

**Sunday, March 7, 2021 – Message by Tim Bonikowsky**

**Questions for further reflection and discussion**

Life Within the Ultimate Community...Community with God

**Opening Questions**

What was one thing that stood out to you from Sunday's message? Why did it catch your attention?

What are your thoughts on the 3 word summary of scripture... "Where are you?" (taken from God's first question to Adam and Eve after they ate the fruit) Can you think of a better 3 word summary?

Was there anything that was confusing, difficult to believe, or that you disagreed with? Discuss.

**Overview**

**Main Points**

1. Jesus Lives in Community with God
2. Jesus Invites us into Community with God
3. What Life is Like within the Community of God
4. How We Enter

Key Idea: Eternal life is knowing the Father, and knowing Jesus, His Son (John 17). Just as Jesus lived His earthly life in constant fellowship within the community of God, So we who follow Jesus are invited to live our every moment in community with God. In learning to live in His presence, we recapture our true identity, purpose, and provision for life and are filled up and empowered to live well into community with one another and for the world.

## Discussion Questions

1. Spend a few minutes reading John 15:1-8
  - a. Discuss the relationship between a vine and a branch (proximity, functions)
  - b. According to this passage, what is the branch's role and what is the outcome?
  - c. Discuss the ways in which the word picture of the branch bearing fruit differs from a life of "trying to do the right things"?
2. Discuss the definition Jesus gives of eternal life in John 17:3. Does this definition challenge your previous understanding of eternal life? If so, how? How does Jesus' definition impact the way we might live our lives? When considering that eternal life is about knowing Jesus here and now and even more completely when we die, what implications does this definition have for those of us who might not be interested in knowing Jesus in the here and now?
3. **What has been your experience with living in awareness of the presence of God? (Is He easy to remember throughout your day? Do you sometimes go for long periods of time forgetting His existence?)**
4. Describe a time that you have become particularly aware of the presence of God with you. How did that impact your perspective in that moment (thoughts, words, actions)?
5. How is your understanding of life with God enhanced to remember that He exists as a community: Father, Son, Spirit?
6. In what context/situations/environments do you most easily become aware of His presence with you?
7. **What habits or activities have been helpful for you in cultivating an awareness of God's presence throughout your day?**
8. Take a minute to imagine how your days would look different (in thought, words, actions) if you were able to live in unbroken awareness that the Lord is your Shepherd, and you are never in want (never lacking what you need). How would your life be different than it is now?
9. **What is one truth from the sermon or the discussion tonight, that you would like to nurture, meditate on, and begin to live into in a more deliberate way in the days ahead?**

\*\*Questions in bold can be prioritized if time is short

## Scripture References

### Introduction

Hebrews 1:1-3

### Jesus living in community with God

Matthew 3:16-4:1, Matthew 17:5, Mark 1:35, John 5:19, John 6:38, John 12:49-50, John 14:10, Matthew 26:36, Luke 11:1, Luke 5:16, Luke 10:21, Luke 6:12

### Jesus inviting us into community with God

Matthew 11:28, John 7:37-38, John 6:35, John 10:10, John 17:3, John 17:1-26,

### Life within the community of God

John 1:11, Romans 8:17, John 15:1-8

### How we Enter

Psalm 16, Psalm 23, I Thessalonians 5:16-18,

## Recommended Reading (always better when read with a friend ;)

**Experiencing the Trinity-** *Darrell Johnson* (this book was so helpful in helping me better understand and actually become excited about the trinity!)

**Union with Christ-** *Rankin Wilbourne* (a very comprehensive look into what it means to be "in Christ", to be united with Him, etc., quite encouraging with all of the implications that stem from our union with Him).

**The Practice of the Presence of God-** *Brother Lawrence* (a collection of letters outlining Brother Lawrence's exciting pursuit of learning to live in God's presence at every moment)

**The Spirit of the Disciplines-** *Dallas Willard* (Provides an excellent foundation for and explanation of the use of spiritual disciplines as means of transformation by God's Spirit)

**Life Without Lack- *Living in the Fullness of Psalm 23-*** *Dallas Willard* (A deep dive into the foundations for cultivating a life without lack, a life of contentment, a life of trust)

**Celebration of Discipline-*The Path to Spiritual Growth-*** *Richard Foster* (Practical book on exploring/practicing the spiritual disciplines)

**The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry-** *John Mark Comer* (very good content on spiritual practices and slowing down)