely have to endure the consequences.

Whatever Jesus said for the people of His time is so relevant for this generation. There is no excuse for sin. None can say that they do not know anything, because everyone is aware of what is right and what is wrong. They also know what is worthy and what is unworthy. Everyone is certain of everything because of the web world. People are so much connected like never before. But they have chosen a path that is not right. It gives them pleasure unbridled. They are caught up with it and they have to give up if they have to live a holy life. Therefore they hate Jesus and His teachings. What they have not understood is life with Jesus is more joyful and exciting than the life they live for the moment.

The media at large have hooked people for all kinds of pleasure. It has also destroyed them on their attention span and have limited their ability to comprehend and reason out. People are willing to consider sin as normal because some celebrity has approved it. They have fought for it. Organizations have raised fund and supported it. A sample for sinful thinking – people think of killing dogs and cats as inhuman act and protect it and fight for preventing it while they have lost the nerve to kill babies (abortion is not a sinful). They have organizations to propagate and promote it. What an irony? Human beings seem to know better. With the growth of technology people have lost ethics and value for the creator. Disrespect to God is so prevalent. Remember – there is no excuse to sin...

- *Marcus John, Pastor Grange Church of GOD*

Day – 22

Title: **Haters need Love!**

Text: John 15:23 “Anyone who hates me also hates my Father.”

No one likes to be hated even if they are not loved. Jesus’ declaration of people hating Him sends an evil intention of people. It is not necessary that you consent to the ideology of someone. You can always have disagreement and that doesn’t mean you have to hate them to the point of wanting to kill them. Jesus was hated for His radical teaching. Jesus came a spoilsport to the Jewish religious leaders. They were enjoying the privilege of their calling and their office. But Jesus contrasted it by being a servant of the people. He showed no distinctions to the laity and the priestly. He treated everyone the same. He became a threat to the elite in the society.

Another biggest trouble with Jesus was His claim that – He was the Son of God. To the Pharisees and the Religious Leaders it was a blasphemy. They hated it. It was the religious zeal that consumed them. They did not want such a jerk to be a leader and huge crowd following. However the undeniable truth is people are healed, blind see, deaf hear, the mute speak and people with leprosy are healed and restored back to the community. The haters were caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. Nevertheless they hated it. Apart from these religious people there were those who had no care for God or anything of that sort. They were haters too.

What was true during Jesus’ time is true even today? People hate Jesus’ teaching. They have a dislike for the followers of Jesus. Wherever the Jesus followers are vibrant those places see transformation. People are treated equally without prejudice and discrimination. The elite find it hard with Jesus’ teaching that makes everyone equal. People who are the like the scum get better as they follow Jesus. The transformation is incredible and unstoppable. So you will be hated as Jesus was if you are a firebrand for God. Remember even the haters need love and only you can give it because of Jesus. Keep loving those who hate you. Amen!

- *Marcus John, Pastor Grange Church of GOD*

Day – 23

Title: **Soften Our Hearts**

Text: John 15:24 “If I hadn’t done such miraculous signs among them that no one else could do, they would not be guilty. But as it is, they have seen everything I did, yet they still hate me and my Father.”

In John 15:24 (NLT), Jesus speaks about the miraculous signs He performed — signs that people witnessed with their own eyes and experienced firsthand. Even after seeing His power, His love and His truth so clearly, many still chose to reject Him and ultimately, crucify Him.

In many ways, we aren’t so different from the people who lived during Jesus’ time. As believers, we too have experienced God’s goodness firsthand. We’ve seen Him answer prayers, open doors, heal hearts, provide in seasons of need and carry us through moments we never thought we’d survive. We know our God is capable of doing great and impossible things — “For nothing will be impossible with God” (Luke 1:37). And yet, even with this knowledge, we often struggle with faith. We don’t hate God, but sometimes our fear, frustration, doubt and desire for control get in the way of fully trusting Him. We hold tightly to our worries instead of surrendering them, even though He lovingly invites us to do so, “Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you” (1 Peter 5:7).

