

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 5th October 2014

PATRONAL FEAST: ST JOHN

As we Gather

The main reading this week is chapter 1 of the first letter John wrote to the church under persecution and suffering from a declining commitment. False teachers were plentiful and Christians compromised their faith as they conformed to world standards. This letter is as relevant today as it was in the early centuries of the young church.

Reading Scripture PSALM 97 1 JOHN 1 JOHN 21 : 20 - 24

Thinking together

We all look for something real / satisfactory in life. John had discovered that a satisfactory reality is to be found in Jesus Christ. All the Apostles had a spiritual closeness to Jesus, and found life with Him to be real and exciting. They experienced eternal life.

How can we find spiritual nearness to Christ and experience eternal life (the kingdom of heaven)? Discuss [Psalm 97]

John wrote of his personal experience in to share Christ with a church under pressure [1 John 1:1-4 and John 21:24]

What pressure(s) is the church under today? Discuss

How can we find fellowship with Christ and with fellow Christians? Discuss

Christian fellowship is founded on the testimony of God's Word, unity of believers and a living relationship with Christ, renewed daily; all being made possible through the Holy Spirit. A life that is real provides joy that is real

What do you understand by the term 'Christian joy'? Discuss

False teachers abounded in John's day and still today cause trouble / confusion in the faith community. John wrote to show the difference between truth (light) and error (darkness) [1 John 1: 4-7].

What does light represent? Discuss

What does darkness represent? Discuss

How does Jesus Christ purify us from all sin? Discuss

The false teachers of John's time

- Denied that sin breaks fellowship with God [1 John 1:6]

How does sin block / break our relationship with God? Discuss

- Denied that people have a natural tendency toward sin [1 John 1:8]

How can we guard against sinning? Discuss

- Denied that people's acts / behaviour involved any sin at all [1 John 1:10]

How can we remove this barrier between ourselves and God? Discuss

It takes honesty and humility to admit to our false pride and recognise our weaknesses / faults / shortcomings. True confession [1John1:9] involves commitment to letting light (Christ) live in us, and to revealing the glory of God to others.

A dynamic church life is based on transparency, unity, forgiveness, and love.

Are there any of these areas in the life of your local church that can be improved? Discuss

If we keep our eyes on Jesus (trust Him in all things) our desire to please Him aligns our desires with God's desires [Psalm 97:10] and we do not easily become distracted by self, circumstances and curiosity concerning the work / behaviour of other Christians [John 21:20-22 & Hebrews 12:1-2].

We each have our assigned task / calling and our responsibility is obedience as we witness to Christ. We each serve Christ where He places us.

How and where do you serve Christ? Discuss

In Closing

The final argument for Christianity is the Christian experience.

Our glory is to reveal, through service, Christ's Glory wherever we have been called by God.

PRAYER YOU MIGHT LIKE TO READ FOR A SECOND WEEK

God of our salvation,
 we falter before the demands of your word, and turn away
 from your call to life. Pour out your mercy on us as you showed
 mercy to your people of old, that we may turn from our sinfulness
 and walk the path of self-emptying love made known in Jesus Christ.
 Amen.

SOURCES CONSULTED IN PREPARING THESE NOTES

Barclay, William: The Daily Study Bible, revised edition, The Gospel of John, volume 2

Wiersbe, Warren W.: The Bible Expository Commentary, volumes 1 and 2

Life Application Bible (NIV)

Spirit Filled Life Bible (New King James)