



New Life

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Friday 3 April 2020
**WHERE IS GOD IN
COVID-19?
JOHN 17**

Hi NewLife,

There's nothing normal about the new 'normal'. It's now normal to use words like: crisis, chaos, ZOOM. These are words I don't really like to hear: unprecedented, virus, postponed. I'm tired of using these words: quarantine, distancing, cancelled... grief.

This past week I've been drawn to Jesus' prayer in John 17. It's a prayer in midst of unprecedented chaos: Jesus is distanced from his disciples... feeling alone; it's a time of deep worry and grief; he's anticipating intense crisis of crucifixion.

Jesus' prayer has been steadying me. Jesus entrusts himself to his Father's plan - a plan to bring eternal life to light for glory of Jesus. Jesus prays for his disciples to stand firm in belief. Jesus prays for ALL believers... a prayer for you and I... to be UNITED in belief.

Let me read just two verse for you now:

*I have given them the glory that you gave me,
that they may be one as we are one—*

so that they may be brought to complete unity. [John 17:22-23]

NewLife, we've been isolated and disconnected by COVID-19. For 2 weeks we've given ourselves to hope-filled lament - for ourselves and our world. This weekend, I'm urging us to join in Jesus' urgent prayer for unity.

We so easily become disconnected from one another... even when we're not isolated. In normal operation we can take unity for granted. We let ourselves drift away from real spiritual connection. That's not good for us.

God's made us for spiritual connection with one another. And without it we are in danger of spiritual death. I'm very sensitive today to our growing digital fatigue. It's building in me. I'm just a bit tired of being on screen and online. It's important for us to take rest from screens and online engagement. So this weekend, I encourage you in taking rest to make deliberate space for making a spiritual connection with other believers at NewLife... which might need to be online.

We'll be in this season for many more weeks yet. **We're going to need a growing connection with one another to navigate this together with Jesus.**

If you're in LifeGp, your leader will connect your group together this weekend. Other people will hear from a CARE leader to connect with you. If you don't hear from someone... please let me know so you're not left alone.

Attached to this announcement is another resource for self-guided meditation and discussion in our homes.

I'm really looking forward to our Resurrection Sunday 'gathering'. We'll launch our first *NewLife@Home* Sunday. It'll be our ongoing way for gathering together each Sunday.

Between now and next Sunday:

1. **Daily prayer meetings** on ZOOM at 7-11-7 until Good Friday
2. **Hymnfest** at 7pm Thursday on ZOOM. Collection of Bible readings and prayerful reflection on hymn Who Is He. Available on video later.
3. **Good Friday** video you can watch in your home and share a remembrance meal in your home.

Let's navigate this together in unity with Jesus.

John 17

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:

"Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

"I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that

they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. 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.”

Let's navigate this together in unity with Jesus.

In grace, peace and hope

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