We try to carry burdens He never meant for us to carry alone. We stress, overthink, and exhaust ourselves when He calls us to rest in Him. We also forget the power of prayer, even though Scripture urges us to remain continually connected to Him, “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Sometimes this quiet disobedience — the lack of trust, the hesitation to surrender, the choosing worry over worship — becomes a different kind of rejection. Not hatred in words, but distance in action. A heart that believes God can move yet struggles to fully believe He will.

So today, let’s ask the Lord to soften our hearts. Let’s ask Him to deepen our faith, renew our trust, and help us truly surrender every area of our lives to Him. May we stop holding onto control and instead rest in the peace that comes from knowing He is sovereign, loving, and always working for our good.

- *Tovia John, Pre-K Teacher @ Pittsburgh Urban Christian School*

Day – 24

Title: **The Law**

Text: John 15:25 “But this happened so that the statement written in their law might be fulfilled: They hated me for no reason.”

What reason did men find to hate Jesus? He was faultless yet He died for all our sins forever. He bore the sins of the world and for that God turned His face from his Son. Jesus was the fulfillment of the prophecies and the law. He is hated for being Jesus.

Psalm 69:4 says, “Those who hate me without cause are more numerous than the hairs of my head; my deceitful enemies, who would destroy me, are powerful. Though I did not steal, I must repay.” It describes a Davidic plea for help against unjust, numerous enemies. This scripture is also the prophetic reference to the unwarranted hatred Jesus experienced among the people He served.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem for the Passover He was hailed and celebrated, the people laying their clothes and tree branches down for Him. What happened that those same people ended up crucifying Him? They thought that the Messiah would save them from the tyranny of the Roman people. Jesus did not do that; He was here on this earth to die for our sins. Crucified and made a mockery by the people He came to save, including us. He was hated, spit on, beaten, flogged and betrayed by His closest followers and disciples. Jesus was the fulfillment of the prophecies and law that God gave. The people hated Him though He did nothing wrong.

If you are an earnest follower of Jesus, it is likely that people can hate you for no reason despite your integrity. This can be nothing but the work of the devil to frustrate you and push you away from becoming a disciple of Jesus. Beware!

- *Megan Piszker, Registered Nurse @ Penn Highlands*

Day – 25

Title: **Testimony to the Truth**

Text: John 15:26-27 “But I will send you the Advocate - the Spirit of Truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me. And you must also testify about me because you have been with me from the beginning of my ministry.”

Here Jesus is telling his disciples that He is going to the Father but they will not be alone because He will send the Holy Spirit to them from the Father. The Holy Spirit will testify that Jesus is with the Father. The disciples are told also that they must tell others about Him with the power of the Holy Spirit because they have been with Jesus from the beginning of His ministry. They had seen all that Jesus had done and can tell others of all His teachings and miracles on earth.

Even though we didn't see Jesus in the flesh we have His gospel and we also have received the Holy Spirit inside of us when we accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit will help us to tell others of Jesus and what He has done for us on earth and by His death on the cross and His resurrection. We are His disciples in the present time.

Part of the testimony to Jesus is the way we live and honor Him in our everyday lives. Such a living will automatically make us want to share the love of Jesus. We cannot and will not keep quiet we will be the spokesperson for Jesus.

Father, help us remember that we have Your Holy Spirit in us and that He will help us be His disciples today. Help us to spread Your word and make more disciples for You. In Jesus name Amen.

- *Briana Copeland, Food Processor @ Stellos Foods*

Day – 26

Title: **Don't Give Up Your Faith**

Text: John 16:1 "I have told you this, so that you will not give up your faith."

Jesus was telling his disciples not to give up on their faith no matter what challenges they may face in the future when He is no longer with them. We too need to keep our faith not only when life is going well but when we are facing challenges in our life. When life is hard and you're not sure what to do, you need to turn to Jesus.

