

That You May Have LIFE

Week 25 Discussion Questions

Text: John 15:18-16:15

Icebreaker: If your connection to Christ was measured in cell phone service bars, how many bars did you have this week? What made your connection feel stronger or weaker?

1. Read this week's passage. What stands out from the text or sermon?
2. Recap: Look back through these verses in John (5:18; 7:25-31; 10:33; 11:45-57). What claims and actions of Jesus caused the world to hate him, arrest him, and eventually kill him?
Those that have witnessed Jesus' miracles and teachings tend to be ok with the miracles (More wine? Yes please! Abundance of food? Living water? Yes please! Healing? Raising from the dead? Of course!). What they have a problem with is Jesus' exclusive claims to be equal with God.
3. Being "of" something has to do with identity and allegiance. Why do Jesus' claims of equality with God bring hatred on him from those whose allegiance and identity are "of the world" and what does this tell us about their allegiance?
This threatens their religion and their power. The Jews had expectations of the Messiah that would come, and it included overpowering their current oppressors and giving them power and authority. They expected that Jesus would subvert the status quo and change everything. Jesus did this, but not in the way they expected, and that threatened them.
4. What role do "expectations" play in all relationships? Describe a time in a relationship (parent, friend, spouse, child, family, co-worker, etc) when you had specific expectations of someone and they did not meet those expectations. How did that affect your relationship with them?
Unmet expectations often bring tension and conflict. When our expectations do not align and we are not on the same page with one another, we experience a sort of loss and disconnection. Sometimes our expectations are warranted, but sometimes we have poor expectations. Communication and clarity is always helpful in these situations in order to set expectations.

5. What expectations do you have of God as you navigate your life with him? How does this passage shape or change those expectations and what impact does it have on your relationship with him?

God does not promise a perfect, care-free, or pain-free life. This passage tells us that we will face trouble, but we will also experience empowerment from the Holy Spirit and Jesus will continue his life-giving work through us. Both things are true and should shape our expectations of the Christian life.

6. Jesus tells his disciples that their identity is *not of this world*. Our understanding of what it means to be “not of this world” is based not only on the rejection of the world’s identity, but even more so on the acceptance of the identity Jesus offers. How does Jesus describe the identity the disciples should accept and embrace?

Sometimes it is easier to judge the world and simply reject it, claiming to be “not of this world.” But God does not simply tell us to reject the world, in fact he has left us here in it for a very specific purpose. While we reject the things of this world, that means rejecting allegiance to anything in this world and instead giving our allegiance to Christ. Our allegiance to Christ means being of this world and loving it as he has: bringing life, flourishing, and bearing fruit within it.

7. How does Jesus tell his disciples to respond to those who hate them?

By “bearing witness”—discuss what this means in light of all we have studied of Jesus’ example and teachings in the book of John.

8. Have you ever experienced persecution because of your faith? How did you respond?

9. Why is it an advantage that Jesus would go away?

When Jesus was here on earth, God’s presence was geographically and temporally experienced, but it was also geographically and temporally bound. Jesus’ going to heaven to prepare a place for us and sending his Spirit means that the same God is now present and not bound by space and time. We ALL can have Jesus very presence indwelled within us. The scope and magnitude of God’s presence grows exponentially when Jesus leaves his spirit with us.