

Bible Studies for Life: February 19

Discerning the Voice of God: Does it Honor God? • John 17:1-9

By Becky Brown



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Judas Iscariot receives a morsel of food from the very hands that will soon be pierced through on Calvary. He quickly leaves the room with his two clean feet to pursue his plans to betray Jesus.

Jesus remains there with the Eleven and shares many precious bits of information concerning what they are about to experience after his departure. He also reminded them of what He was about to endure at the hands of the Roman soldiers and the leaders of the Jews.

The coming of the Holy Spirit is promised. He encouraged them to find their strength through consistently abiding in Him. Loving one another would be their mandate from Jesus. Obedience, fellowship, and *followship* would be their permanent pursuits.

Persecution was promised. Presence of God was assured.

From John 14:31, it appears that they departed the Upper Room and began the journey toward the Mount of Olives. This location was where Jesus and the men stayed at night when they ministered in Jerusalem.

Reaching the Garden of Gethsemane was their goal. From that location, they could look westward toward the city of

Jerusalem and see the sunset in the evening. What a sight! This night of Passover would also have included a beautiful full moon.

Chapters 15 and 16 were possibly a walking/teaching time with Jesus and the Eleven. John 18:1 indicates that they left the city and crossed the Kidron Valley at that point. The prayer in John 17, which is sandwiched between those moments, is our focus for this lesson.

This prayer was spoken by Jesus as He lifted up His eyes to Heaven. He addressed His Father with these words. The disciples were hearing every word as Jesus prayed. His hour had finally arrived to accomplish salvation for all people.

Throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus continually said that His hour had not yet arrived. At this point in the narrative of His life, however, His hour was upon Him. It was time to give His life.

I can imagine that those Disciples never forgot the words of that prayer. He prayed for the glory and honor of His Father to be displayed. He asked that eternal life be granted to His followers. Eternal life was provided to Believers in Jesus.

He wanted them to know His Father and to recognize that He had been sent to the Earth BY the Father, FOR the Father, and ON BEHALF OF those who would believe.

Jesus brought honor to the Father by being obedient to complete His assignment. He proves His deity as well as His humanity by reminding those listeners (and current day readers!) that He and the Father had shared glory before the world was created. They shared glory presently. They would share glory eternally.

Jesus knew what would please His Father the most. Jesus wanted His men to continue this work that He had started. He did not want them to drop the ball of faithful service. He wanted them

to plan to leave everything on the playing field of life.

He was about to leave them with the best example of that kind of life model. He was about to give His all. In this prayer, He reminded them of how He had lived, the fact that He was about to die, and that He wanted them to have a deep, abiding, personal relationship with His Father.

He prayed for Himself. Then, He prayed for His Disciples. Finally, He prayed for YOU and He prayed for ME! We are "those who believe in Jesus because of the word of the disciples" in verse 20 of chapter 17. Notice that John 13-18 are recorded in red words in Scripture.

We can know these words direct us to what God wanted them to know then, and what we need to know even now. We know this is the voice of God because Jesus and God are One! We see that Jesus came to honor God. Our lives should do the same.

Brown is minister of missions at First Church, Richland.