Looking back, there were times I needed faith to get through the challenges. Years ago, there were health issues on my side of the family and multiple health issues going on with my husband's family. There were days when I felt helpless and wondered how we'd get through it. I'd cry out to God asking why? I'd be on my knees crying out. There were days I felt that God had forsaken us. One obstacle after another seemed to be in front of us. Then one day, I had a revelation. Abraham was willing to sacrifice Isaac, and he had faith that God would take care of it. I realized I needed to have faith that God would carry me and my family through whatever challenges we would face. We still had challenges and still do, but I have a peace knowing that I am not alone.

Faith is believing in something that you cannot see but know is true. It's important to help others who may be struggling in their faith to let them know they are not alone. You can share your faith by sharing your struggles with others if they're open to it. You can also demonstrate your faith when interacting with others. People will notice that something is different about you by the way you talk and act when you are facing challenges. Right now, the world seems to be in turmoil, but if you look back on history this is nothing new. This world is temporary, troubles will come and go, but Jesus is constant. He will always be with us. We just need to have faith that He is with us even though we can't see Him. We need to focus on our heavenly Father, read our Bible and pray. Whether life is going well or is challenging us, we need to remember the hymnal by Helen H. Lemmel "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus." God is always faithful to us. We need to remember to be faithful to Him.

- *Becky Kunselman, Domestic Engineer*

Day – 27

Title: **Outcast for Christ**

Text: John 16:2 “For you will be expelled from the synagogues, and the time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing a holy service for God.”

The synagogues were the place where all Jewish religious people gathered. It was a place of belonging. The priest had the authority to excommunicate or reinstate someone in. To be part of the synagogue is a status symbol. Those infected with leprosy were cast out of the synagogue. The priest had the power to examine the affected person and quarantine them and reinstate if found clean and legally fit. To be expelled because of a stigmatized ailment is acceptable but to be expelled because of your following of Jesus is a little too much. Jesus was warning His disciples about being thrown out of a religious place which became an integral part of their society. These leaders of the synagogue would not mind if they had to kill someone to protect the sanctity of the synagogue.

Jesus’ teaching was so radical that synagogue was only a place of gathering and not a literal place where God would dwell. God dwells in the midst of His people. He does not live in temples made by human hands (Acts 17:24). The leaders of the synagogue will become nothing devoid of it. It was their power center and any hindrance to it would make them insecure and that drove them crazy. So they were willing do anything to protect their identity and challenge people against following Jesus.

Well! Whatever the leaders of the synagogue did; people of this generation do it too. These people want everyone to be baited in ignorance and blinded. They do not want them to know the truth if they know it then they will be set free. Jesus liberated everyone from legalism and taught that people were the temple since God’s Holy Spirit lives in them. Jesus made the truth plain it was not the religious center that mattered but the human heart with spiritual fervor because of the indwelling of the Spirit of God. So as disciples of Jesus we need to be prepared even if we would be killed. Scary! Isn’t it? Jesus went through it – we too can!

- *Marcus John, Pastor Grange Church of God*

Day – 28

Title: **Know Him!**

Text: John 16:3 “These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me.”

Jesus’ words in John 16:3 remind us that religious activity does not always reflect a transformed heart. He warns His disciples that harm will come from people who sincerely believe they are doing what is right yet act out of ignorance of God’s true character. The root of this problem is clear: “because they have not known the Father or Me.” Jesus points us toward relationship rather than reputation. Knowing about God is very different from truly knowing Him, and without that relationship, even well-intentioned actions can become hurtful.

There are moments when people hurt us, disappoint us, or act in ways that stir anger and confusion—even toward God. In those moments, this verse reminds us, that Jesus already warned us these things would happen. Their actions are not always a reflection of God’s heart, but of a lack of true knowledge of Him. Remembering this can help guard our hearts from bitterness and keep us anchored in the truth instead of offense.

