

## **LIFE IN THE VINE**

### ***Love***

June 27, 2021

**Overarching Theme:** In 2021, FUMC will be SENT with the peace of Christ!

#### **Instructions:**

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. *The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.*

#### **Core Point:**

On Easter evening, the Risen Christ appears to his gathered disciples for the first time since Good Friday and speaks these words: "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I send you." Just as Jesus sent his disciples into a divided, conflicted 1<sup>st</sup> Century with his peace, so he sends us into a divided, conflicted 2021 with his peace.

#### **John:**

The Gospel according to John is written by John, one of the apostles, who was the brother of another apostle named James and all the Gospels mention their father's name as Zebedee (Mark's Gospel in addition mentions that Jesus gave these brothers the name 'Sons of Thunder'). John's Gospel is quite different from the other three (does not contain a genealogy, or any record of Jesus' birth, childhood, temptation, transfiguration, appointment of the disciples, nor any account of Jesus' parables) because more than his Gospel giving an account of the life of Christ, it is a powerful argument for the incarnation of Christ. The purpose of the writing of this Gospel was to demonstrate conclusively that Jesus was, and is, the very heaven-sent Son of God and that all who believe in him will have eternal life because he is its only source. It was written to new Christians and also to seekers of salvation and truth sometime between AD 85 and 90. A key verse of this Gospel is: "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (20:30-31). Some of the special features of this Gospel are: In every chapter Jesus' deity is revealed and his true identity of the divine-human nature and life-giving mission is underscored through the many titles he is given as well as through the eight miracles of Christ which John mentions, calling them signs.

The greatest sign, of course, is the resurrection and John provides a stirring eyewitness account of finding the empty tomb and various post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. Of these miracles, six are unique to John as well as the 'Farewell / Upper Room Discourse' (chapters 14-17); over 90% of John is unique to his Gospel. John records seven 'I am' sayings of Jesus through which he affirms his preexistence and eternal deity.

– Adapted from The Life Application Bible, p. 1866.

### **Reflect on this Scripture:**

John 13:1-15, 34-35 NRSV

<sup>1</sup> Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. <sup>2</sup> The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper <sup>3</sup> Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, <sup>4</sup> got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. <sup>5</sup> Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. <sup>6</sup> He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" <sup>7</sup> Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." <sup>8</sup> Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." <sup>9</sup> Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" <sup>10</sup> Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." <sup>11</sup> For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

<sup>12</sup> After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?" <sup>13</sup> You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. <sup>14</sup> So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup> For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.

<sup>34</sup> I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

### **This Week:**

We have been following the Sermon Series called 'Life in the Vine.' This series is based on the theme for the 2021 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity based on the

words of Jesus found in John 15:1-17 where Jesus refers to himself as the Vine and his disciples as the branches meant to bear fruit to bring glory to the Father. Jesus gave the picture of the Vine to describe his life with his disciples and their lives in relation to each other. In this series we looked at the aspects of God through Christ calling us into relationship and to welcome others into relationship with us and also to mature and grow in this relationship in Christ by seeking to be united with those who belong to Christ. Today, on the third Sunday in this Series we look at Jesus revealing the full extent of his love for us and commanding us to love others in the same way. Jesus said, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (Jn. 15:12).

We're looking at the passage in John's Gospel that records the scene in the Upper Room of Jesus washing the feet of his chosen disciples when he shared the final meal with them before his betrayal, death and resurrection. Jesus knew that the time had come for his departure from the world and his return to the Father and so he purposed to reveal to them the full extent of his love, his love for them which was sacrificial and unconditional. He did this during the time of the meal by expressing it through washing each of his disciple's feet. Through this way of serving them, even though he was their Master, Jesus wanted them to know how much he loved them and was going to give himself for them, even to die for them. However, the disciples did not understand this then and Peter, voicing out on behalf of the others, initially resisted this. Jesus knew that they would not understand this at that time but later after receiving the Holy Spirit, the Spirit would help them to realize. However, Jesus, using the metaphor of taking a bath and allowing to washing one's feet and contrasting between the two, explained that as he has given himself to them in relationship which the metaphor of them taking a bath meant, they were to fully receive this relationship and respond to his love which the metaphor of allowing the washing of feet meant. Jesus declared that they were spiritually clean by this but at the same time he knew that one of them, Judas Iscariot, was not clean because although Jesus gave himself to him like the way he did to the others, Judas in his heart did not fully receive Jesus' relationship and love and therefore he would betray.

Having shown his disciples the full extent of his love, Jesus thereafter urged them to give themselves to each other in the same way as he did. As their Master he served them and washed their feet and he expected the same from his disciples to each other. Therefore, he gave a new commandment to love each other as he has loved them in contrast to the old one of loving one's neighbor as oneself (Lev. 19:18). By loving with the sacrificial and unconditional love that Jesus loved them with, the world would know that they are his disciples. Jesus gave this

commandment to be obeyed in response to his love as a decision of one's will because he knew that it would not be easy. As his disciples, loving and serving each other consciously is important because it would require humility and forgiveness. Even today as in the past, it is not easy to be in community as we are often faced with our own and others limitations and we fail to love. But Jesus' way is to begin anew with compassion each time we fail . Only by receiving fully Jesus' love and being in relationship with him would it be possible to give ourselves to others and truly love them to form one body and truly be his community.

**Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:**

1. Has there been a time or a situation in your life when you have realized very deeply how much Jesus loves you and has given himself for you?
2. What are the ways in which we can fulfil our Lord Jesus' urging to 'wash one another's feet'?
3. What are some of the challenges you face in loving others, especially in your family or in the community of the Church, the way that Jesus has loved you?

**Activity for the Life of a Disciple:**

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC.
2. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: John 13:34-35 NRSV  
<sup>34</sup> I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."
3. Prayerfully approach God in asking to realize more and more how much he has loved you and given himself to you and to respond wholeheartedly to his love by loving others the way he has.