

Living Water Fellowship

Worship with Holy Communion

7th Sunday of Easter – 16th May 2021

COME TO JESUS

Gathering Song: Shine Jesus Shine

Welcome & Prayer:

GROW IN HIS GRACE

Bible Reading: John 3:1-17

FAITH CHAT:

Song: All Creatures of our God and King

Bible Reading: Mark 7:1-13

The Message: *LIFE PULSE: LIFE BEYOND...RELIGION*

The Apostle's Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.
He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven,
and sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty,
from thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers:

Group Bible Study/Discussion:

1. Read John 3:1-17 & Mark 7:1-13. What questions immediately come to mind? What do you hear God say to you as you read it a few times to yourself? Does your familiarity with either of these texts interfere with you hearing them in a new light?
2. Nicodemus appears to be seeking a human solution to a spiritual problem. Have you ever tried to do that? How did that work out for you? What is Nicodemus after?
3. If Nicodemus needed a new birth, what does that tell us about the human condition? How might this be part of his struggle to understand?
4. Read Numbers 21:4-9. What is going on in this Old Testament story? What parallel does Jesus make by using this story? Do you think that Nicodemus understood what Jesus was telling him? Why/not?
5. John 3:16 is the most famous verse in the Bible. Is it so familiar that not-yet-Christians can no longer hear it in its richness & enormous impact on our world?
6. According to Jesus, what is his identity & purpose? How is it that one can gain eternal life? If a person truly believes in something, how is it reflected in their life?
7. What are some ways that you have seen Christians (including yourself) elevate tradition to the same level as scripture? When you see it, what do you do?
8. What traditions did the Pharisees expect Jesus to obey? How did he respond to this? How did he use scripture to challenge the Pharisees? Is it easier for you to follow Jesus or follow the Bible? Why can we not separate the two? How is it possible for a person to obey the Bible yet have their heart far from God?
9. What did Jesus call the Pharisees & teachers of the law? List the four accusing contrasts that Jesus used to justify this. How might someone say these four accusations are still applicable to contemporary Christianity?
10. What 'religious' practice do you need to give up to more closely follow Jesus? Who can you invite to join you in that experience?

The Communion:

Words of Institution & The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, & the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Worship video during Communion: Breakthrough (Red Rocks Worship)

GO IN HIS POWER

The Blessings:

(Name), † child of God,

Jesus Christ fills you with life that never ends. Amen.

Announcements:

Song: Born forever (AT 421)

SHOW HIS LOVE

JOHN 3:1-17

¹ There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. ² After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. "Rabbi," he said, "we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you." ³ Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God."

⁴ "What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb & be born again?" ⁵ Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water & the Spirit. ⁶ Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. ⁷ So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.' ⁸ The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit."

⁹ "How are these things possible?" Nicodemus asked. ¹⁰ Jesus replied, "You are a respected Jewish teacher, & yet you don't understand these things? ¹¹ I assure you, we tell you what we know & have seen, & yet you won't believe our testimony. ¹² But if you don't believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ever gone to heaven & returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven. ¹⁴ As Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.

¹⁶ "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one & only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

MARK 7:1-13

¹ One day some Pharisees & teachers of religious law arrived from Jerusalem to see Jesus. ² They noticed that some of his disciples failed to follow the Jewish ritual of hand washing before eating. ³ (The Jews, especially the Pharisees, do not eat until they have poured water over their cupped hands, as required by their ancient traditions. ⁴ Similarly, they don't eat anything from the market until they immerse their hands in water. This is but one of many traditions they have clung to—such as their ceremonial washing of cups, pitchers, & kettles.)

⁵ So the Pharisees & teachers of religious law asked him, "Why don't your disciples follow our age-old tradition? They eat without first performing the hand-washing ceremony." ⁶ Jesus replied, "You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote,

'These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

⁷ Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.'

⁸ For you ignore God's law & substitute your own tradition." ⁹ Then he said, "You skilfully sidestep God's law in order to hold on to your own tradition. ¹⁰ For instance, Moses gave you this law from God: 'Honour your father & mother,' & 'Anyone who speaks disrespectfully of father or mother must be put to death.' ¹¹ But you say it is all right for people to say to their parents, 'Sorry, I can't help you. For I have vowed to give to God what I would have given to you.' ¹² In this way, you let them disregard their needy parents. ¹³ So you cancel the word of God in order to hand down your own tradition. This is only one example among many others."