

First Love Life... *Loving Jesus first*

Fullness of Joy

Loving Jesus is born out of His love for us. We've studied this now for several weeks. This week we will see the ways He has made it possible for us to live in Him, love Him and be transformed by Him. We will hear Him tell us how to live in fullness of joy.

Last week we heard Jesus tell his disciples about His imminent death and resurrection. He told them He was leaving. Now we are going to hear His final instructions and promises He made to them, and us. Pray that God will give you ears to hear and the will to obey.

Be encouraged to DIG deeper if you have time. These Words are rich with life changing power. These passages are revolutionary. *Jesus is giving us the keys to real life in Him!* This is where we find the path to the full, abundant life He promised (John 10:10) and prayed for (John 17:13). He also warned that many will not walk here, but will choose to live in mediocrity. Are you ready?

Day One

Life Points . . .

Listening to God is a privilege beyond our imagination. His Word is an incredible gift. Today we are going to prepare our hearts to receive it. Kind of like cleaning house before guests come. Not for appearance sake, but for pure access into all of our heart, soul, mind and strength.

- Take a few moments and prepare your heart to hear Jesus. Are you anxious? Pray. Sometimes it helps to write out on paper what is consuming your mind so you can concentrate. I call it my A (*for Anxiety*) list. Use the space provided for today: _____

- Are you convicted? Do you know of something in your heart that you need to confess and tell the Lord you are sorry for? Clear the air so you can hear Him speak unhindered. Is there some action you need to take in response? An apology maybe? What action(s) will you take? _____

- Are you compromising? Often we feel our time in His Word is dry because we are avoiding what He's already told us to do and we are entertaining ongoing sin. Things like gossip, lying, self indulgence, greed, vanity, selfishness, self-righteousness or a critical heart etc. These are like termites in our walls. Ask the Lord to shine His light brightly into your

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dark corners and then confess the sin. He is faithful to forgive (1 John 1:8-9). _____

- Jesus came to set us free from ourselves and the traps we find ourselves in. He knows we cannot overcome sin in ourselves. So, He is giving us His Spirit to empower us. Tomorrow we will embrace that gift. To end your time today, kneel and express your desire to live in Jesus. If that scares you, tell Him. If it excites you tell Him that. Have an honest conversation with your Lord. _____

Day Two

The Word we will hear in this lesson is the difference between real life in Christ and just playing at being a Christian. It's very exciting to consider the gift He's giving us. Will you live it?

1. Read **John 14:1-4**. Jesus has told His disciples He is going away. What is He telling them here? _____

2. Read **John 14:6-7**. Jesus makes several strong claims in both verses. What are they? _____

3. Read **John 14:8-11**. What truth does Jesus point out one last time to His disciples? _____

- a. Do you ever wonder if Jesus is God? How does this passage clear it up for you? _____

- b. Why do you think it is so important to have this reality in place? _____

4. If we believe Jesus is God and He is speaking the Words of God, how do you think we should listen and respond? _____

5. Read **John 14:12-14**. We need to be careful here. We naturally want to know what great things *we* will do! Don't we? I'd like to perform a miracle or two, wouldn't you? ☺ Let's concentrate on what we can apply here.

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- a. What does Jesus say is our role in **verse 12**? _____

- b. What phrase regarding *asking* is repeated in **verses 13 and 14**? _____

6. The NIV study Bible says it well, “*In My Name*: Not simply prayer that mentions Jesus’ name but prayer in accordance with all that the person who bears the name is. It is prayer aimed at carrying forward the work Jesus did—prayer that He Himself will answer.” The name of the Lord is a manifestation of His character.
- a. How does this affect the way in which we pray *in Jesus’ name*? _____

- b. Obviously, in order to pray in accordance with who Jesus is, I must know Him. I can easily pray in my name, representing all I am! How does this motivate you to know Him more? _____

Life Points . . .

Remember, we are listening now to the truth of what it means to *die to self* and *live in Christ* (Luke 9, Lesson 4) to live the life of joy.