At the same time, there is a flip side: we must be careful not to become the very people Jesus warned His disciples about. Without a genuine, growing relationship with God, we too can act out of ignorance while thinking we are doing the right thing. Today, let us ask God to open our eyes—to intercede for those who do not yet know Him, asking that He would draw them into relationship, and to search our own hearts so we walk in humility, love, and truth.

- *Tovia John, Pre-K Teacher @ Pittsburgh Urban Christian School*

Day – 29

Title: Truthful Warning

Text: John 16:4 “Yes, I’m telling you these things now, so that when they happen, you will remember I warned you. I didn’t tell you earlier because I was going to be with you for a while longer”

“Don’t be afraid! From now on you’ll be fishing for people!” And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus” (Luke 5:10-11). When Jesus encountered His first disciples, He invited them to join Him in the work of calling people to be a part of what God was doing in the world through Jesus. The response of the disciples to Jesus’ invitation was amazing. They left their fishing boats and nets and followed Jesus. They did not have all the details. They were not sure where this journey would take them. But they were committed to follow Him. The longer they followed and stayed with Jesus, the more devoted to Him and His mission they became. They were going to change the world! There was no talk in those early conversations that Jesus would be rejected, tried, convicted and condemned to die. As time went on over the next 3 years, Jesus did begin to tell them what was ahead for Him. The disciples did not understand or believe. Peter even took Him aside and “assured” Him that none of these things would ever happen to Him. Jesus predicted that even His disciple would abandon Him. But Peter again “assures” Jesus that even if everyone else abandoned Jesus, He would not. He was ready to die for Him. Now as Jesus and the Disciples are making their way to Gethsemane, there is a new sense of urgency in Jesus’ speech. His warnings about what would happen to them became more dire. You too, are going to experience persecution and suffering. In our verse for today, Jesus explains that He has not spoken to them about these things more clearly because He was still with them. But now Jesus has told them plainly that He is leaving them. He wants them to be prepared. He does not want to lose them or have them turn away from Him when they experience rejection and persecution. So He must speak to them clearly. They must strengthen their commitment to Him and not give up. Are there times in your journey as a follower of Jesus when you felt like you wanted to turn away from Him? How did you respond? What kept you faithful to Him? What kept you from leaving Him? As Jesus’ followers we must remember that we will experience rejection. Jesus told us beforehand to expect that. We must not give up. We will find strength to carry on as we remember what Jesus went through. We will find strength to carry on as we spend time in prayer and reading Scripture. We will find strength to carry on through our relationships with other believers.

- *Mark Hosler, Retired Missionary (Haiti)*

Day – 30

Title: **The Overlooked Question: Where Are You Going?**

Text: John 16:5 “But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’”

This is an interesting verse in the context of John 15 & 16. It is wedged between Jesus’s teaching about the necessity of abiding in Jesus the true vine, and His encouragement that in this world we will have trouble but Jesus overcomes the world (16:33). Also sprinkled around verse 5 is Jesus’s teaching about loving one another, His love for us, obeying Jesus, bearing much fruit, how Jesus chose His followers, the power of the Holy Spirit, and how our sorrow will be turned to joy.

John 16:5 hints at the confusion and misunderstanding of the disciples all through chapters 15 & 16. Jesus is laying out where hope and victory comes from, but the disciples miss it like many of us do today. We tend to miss the power of Jesus, and instead focus on what we can see or feel. We sometimes fall into the snare of despair and confusion by not being able to see beyond our immediate circumstances because we fail to abide in Jesus, the true vine. But Jesus is very aware of our tendencies. He reminds them (and us) that He is going back to the Father. He reminds them of His role (pretty much everything: Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer, Sender of the Holy Spirit, Preparer of our eternal home); compared to ours (abide in Him and invite people to meet Him). You can almost feel the frustration of Jesus in verse 5. He has taught them everything they need to know in order to face the trials of this world. But the disciples are so focused on their own circumstances that sorrow has filled their hearts (16:6). They don’t even ask where Jesus is going. If they had, they would have seen and understood that hope is not lost; in fact, hope blossoms when Jesus leaves because He is going to send the Holy Spirit to help us in ways that Jesus in person could not (16:7-11).

