

Gospel lesson

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In the evening after the Last Supper, Jesus taught His disciples during a lengthy lesson called the Farewell Discourse. Listen now as Jesus prays at the end of His farewell discourse, before they go to the garden.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/spi-pharisee-tax-collector/>;

credit: Sweet Publishing / FreeBibleimages.org

John 17:1-11

NRSV

¹After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you,

²since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.

³And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

⁴I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do.

⁵So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

⁶"I have made your name known to those whom you gave

me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me is from you;

⁸ for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.

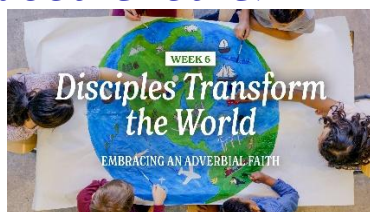
⁹ I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours.

¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.

¹¹ And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

The Word of God for the people of God

<Interactive time>



picture from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/miracle-sunday-worship-study-resources#worship-series>

The vision of the United Methodist Church is to form disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously in local communities and worldwide

connections. In an effort to fulfill that vision, our bishops have been having us consider “Embracing an Adverbial Faith,” culminating in today.

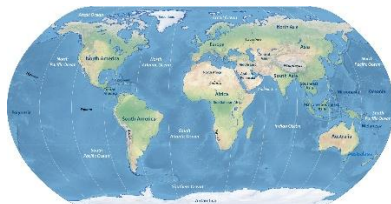
Week 6 - Disciples Transform the World/Miracle Sunday



Week 6 - Disciples Transform the World - *Miracle Sunday*

Charged by the Great Commission, disciples of Jesus Christ seek to live into the vision of the kingdom that our Lord proclaimed. This is a world-changing task, one we embrace with adverbial faith, as we love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously.

Miracle Sunday invites deeper commitment to the work of God. Through our offering, leaders will be trained and the good news will continue to be proclaimed across the world.



fair use map from
https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/continents_map.htm;
 credit: nationsonline.org;
 background-image: Natural Earth,
 Tom Patterson

I have here a map of the world continents. Would someone be willing to help me indicate where countries go on this map? <Let them respond; have volunteer identify where they think several countries would go: e.g., China, United States, France or Spain, Brazil, Russia, Mexico, Iran, Canada>

Where are the Philippines? How well do you know the countries of Africa? <Let them respond>



map of countries around the world from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Political_map_of_the_World_\(January_2015\).svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Political_map_of_the_World_(January_2015).svg); public domain

There are a lot of countries in the world. Do they all speak the same language? <Let them respond>

What else is different about them? <Let them respond>

What do you think we have in common with them? <Let them respond>

Which countries does God have power over? <Let them respond>

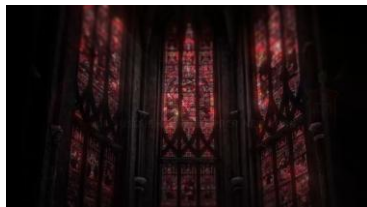
Which ones do you think God wants us to fight with? <Let them respond >

What are we supposed to do with people of other countries, other cultures? <Let them respond; love>

How can we make sure they hear the Good News of Jesus, that God loves them and we are one in the Christ? <Let them respond >

<resume sharing screen in Zoom/play video of bishop>

<https://vimeo.com/1190568176>



<Hymn "A Charge to Keep I Have"

UMH #413>

<stop sharing screen in Zoom>

Message: So That They May Be One



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/stories-that-matter/week-6-seventh-sunday-of-easter-year-a/week-6-seventh-sunday-of-easter-year-a-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Holy Lord of all the world,

as we take time now to further consider today's scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may indeed be as one and glorify You before the world by our life in You. Amen.

In the "Stories That Matter" series today, we look at Jesus's prayer "So That They May Be One":

~~This service invites~~ [Let us think] creative[ly] ~~engagement with~~ what it means to live as answers to Christ's prayer for oneness in the world."

A few years ago, it was hard to imagine the state of the country we live in today. Why would God allow our nation to be thrown into such instability and chaos?

Then again, the ancient Israelites had a hard time imagining the exile before their kingdom was overthrown; why would God allow that?

The book of Isaiah contains some pretty amazing

theology for its day. Before the exile, each kingdom had their own gods, and the stronger the kingdom, the more powerful the god. By that thinking, destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and the exile meant YHWH was defeated, possibly dead. And yet, the prophets - Isaiah and others - maintain that YHWH is not only not dead but actually in control of all of this.

In fact, YHWH is in control of all nations, not limited to the Israelite nation. They just happen to be the covenant people by which our Creator, the great "I AM" makes Godself known to the world. And today we hear that a foreign king, Cyrus, was the Messiah of their day - the one anointed by YHWH to restore the descendants of Jacob to their homeland.

This transformative theological thinking enables the Israelites to maintain their cultural identity as a people despite the exile. God dwelling with the people - not tied to a temple, but with the people - during their time of trial brings them out the other side of it with new insights into God's relationship with all people, including themselves.

I believe we are going through a transformative time now as well. How exactly humanity transforms has yet to be realized, but several potentials spring to mind

✚ It could be this period is once more clarifying that God is not limited [to or by] governmental or religious organizations or structures - those who claim that [only one way is right for everyone] do not understand the individualized nature of our relationships with God - love is not limited in form. Maybe we will come out of this with greater

respect for cultural variety and ways to show love.

- ✦ Perhaps this period is helping us to truly understand that everyone is to be equally nurtured in grace regardless of race, gender, or any other characteristic which does not harm others – uniqueness is a gift that enables us all to be more than just the sum of parts. Maybe we will come out of this with equal rights more firmly established.
- ✦ Possibly we are learning to provide the basic necessities of life to everyone rather than let the few ultrarich greedily deny those in need. People are more productive and fulfilled when they are not scrambling to make ends meet. Maybe we will come out of this with access to healthcare, affordable housing, and healthy food distribution for all.

Whatever is going on, we can listen to what was written in 1 Peter:

- ✦ “...do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you”
- ✦ “Humble yourselves...under the mighty hand of God”
- ✦ “Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you”
- ✦ “Discipline yourselves, keep alert, ...steadfast in your faith”
- ✦ “And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you.”

Jesus prayed for as much for His disciples: “...they have kept your word...and they have believed that

you sent me...they are yours... Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.”

All of us are called to be disciples of Christ, to be one in the Spirit. We have a vision to love boldly, to serve joyfully, and to lead courageously, that as God is glorified through us, all people are drawn to become disciples of Jesus for the transformation of this world. We are NOT in this alone! We are called to Christian community, where - in and for the glory of God - all are loved and nurtured.