- Jesus is the Way, Truth and the Life, there is NO other way. This is referring to salvation, yes, but also to our daily experience of God. We come to God through Jesus all the time! Why will Jesus do what we ask in His name (see **John 14:11-13**)? _____

- His heart’s desire is to glorify the Father and that is the prayer He will answer. When you pray, are you asking what will bring the Father the most glory? Write down your thoughts about this and what you are learning. _____

- God knew we would struggle with this because we are so naturally selfish! What promise does He give us in **Romans 8:26-27**? _____

Days Three and Four

1. Read **John 14:15-31**.
- a. What did Jesus command in **John 13:34**? _____

- b. Who does Jesus promise to give us? _____

- c. What does that mean to us? _____

2. Let's take a quick side trip. Paul explains the power of this Spirit in us in **Romans 8:5-17**. We won't take the time to explore all that this means (great topic to dig deeper on!), but this will help expand our understanding of what exactly Jesus has given us. Read this Romans passage. What stands out to you?

- a. Even if we don't understand all we've been given, clearly we've been given what we need to live in Christ! Who has been given this Spirit according to **verse 9**? _____

- b. What kind of Spirit have we been given according to **verses 15-16**? _____

3. As you read this passage, you will quickly see the obvious connection of love with obedience. These two cannot be separated. Jesus states the obvious in **John 14:15, 21, and 23**.
- a. What does He promise in **verse 21**? _____

- b. Do you want Jesus to reveal Himself to you? _____
- c. He states it another way in **verse 23**. What does He say here? _____

- d. What signifies that we don't love Jesus Christ according to **verse 24**? _____

4. Read **verse 26** again. Jesus repeats the phrase, "in my name." To what or who is He referring this time? How does this shed more light on this phrase? _____

- a. So, what is one role of the Holy Spirit? _____

- b. **Verse 27** magnifies this gift. What have we been given and how is it different than what the world gives? _____

5. Read **Galatians 5:22-26**. What else is available to us through the presence of the Spirit in Jesus name according to **Galatians 5:22-23**? _____

- a. What happens to our sinful nature? _____

- b. Crucifixion is painful. Crucifying sinful passions and desires takes work on our part as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit. How does **verse 25** word this process? _____

6. There's much more to learn about the incredible gift of the Spirit. You may want to do a study on your own. We need to see what **2 Timothy 1:7** says. How does this verse encourage you when you think of dying to self and living in Christ? _____

7. How does this relate to Jesus' instruction in **John 14:27**? _____

Life Points . . .

Fear is the enemy of faith. Fear paralyzes, faith empowers. The Apostle Paul spent a lot of time explaining to followers of Christ all they had been given in His Spirit. He also prayed we would embrace what we have. Take the prayer from Ephesians 1 below and pray it for yourself and whomever else you want. Underline what you need to hear today:

¹⁵Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere, ¹⁶I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, ¹⁷asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. ¹⁸I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance.

¹⁹I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power ²⁰that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. ²¹Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. ²²God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. ²³And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself. Amen.

Day Five

John 15 is a beautiful teaching of Jesus, describing His desire for intimacy with us and our response to that call. As you read it, remember that when He says "you," He means YOU.

1. Read **John 15:1-4**. The Holy Spirit is the One that gives us power to live in Christ and He in us. (Help: In the Greek, the same word is used for the term 'pruning' and 'cleaning'.)

a. How is it possible that we produce fruit for God? _____

b. Why is cleaning, or pruning necessary? _____

c. What are some things in your life you sense the Gardner pruning away? _____

2. Read **John 15:5-8** outloud. As you read it, think about this being a description of First Love Living.
- a. How much fruit will you produce by remaining in the Vine? _____

 - b. How much if you're not connected? _____

 - c. What promises does Jesus make in **verses 7 and 8**? _____

 - d. What is the motive behind our requests? _____

3. Read **John 15:9-17**. Really listen to the heart of Jesus. These aren't just beautiful words, these words speak the truth.
- a. How much does Jesus love you? _____

 - b. How do we remain in His love? _____

 - c. Why is Jesus telling us this? _____

4. Jesus repeats the command in **verse 12**, and then goes on to define it a bit further. How extensive is this love command? Share your thoughts: _____

- a. Why does Jesus call us His friends? _____

 - b. Read **verse 16** carefully. What point is Jesus making? _____

 - c. If He appointed us to bear fruit, can we fail? _____

 - d. What is our responsibility in the fruit bearing process? _____

 - e. How much credit can we take if anything good comes out of our lives? _____

 - f. Who gets ALL the glory? _____

 - g. How is remaining in Jesus connected to our prayers to the Father (**v. 16**)? _____

 - h. Jesus repeats the same command in **verse 17**. How many times has He stated this *new* command in the last three chapters? _____

