

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 24th April 2016

THE EASTER SEASON – A NEW COMMANDMENT

As we Gather

As soon as Judas left the room where they had gathered for the Passover meal, Jesus began to prepare His disciples for His crucifixion and ascension, and the future by His farewell instructions.

Reading Scripture **John 13:31-35** see also **Acts 11:1-18** **Psalm 148** **Revelation 21:1-6**

Thinking Together

Jesus knew what Judas was going to do, just as He knew that Peter would deny Him and the disciples would run away / scatter, but this did not change His love for them. Today, even though He knows what we have done / will do to hurt Him, He still loves us unconditionally and will forgive us whenever we ask for it.

Judas did not understand this, but Peter did

Do you understand the relationship between Law and Grace? Discuss

See Acts 11:1-18

Do you understand how this difference can / does affect your life? Discuss

From a human point of view the crucifixion was an evil deed involving unspeakable suffering and humiliation. From the divine perspective, the death of Christ was the revelation of the glory of God (John 13:31-32). Following the Cross there is resurrection, ascension, the final triumph of Christ – the second coming:

- Vindication of Christ must follow His humiliation
- Enthronement of Christ must follow His crucifixion
- The crown of thorns must change into the crown of glory

What did it mean for Jesus to glorify the Father? Discuss

See John 17:4

To love others was not a new commandment (Leviticus 19:18), but Jesus in this instance used the word 'new' (John 13:34-35) in a revolutionary way as He explained **how** He expects His disciples to love - as much as He loves. Jesus loved His disciples *selflessly, sacrificially, understandingly, and forgivingly*

What does this mean for us and our relationships? Discuss

See Revelation 21:1-6

Because of the death of Christ on the Cross, love takes on a new meaning and a new power. Love is an attitude that reveals itself in action (1 Corinthians 13) and with the coming of the Holy Spirit believers have a new power in their lives. It is love that is the true evidence that we belong to God

How do we evidence this love? Discuss **see 1 John 3:16-19**

Do you experience difficulty in dealing with changes in the faith community / your local church? Discuss **see Acts 11:1-18**

Do you see bickering / jealousy / division among believers? Discuss
See Ephesians 4-5 + 17-22

In Closing

Love is the key word in Jesus' farewell to His disciples (John 13:34-35) and in His High Priestly prayer (John 17:26).

The Good News is for all people everywhere, and the kind of love Jesus requires from us is hard to do – that is why others notice.

How, in our everyday lives, can we love like Jesus loves?

What are the results of Jesus' kind of love in the growth of the Kingdom of God?

PRAYER

Gracious God, your Son revealed the meaning of love.
Increase in us that same love, that all may know that we
are your disciples. Amen