

JESUS STILL SPEAKS

In every circumstance and situation we face, Jesus gives us direction and hope.

KEY POINTS

- ❖ Words are very important, and last words doubly so. Just before He died, Jesus prayed a sincere, heartfelt prayer expressing His desires regarding the lives His disciples would lead after He left the Earth. He also prayed for us—the ones who would become believers long after He had left. (See John 17:6-17, 20-24.)
- ❖ Right now, we are looking at the verses in John 17 in the context of our present time and the awful realities we are currently facing. Once again, we are forced to look at the way people in the “human race” live together in society. The truth is, as we are all descendants of Adam and Eve, there should never be any discussion of race from the standpoint of substantive differences. We are all one family!
- ❖ Of late, many across the world (Canada included) have taken to the streets in protest of anti-Black racism, fueled by recent events in the United States (U.S.).
- ❖ In some U.S. cities, these protests have become violent, which has done nothing to promote the cause of equality. However, one can easily understand the boiling over of rage, grief and frustration of people who have been systemically abused all of their life because of their skin colour.
- ❖ The question on everyone’s lips is this: “What is the answer to this dilemma, and how do we go forward from here, again. We always keep coming back to this same horrible place.” So now we turn to the answer.
- ❖ Consider a man who set an example of human behaviour that has never been challenged or superseded in human history.
- ❖ A man who set a standard of love, acceptance, empowerment, opportunity and hope for all people that will never be equaled. Like George Floyd and countless others before him, this man suffered death at the hand of oppressors who inflicted unspeakable physical, emotional and spiritual torture upon him and yet had the power to pray “Father forgive them.”
- ❖ What’s so appealing about that, you may ask. Why would I want to live a life like he lived, doing good to all I meet, only to be crucified and die on a cross?
- ❖ There is only one reason you would do this. Because you truly want to change the world, and you realize the change starts within. You may not think you can have a great impact on others, but *you* can live according to a higher order and a higher purpose than seeking only what is best for yourself.
- ❖ This man not unknown to most of us. His name is Jesus Christ, “Jesus the Messiah,” or “Yahweh Saves is Messiah.” What He said and how He lived still speaks to us today. His was the most powerful and impactful life ever lived!
- ❖ Here are some practical things we can do and steps we can take to address the scourge of racism (and other inequalities we see and experience all around us):

KEY SCRIPTURES: John 17:11,13,18-23;
 Genesis 1:27; Deuteronomy 10:17;
 Malachi 2:10a; Mark 12:30-31; Romans 2:11;
 Philippians 2:3; James 2:1,8; John 13:34-35;
 Matthew 5:3-11, 11:28-29

- **Speak up.** Don’t suffer, or watch others suffer, in silence. Identify perpetrators of injustice. Confront them, and those with power to make changes, with love, truth and reason.
- **Show love.** Individually, we can be safe spaces where those who are hurting can come to receive support and comfort. Be the change in someone else’s life.
- **Be an example.** In spite of gross inequities visible minorities face in our society, be an example of diligence, competence, tenacity and resilience in the face of adversity.
- **Spend strategically.** Wherever possible, support minority business owners and help them to survive and thrive. (But don’t throw your money away to incompetent people who expect you to patronize their business simply because they are of the same race and colour as you.)
- **Vote.** it is incumbent upon us to vote for those who stand for what is right. If you don’t vote, don’t complain.
- **Pray.** God hears and answers prayer, but we can’t expect Him to answer prayers we don’t even care enough to pray.
- ❖ We are able to follow the example of Jesus Christ and live life like He did, confronting evil as He did, and triumphing over evil as He did.
- ❖ We’re in it for the long haul. Things may not change as quickly and smoothly as we would hope, but things will change for the better if we all take our place and fight the good fight of faith.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. Read at least two of the following portions of scripture: Mark 12:30-31 • John 13:34-35 • Matt. 11: 28-29 • Matt. 5:3-11 • Matt. 5:16 • Matt. 5:43-45 • Matt. 7:7-12 • Mark 12:30-31 • John 14:1-6.
 Summarize what the scripture is saying in your own words. In your opinion, are you living to that "higher order" that is outlined in the scriptures you chose to read? Or do you feel that there is "room for improvement"?
2. How have you/can you use the first 5 practical steps outlined in the lesson to confront evil and address inequalities? As you ponder and act on your responses, Step 6 is crucial: Pray.




PRAYER TIME
 Lord, help me to hear You as You speak, so that I will do exactly as You bid me to do. Amen.




Start-up: Have you ever had to "take a stand" or "stand up" to/for something? What was the end result and was there a cost involved?

WEEK OF SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 2020

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week’s message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

 (Reminds me/Confirms)
  (New idea)
  (Think about)

 (Do this)
  (Speaks to my heart)
  (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

**Go deeper with your Life Group family.
 CONNECT-REFLECT-DISSECT THE WORD
 Your Life Group ~ Your Lifeline**