

## Mount Olive Wednesday Night Bible Study and Prayer Meeting

September 22, 2021

### John 15: 15 - 17

**15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. 16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. 17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.**

---

Pastor Tom noted to begin our study that God has put an asterisk \* on Chapter 15 in John so we can move slowly and deliberately through each verse to glean their wisdom and teachings for us. This chapter is a defining point in the Gospels as Jesus nears the cross.

### Verses 15 and 16

*Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*

*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

Pastor Tom introduced the topic of 'the changing of the guard' in our churches today. For example, Arlene is one of the last of the 'old guard' who led the church for a long time. Her children, as well as many others, were raised in the church and brought their children to church. Karen had told Pastor Tom that she now felt like one of the 'old guard' as the mantle has been passed down. Sadly, though, many of the younger group nowadays are leaving the area and/or leaving the church. So the question is asked: Who will replace our church leadership as the new 'old guard' passes the mantle on?

Pastor Tom continued by explaining why he has been preaching from the book of Acts recently: it is because events in that book reflect our times right now. It addresses what needs to be done to guarantee the replacement or continuation of leadership. It is a 'how to' for establishing a 'new guard'.

Pastor Tom then asked Krystal what she thinks about how this transition can take place.

Krystal spoke frankly about the need for the 'old guard' to listen to and encourage new ideas from new people because what has worked in the past may not have the same results today. The younger people can become discouraged when they feel they are not heard. So the leadership should let them connect and try new and different ministries to spread the Gospel.

Returning to the text from John 15:16...

\*We often say we have found God, but in reality He was never lost! We were lost and God chose us.

Then Pastor Tom posed this question:

Do we really believe that God has chosen us for a particular reason?

Various answers were shared, some said yes, others said no.

Extending this thought, Pastor Tom asked those who answered yes what their purpose/call/ordination was. Some said as a witness, others said to glorify God in all actions.

In verse 16 it says we have produced fruit (this is how God changed you). Here at Mt. Olive church, we have produced fruit for a long time. It is very important now that we should make sure our fruit should remain. And our fruit remains by loving one another, which brings us to verse 17.

## Verse 17

*These things I command you, that ye love one another.*

\*This is not a suggestion but a command from Jesus. We know though that it is not always easy to love one another. But this is the inspired word of God and Jesus says, "It is not what you want to think, but I command you to love one another!"

\*When the younger 'Elishas' show interest in starting a new ministry at church, the older people should let them walk with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and love them and guide them in the Word. Some church leadership in many denominations have bent the rules to accommodate culture/society. They have strayed from the Word. (What one generation tolerates, the next generation accepts as suitable.) We cannot always control all leadership but as Joshua 24:15 states:

"But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

When Pastor Tom began working with Krystal, he told her she was his 'spiritual daughter'. He would encourage her and help her grow in her leadership role. But if she leans out of bounds, he will pull her back into the guidelines of the Word.

So we can find new ways to serve, starting new ministries, etc.

Finally, we look at the promise that Jesus gave in all these verses: If we follow His commands and love one another, we can ask Him for whatever you desire and He will give it to us. Remember not to take this verse out of context. It comes with the condition of following Him and loving one another.

---

May the Lord watch between me and thee

While we are absent one from the other.

---