So as you prepare for Resurrection Sunday, abide in Jesus and know without a doubt that He has overcome. And because He has overcome, you will too. We are raised with Jesus, out of despair; out of sin; out of confusion; and into eternal life and victory - not just in the world to come, but today as well.

- *Mike Bobula, Pastor Latrobe First Church of GOD*

Day – 31

Title: **Grieving is Real**

Text: John 16:6 “Instead, you grieve because of what I’ve told you.”

The conversation that Jesus had with the disciples were mind-blowing. They were unable to comprehend what Jesus was telling them. What they probably understood was Jesus was going away, that was their sure comprehension.

Why were they grieving? The reasons were many – they had to leave their profession to walk in an uncharted territory. They had left their families; the comfort they gave were not there anymore since they were out on ministry with Jesus. Because they journeyed with Jesus they were now kind of enemies to the Jewish authorities. They were under scanner. Given all these – fear and insecurity of their future should have gripped them. Even before they could have a complete understanding of Jesus, He was ready to go to His Father. The three plus years with Jesus was eventful. It was coming to a close. His departure would leave everything unsettled. They still needed help and support even if they continued the ministry of Jesus. They were so unsure of themselves. Now you know why the disciples were grieving.

How often such grieving is real when we face issues of sudden loss? Especially when some loved one on whom we were dependent is no more. Life feels empty. We are devastated. We crumble under unbearable grief. However for those of us who follow Jesus, even such a loss is gain because God is in control. He knows what is best for us and gives us nothing less than the best.

The disciples were going to lose Jesus that shattered them and their life’s purpose. The good news is Jesus is well-aware of the situation that is why He sent the comforter Holy Spirit who will guide us and lead us. Like Paul said, “Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him.” (Philippians 3:8) Amen!

- *Hannah John, Registered Nurse @ UPMC*

Day – 32

Title: **Spirit of GOD – Counselor**

Text: John 16:7 “But it is actually best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Counselor won’t come. If I do go away, he will come because I will send him to you”

Jesus knows what is about to happen. He is now using this time in the Upper Room and on the walk to Gethsemane to teach. It is essentially His “farewell address.” Jesus now reveals to them that He would soon be going away. He has told them that death awaited Him when they get to Jerusalem. Apparently it hasn’t really sunk in yet. They are so focused on their own agenda, their own expectation that Jesus was going to overthrow the Romans and set aside the religious leaders and become the Messiah-King like David was. But now as they make this journey, the disciples begin to understand that Jesus is serious. He is leaving. They don’t understand all the details. They don’t know where He is going. But Jesus detects that they understand. He says, “You are very sad” (vs. 6). We would expect that response. They have followed Jesus for around 3 years. They have witnessed His power in His miracles. They have listened to His teaching. They have seen His kindness and compassion for those who are broken. They have come to love Jesus deeply. They will miss Him. How will they go on without His presence with them. Jesus assures them now, that His departure will actually be good for them. After He leaves, He will send a Helper to be with them. The Greek word is “Paraclete.” It is translated with several English words in different English translations – Counsellor, Comforter, Advocate. He is referring to the Holy Spirit. In God’s plan the Holy Spirit cannot be sent until Jesus has returned to the Father in Heaven. In the verses that follow, Jesus outlines what the ministry of the Holy Spirit will look like. What we need to understand in this promise is that while Jesus is leaving, He is not abandoning His disciples (including you and me). We are not left to fend for ourselves in this world. This Counselor will be Jesus’ representative to us. There is another important lesson for us in the promise of this verse. There are times when we experience something that we would consider to be a loss. But the loss may be part of God’s plan. He will use that loss to accomplish a greater good. Jesus will be gone, but the Holy Spirit will come. God’s ministry will now not be limited only to the “physical place” where Jesus was. God’s work in the world will now expand to wherever the Holy Spirit is present. As Jesus’ followers will receive the Spirit God will be able to work through them wherever they are. As the Holy Spirit is present in your life, God can use you to expand His work in the world.

