

Tomorrow's church today

Part 3, John 17:20-26

1. How were disputes amongst your brothers and sisters dealt with in your family? Was it mostly through:
 - a. Kindness
 - b. Logic
 - c. Threats (both real and imagined)
 - d. Bribery
 - e. Withdrawal of privileges
 - f. Locked in a room together until you sorted it out
 - g. Sent to solitary confinement until you came to your senses
 - h. Advised to have a good hard look at yourself
 - i. The look of death

Read John 17:20-26

2. Considering people's tendency to argue over just about anything how reasonable is Jesus prayer that the believers would be united together? (verse 21)
3. "*Father, just as you are in me and I am in you*" (John 17:21b). In this passage what is Jesus standard of unity? How high a standard is that?
4. What is "the glory" in verse 22 and 24? Why might it be so important for unity? Is there a relationship between "the glory" and what John speaks about in 1 John 19-20? How does "the glory" change us?
5. Why is this unity (verse 23) a sign to an unbelieving world?
6. *I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.*" (John 17:26). Jesus speaks of God's love and Christ's presence being essential for unity. In what ways does God's love and Christ's presence bring unity? What do we need to do in order to come under the influence of God's love and Christ's presence?
7. What might it mean that Christ commanded love, commissioned mission but prayed for unity? What does this tell us about how church unity is achieved?

For reflection: Read Romans 12:9-10: Sincere love means that we mean it. That we love our Christian brothers and sisters irrespective of whether they are close to us, different to us, think like us, look like us, believe like us. This is a heart matter. There isn't a Christian alive, there isn't a church on the face of the planet that doesn't require a regular love check. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) and all our hearts drift (Hebrews 2:1) on tides of disappointment and hurt. Because of this we all need to enter into the presence of God's reconciling love (2 Corinthians 5:19) because our great hope of ramping up our love for one another comes from Christ alone, because His love is foundational for our love (1 John 19-20). This goes for relationships in the church, this goes for our marriages our families and our friendships.