

THE UNITY PRAYER OF JESUS – JOHN 17:20-23

SCRIPTURE & SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE – OCTOBER 18, 2020

OPEN

1. With the recent death of Supreme Court justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, many have highlighted her close friendship with the late justice Antonin Scalia as remarkable given their deeply divergent views. Do you have any relationships where you're able to strongly disagree but still maintain close connection? Whether you have any or not, what do you think it takes to have those kinds of relationships—especially with those whom you disagree politically?

This past weekend, Pastor Charlie preached on Jesus's prayer in John 17 that his followers would be united through the love of God. He invited us to consider what it means to pursue this kind of unity as believers even in the midst of our political disagreements. **READ JOHN 17:20-23.**

DISCUSS

2. In this passage, how does Jesus describe the kind of unity he desires for believers? How does the relationship between God the Father and God the Son connect to that unity?
3. In a time when there is a lot of cynicism around the church in America, what stirs in your heart and mind when you think about Jesus praying for his people—and not only in the past, but presently as he sits at the right hand of the Father?
4. We can be quick to assume that we are living through “unprecedented” times, but Pastor Charlie reminded us that unity has never come easy for the people of God. How does knowing a bit more about the backgrounds of the twelve apostles challenge and/or encourage you about your relationship with other believers in the church?
5. Pastor Charlie distinguishing between unity and uniformity, acknowledging that not all disagreements are destructive to unity in the body of Christ, though some are. What are some kinds of disagreements that are “natural” so to speak and not necessarily divisive? How
6. Whether you lean conservative, liberal, libertarian, or somewhere else on the political spectrum, what are practically ways that you guard against making this affiliation more prominent than your allegiance to Jesus?
7. How do we need to grow as a community group to embody the kind of unified love for which Jesus has prayed?

PRAY

Have someone slowly re-read this week's passage. Meditate on the profound nature of the love our Triune God has for us. Use Jesus's words here to shape your own prayers. Confess any hardness of heart that is keeping you from seeing your brothers and sisters in Christ the way that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit do.