- *Mark Hosler, Retired Missionary (Haiti)*

Day – 33

Title: **Spirit Led**

Text: John 16:8 “And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment.”

To the disciples everything around Jesus was new. His thoughts, His teachings, His ways and His love for God and His people. Now when He spoke about the coming of the Holy Spirit it was a lot to comprehend. Jesus knew it and therefore He was describing the work and the power of the Holy Spirit. During the times of the patriarchs Spirit encounter was rare and it was not for everyone. It was meant for priests (not all of them though) and prophets. Jesus was speaking of the Holy Spirit who would be for everyone. Bingo! That was unexpected for people who were simpletons.

Jesus was about to get back to the Father and all these days He was there with the disciples in everything. Disciples will be shattered without Jesus. They were bold because of Jesus. After Jesus is gone the Holy Spirit will be sent from the Father and since He is a Spirit He will be with everyone simultaneously unlike Jesus’ physical presence which was limited. With the Holy Spirit indwelling the disciples does not have to be afraid. They will be led by the Spirit.

No one can confess Jesus to be their Lord without the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3). The Spirit of God that enabled a person to see Jesus as Savior will continue to convict people of their sin and lead them to a changed being. On our own it is impossible but with the Spirit change is inevitable. The Spirit of God will lead the person to a right living making the person holy and pleasing to God. The Spirit will also caution the individual of the coming of the Lord and that none can escape the judgement of God.

Let us heed to the Spirit of God and be led by Him. The Spirit gives power to be a witness.

- *Marcus John, Pastor Grange Church of God*

Day – 34

Title: **Unbelief is Sin**

Text: John 16:9 “The world’s sin is that it refuses to believe in me.”

What gets interesting is this the Spirit of God will convince people of their sin. People do not want the Spirit of God because they knew when the Holy Spirit comes upon them, they will have to change their way of living. This perspective would frustrate them and therefore they prefer to stay the way they are. Change frightens everyone, especially when you know what you are doing is not right. So they refuse to believe in God and challenge against it. The Apostle John calls this refusal to believe in the Spirit of God as sin.

What then do people believe? Anything that is convenient to them. We live at a time when people do not have any convictions so to say principled lifestyle or ethical driven. The way life goes on is purely convenience based. If something is uncomfortable to their living style, they call it deviant and make a big noise about it.

In a world centered around AI people find it hard to believe in God. But they have happily put their trust in machines and smart devices. The device is smart but people are not. You are monitored by people who have nothing to do with you. Some of them are strangers and they monitor you not to be of any good to you but to see how you can become a consumer. The God who watches over you does it because He loves you. He is joyful to give you the best if you believe in Him.

Unbelief in God is a sin. How often do we struggle with it? Can we ask God during this season to increase our faith? Let us consciously trust God and wait on Him. His Spirit is there to help us in moments of disbelief.

- *Marcus John, Pastor Grange Church of God*

Day – 35

Title: **Christ is my Righteousness**

Text: John 16:10 “Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more.”

The disciples of Jesus were probably overwhelmed hearing whatever He said to them. However Jesus did not want them to be in the dark and so He gave them an insight into the every aspect pertaining to the Spirit of God. Jesus had made a huge claim that righteousness was available because He was going to the Father.

What did Jesus truly mean? Did the disciples grasp what He meant? Certainly yes. These Jewish men knew how one attains right living. They had to earnestly follow all the Law of Moses to the letter. Sadly, there was none who was righteous since it was not easy to do so. Being righteous by human measure had always been a struggle. Jesus paved a way for it.

What did Jesus do? He was the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. His death on the cross made way for people to be right with God. Our righteousness is like filthy rags but with our trust in Jesus' finished work on the cross we are made right. Now because Jesus had ascended to the Father He will be sending the promised Holy Spirit. He will guide the disciples in all truth. When Jesus said they will not see Him anymore – He meant His physical presence but He will be with them as the Spirit of God.

