

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent ~ Sunday, February 28, 2016

“Famous Last Words ~ The Word of Affection”

John 17:20-26

“Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, here is your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.” (John 19:25-27)

“This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, but he will be joy to many others. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul.” (Luke 2:34-35)

Seeing His mother’s sorrow, Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ her by placing her into the \_\_\_\_\_ of one of His closest disciples.

There was more going on here on here than just \_\_\_\_\_—and this isn’t just a simple request for \_\_\_\_\_ and care.

“‘Who are my mother and my brothers?’ Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, ‘Here is my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.’” (Mark 3:31)

This passage isn’t so much a rejection of Jesus’ \_\_\_\_\_ family, but rather a \_\_\_\_\_ of what \_\_\_\_\_ means in the context of Christian community.

Jesus is making it very clear that it’s not just \_\_\_\_\_ ties, but common \_\_\_\_\_ that binds family together.

It was their shared \_\_\_\_\_ in, and \_\_\_\_\_, to Jesus that brought Mary and John together in \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.

“His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ.” (Ephesians 1:5)

*ecclesia* =

“I am writing to you so you will know how to live in the family of God. That family is the church of the living God, the support and foundation of the truth.” (1 Timothy 3:14)

“Since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other and each of us needs all the others.” (Romans 12:5)

We belong to each other—just like the hand belongs to the foot—as fellow believers, we are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

“I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that *they will all be one*, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you...May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.” (John 17:20-23)

Jesus wanted His followers—not just the 12, but all those who would come after—to experience the same kind of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_—the same kind of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_—that He shares with His Heavenly Father.

*Koinonia* =

The original Greek, comes from the root meaning \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ and means \_\_\_\_\_ participation in something either by \_\_\_\_\_ what we have or who we are to another person or people.

“All who believed were there together and had everything in common.” (Acts 2:44)

This kind of living implies \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, as we seek to live out Jesus’ prayer for unity—that we may be one with each other.

- **What role does community play in your life?**
- **What are your primary relationships?**
- **Have there been times when you have felt alone or lonely?**
- **How do you view the Church?**
- **Why is being part of a Christian community important to you?**

### 3 REASONS WHY CHURCH FAMILY IS IMPORTANT

**#1. Church family is important because it is the place where we find \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.**

God intended that we be \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ through the community of believers and the fellowship that we have with each other.

“Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

“How I praise the Lord that you are concerned about me again. I know you have always been concerned for me...” (Philippians 4:10)

“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. . . If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.” (1 Cor 12:12, 26)

“Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:2)

“This is my command: Love each other.” (John 15:17)

- **What have been the difficult times in your life?**
- **How has your Christian community supported you?**
- **How have you supported others during their trials and challenges?**
- **What is one way that you can grow in this area?**

**#2. Church family is important because it is the place where we are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ for ministry.**

“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.” (1 Peter 4:10)

God never meant for us to go it \_\_\_\_\_—your gifts, talents, and abilities are meant to \_\_\_\_\_ mine—as we \_\_\_\_\_ together.

“Two people are better than one, because they get more done by working together.” (Ecclesiastes 4:10)

“Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?” (1 Corinthians 12:27)

When we come together as church and combine our gifts talents, and abilities, the whole is \_\_\_\_\_.

- **What gifts and talents has God given you?**
- **How do you use these gifts to build up the wider community?**
- **How have you benefitted from the gifts and talents of others?**
- **What is one way that you can grow in this area?**

**#3. Church family is important because it is the place where we find \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.**

“Only fools trust what they think alone.” (Proverbs 28:26)

The community of faith is crucial to our well-being because it’s a source of much needed \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

“You shall guide me with your counsel.” (Psalm 73:24)

“God’s intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known.” (Ephesians 3:10)

When we look to the accumulated \_\_\_\_\_ of God’s people, we’re much more apt to be guided down those paths that \_\_\_\_\_ our lives, rather than \_\_\_\_\_ them.

This guidance is essential to our well-being, especially in today’s world where right and wrong have become \_\_\_\_\_ and morality is restricted to what works \_\_\_\_\_ for me.

This individualized, subjective approach to living, is \_\_\_\_\_ with community and fellowship, and the exact \_\_\_\_\_ of what God has called us to be in the world.

“In a multitude of counsellors there is safety.” (Proverbs 11:14)

- **How have you benefitted from the wisdom of others?**
- **How have you shared the wisdom that God has give you?**
- **Have you ever struggled to walk the path of faith? What tempts you or threatens to pull you from Christ’s path?**
- **What is one way that you can grow in this area?**

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The mark of true fellowship isn’t the \_\_\_\_\_ of conflict or difficulties, but the \_\_\_\_\_ of compassion and love; forgiveness and reconciliation, in the midst of those difficulties.

Jesus calls us to be \_\_\_\_\_ with each other.

Jesus calls to make church a \_\_\_\_\_ and to make an unwavering \_\_\_\_\_ to each other

**You were created for community and formed for family. What role does fellowship with this church community play in your life and faith?**