

Treasuring One Another
John 17:20-26
Small Group Discussion

Intro Questions

- How do you feel about the upcoming election season? Excited? Fearful? Cynical? Other? Why?
- In Sunday's sermon, Pastor Charlie Drew shared a quote from Arthur Brooks, describing the polarization and contempt in our country today. Read the quote, and discuss the question that follows:
Watch and listen to politically polarized commentary today, and you will see that it is more contemptuous than angry, overflowing with sneering, mockery, and disgust. Studies on the subject have shown that, whereas simple anger is characterized by short-term attack responses but long-term reconciliation, contempt is characterized by rejection and social exclusion in both the short-term and the long-term. Polarization, and thus, contempt, leads to permanent enmity.
- What is the difference between anger and contempt? What is the danger of contempt?
- Charlie claimed on Sunday that this social climate presents us in the church with an "enormous missional opportunity." How could this possibly be true, in view of our differing political opinions?

Read John 17:20-26, then discuss the questions that follow.

- What is the setting for this prayer? (I.e., who is praying, when did he pray this, what had just happened, what was about to happen, etc.?)
- How would you summarize what Jesus asks of God the Father here?
- Charlie summarized Jesus prayer by saying that he prays for our community to reflect the Trinity in two broad ways.
 - 1. It's like the community that has always existed between the Father and the Son**
 - How would you describe the kind of community that has always existed between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? Some descriptions are evident in today's passage, but feel free to expand to other passages if necessary.
 - What does it mean that the members of the Trinity share the same values and agenda? What are those values and agenda?
 - In what ways do they honor and respect one another?
 - 2. It is a community that shares the values and longings of God.**
 - Where do you observe this principle in today's passage, as Jesus prays for us?
 - What are the values and longings of God, which Jesus wants to be true of our faith community?
 - What would our church family (or small group) look like if this characteristic became true of us?

- What happens to our unity if I sincerely believe that my candidate or party is at (or much closer to) God’s “address” than yours is—say on abortion, or racism, or care for the poor?
- In what way does a humble posture of listening alleviate this threat to our unity?
- Charlie suggested that we make a careful distinction between **moral principles** and **political strategies**.
 - What is an example of a moral principle upon which we agree, in spite of political parties?
 - What is an example of some differing political strategies in addressing that moral principle?
 - What is the value in distinguishing between moral principles and political strategies? How can this distinction help our church family (or small group)?
- How could our unity, in spite of political diversity, surprise and attract people to Jesus?
- What did Charlie mean when he said, “If we are sociologically predictable, the world will not pay attention to Jesus and the church?” Do you agree?
- What great desire of Jesus do you see in his words, in v. 24? What was he willing to do to accomplish this desire?
 - How does this prayer/action of Jesus enable us to find the unity he prays for us?

Prayer

- Share your needs with one another.
- In addition to praying for your needs, pray for our church/group to be unified in spite of disagreements.