

Mount Olive Wednesday Night Bible Study and Prayer Meeting

August 18, 2021

John 15: 8 - 10

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. **9** As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. **10** If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

Pastor Tom began by reading all the verses (8 - 17) he hoped to get through tonight. These are all the precious words of Jesus as He addresses His disciples just before His arrest on the night before His death. Pastor Tom also posed the question:

Do you ever question why you do something?
For example: Why do we 'do' church?

Many varied responses:

- To get out of this world and its negativity. Church can be a refuge and sanctuary.
- It's the Lord's House, a place of peace/calm in a world of chaos.
- Christ commanded/ordained us to 'do' church. It is the body and bride of Christ.
- It provides fellowship with like-minded people. Hebrews 10:25 tells us not to forsake/forget to gather for fellowship. This fellowship can build us up when we are weary from the week between church services.
- Church is a place to worship God with the purpose to glorify God.
- Church is like a mini family reunion each week.
- A place to get strength for the coming week; to refuel when our spiritual 'tank' is empty

Pastor Jon found an interesting emphasis in John 15 about 4 ways to be bearing fruit:

1. Sometimes we bear no fruit at all
2. We bear fruit by sharing, caring and giving witness to the Gospel

3. We are purged/cleansed to bear more fruit.
4. When we abide in Jesus, we can bear much fruit.

All of which connects to another reason why we 'do' church...

- Because we were given the Great Commission to go and preach and baptize in the name of Jesus.

Pastor Tom then recalled some observations that Pastor Randy (newly appointed to South Fork 1st Church) had made at a recent meeting:

-Of all the forms for the Conference, not one asks how many souls were saved in people who have come to Jesus. Baptisms and memberships don't necessarily mean one has accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior.

-The church is not all about us but about outreach to non-churched folks. (Tom voiced his concern about reaching a goal of 100 men at the Breakfast this coming Saturday...most who signed up are already believers. Hopefully, this will become an evangelistic event. If one person there gave their heart to Jesus, it would be worth it)

-In learning about the people who live nearest to South Fork 1st (as with many other churches), they do not come to that particular church.

Verse 8

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

*So...we finally get the Biblical perspective of why we 'do' church here in verse 8: which is to glorify the Father. This leads on to bearing the most fruit which is followed by the fruit (sharing, caring, witnessing...) speaking to the non-believers.

*Each of us must grow from being a convert into being a disciple who can witness to other converts.

Pastor Jon noted that if you cannot remember the name of the last person you told about Jesus, it has been too long!

Nancy Nadonolly brought up the idea that we should offer a class on how to be a mentor before we assign one to a new member. This would help the new member grow into discipleship.

Verse 9

As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

*Look closely at the chain of events here:

God loved Jesus with pure agape love.

Jesus loves us with pure agape love.

We are to continue Jesus' love to others.

*And we must not forget our 1st love as the church in Ephesus did (mentioned in the book of Revelation).

*In regards to the church, it appears that the 'higher up' people have lost that 1st love but the local churches still do the outreach, sharing, caring and witnessing.

Discussion about homosexual issues in the church ensued.

Verse 10

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

*IF is the big word here. If you keep God's commands (God-made rules, not suggestions) then you stay (abide) in love with Jesus.

*Jesus kept His father's commands. He did what we cannot do. He is a testimony to us. Even at His most grievous time on the cross, Jesus asked why God had forgotten Him. It was because Jesus had all of our sins upon Him and God could not look at that. (Remember that sin is when we say no to God...same as disobeying His commands.)

*Finally, Pastor Tom asked us again the question from the start of Bible Study: Why do we 'do' church?

Pastor Jon referred us to Romans 7. The entire chapter is a good read but verses 15 and 24 are describing our human nature behaviors.

Lisa wisely said that obedience is not all gloom and doom but a source of joy for us believers.

Even though we only got through 3 verses tonight, we had very good discussion and dialogue with the folks present at church and those on the phone.

Go in peace, go in joy, go in love!

May the Lord watch between me and thee
While we are absent one from the other.