This promise of righteousness was not just for the disciples but for everyone who seeks Jesus universally. His Spirit will make people righteous and we do not have to strive hard to be right.

He is all my righteousness and I stand complete in Him and worship Him. Worship Christ the Lord.

- *Marcus John, Pastor Grange Church of God*

Day – 36

Title: **Devil is Defeated**

Text: John 16:11 “Judgment will come because the prince of this world has already been judged”

In this farewell address that Jesus is preaching to His disciples, He has announced that He will be going away and they will not see Him anymore. His disciples were of course troubled by these words from Jesus. But to calm their fear and anxiety about His departure, He tells them that it is actually to their benefit that He will leave. After He leaves, He will send another to be with them – the Holy Spirit. The Spirit will be an Advocate, who will come alongside them. He will be Christ’s presence with them and in them. Jesus’ disciples will benefit from the coming of the Spirit. He will guide them and remind them of what Jesus had taught them. Because of the work of the Spirit, they will continue to grow in their knowledge of Jesus. But the Spirit will also have a work to do among those who are not followers of Jesus. Jesus refers to those who are not His followers as “the world.” In this context, the world does not refer to the sphere in our solar system that we call Earth. When Jesus uses the term world, He is referring to all that is not God – all people who are not aligned with God and who are opposed to His Son, Jesus. In these verses (8-11), Jesus says that one of the Spirit’s activities with unbelievers is “Conviction.” The NIV translation says that the Spirit will prove the world to be wrong with regards to sin, Righteousness and Judgment. This is a conviction that will result in shame and calls for repentance. Today we come to that last act of conviction - Judgment. The enemies of Jesus had made up their minds about who Jesus was. But they were wrong. They had judged Jesus and were convinced that He was guilty. And it appears that they are getting away with their lies. Jesus appears to be losing. But Jesus says that those who oppose Him, are aligned with His enemy. Jesus calls him, “the prince of this world.” This is a title that is used to refer to satan. He is being judged and will be condemned. I believe that Jesus wants His followers to understand that even though it appears that Jesus’ enemies have condemned Him, we should not fear them. Jesus’ enemies and our enemies are aligned with satan and satan will be judged and is in fact already under judgment. We must not be discouraged when we are experiencing opposition. Jesus is aware of what our enemies are doing to us. And He assures us that those enemies will be held accountable for their sin because their leader has been judged. Are there times when your enemies are tearing you down and trying to silence you? Do not be afraid. Our Savior has won the victory over satan and He will be with us always.

- *Mark Hosler, Retired Missionary (Haiti)*

Day – 37

Title: **Training Is Not Yet Complete**

Text: John 16:12 “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear.”

Jesus is speaking to His disciples for the last time. The setting is at the Last Supper in the upper room. The disciples have been with Jesus for three years, but they did not yet fully understand because these teachings need time and the help of the Holy Spirit who was yet to come. If the disciples had known everything that was going to happen, they probably would have been afraid and unable to handle it.

Even though Jesus told the disciples of His crucifixion and subsequent resurrection, they were too overwhelmed to take it all in at that time. What Jesus was telling them was totally out of their experience. Jesus knew the limitations of the disciples’ spiritual and emotional state. Nothing like this had until now ever occurred.

This is consistent with Biblical ways of gradual revelation. In the Old Testament, God revealed His plans and purposes over time. For example, in Genesis 3:15, right after Adam and Eve fell, God promised a future Redeemer who would crush the serpent’s head. As we read through the Bible, more details are provided. Finally, the revelation finds its fullest expression in Jesus Christ.

Be open and prepared for God to reveal His truth as you grow in faith and understanding. What is God’s will for you? Remember your training is not complete yet! We are trainees of Jesus...

- *Shirley Wachob (Children’s Sunday School Teacher)*

Day – 38

Title: **Guiding Spirit**

Text: John 16:13 “When the Spirit of Truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.”

This verse tells us that the disciples would have the Holy Spirit come to them and will bring the truth of Jesus and His word. The Spirit brings God’s word and truth because He hears it from God himself. He will also lead them into what the future holds for them to spread Jesus’ ministry to others.

We also have that same Spirit of Truth in us. The Holy Spirit fills us with the Word of God and brings it to us as we read the Bible and study and hide it in our hearts. He tells us that one day we will be with Him forever. We are also supposed to spread his Word from now on so that we can make disciples of others. We need to look to the future and the people we can lead to know Christ as their Savior. It is our ministry here on earth to all who will hear and learn about Jesus through us.

Heavenly Father, may we hold the truth in our hearts and let your Holy Spirit guides us to all who need to come to know the salvation that comes through the grace of Jesus. Let our ministry bring all glory to You. In Jesus name Amen.

- *Briana Copeland, Food Processor @ Stellos Foods*

Day – 39

Title: **Holy Spirit's Power**

Text: John 16:14 "He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me."

Jesus declares to the disciples the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God will guide them. All along Jesus guided them. He taught them. He mentored them. They were dependent on Him. They were even surprised when Jesus sent them two by two and they witnessed miracles and demon-possessed delivered. They couldn't believe themselves it was a shock of their life. Now Jesus was going to the Father and they would be worried so Jesus had to help them understand that they have a greater support. The help will be from the Spirit of God.

The Holy Spirit will also reveal the plans of Jesus for each of them. The disciples should have to depend on the Spirit and He will lead them one step at time. He will fill them with wisdom from God. He will bring glory to God when the disciples do what the Lord had revealed through the Spirit. When Jesus was with them they were all together in one place and their boundaries were defined. Now when the Holy Spirit comes on them, they can be everywhere as Jesus expected them to preach to all mankind. They will all be united in the Spirit but physically present in different places serving the Lord Jesus. The Spirit's power is the proof of the resurrected Lord Jesus.

This same Holy Spirit will be at work within us if we avail ourselves to be used of God. The question is we feel unworthy, ill-equipped or intimidated because of the task ahead of us. We don't have to fear nothing our only goal should be to be in connection with Jesus through the Holy Spirit and He will guide us. He will provide us with the zeal and the wisdom. All our deeds will glorify God. We need to reflect Jesus, simply put – Be Like Him.

- *Marcus John, Pastor Grange Church of God*

Day – 40

Title: **Spirit Led**

Text: John 16:15 “All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, ‘The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.’”

The relationship that exists between the Father and Jesus is incredible. Jesus pointed out to the disciples that He came to do the will of His Father. Jesus was obedient even to the death on the cross. Jesus lived to honor the Father and that is the reason Father gave His Son the name above all names that at His name every knee would bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Whenever Jesus fulfilled what the Father had wanted Him to, the Father took His son back to Him and seated Him at His right hand. He honored Him. The promised Holy Spirit was sent by the Father so Jesus’ name will be established and the Kingdom of God will be built. People everywhere would turn from their evil ways and follow God. The Spirit of God will guide people to honor and please God. Wherever there would be a need the Spirit will intercede on behalf of people who earnestly follow Jesus.

Do we rely on the Holy Spirit? Do we have an invasion from the Spirit? The Spirit of God is gentle and therefore we need to be in total surrender to Him. Such a life will be a blessing to many who encounter us. The Spirit in us will prompt us to serve people at their point of need. We will be sensitive to others as the Spirit will lead us. He will fill us with wisdom to deal every situation and serve every person in need. The Spirit of God will inspire us to lead people to the saving grace of Jesus.

The Spirit of God will enable us to walk in the ways of Jesus pleasing Him. Spirit of God is liberating and that liberation will be contagious. Therefore let us walk with the Spirit of God and be like JESUS!

- *Marcus John, Pastor Grange Church of GOD*