Week Seven: Let your life speak of freedom

In Jesus, and through the Spirit, God shows us how to receive a deep connection with God and others. When we discover this unity, we realise that we are part of God’s gift to the world, and we recognise others also as God’s gift.

It is good to hear of groups meeting on ‘zoom’ to discuss the material. If you’re not online, who could you share your thoughts with on the phone?

CONNECT WITH GOD
Reflect on your experiences of giving to, and receiving from, others as you lived with attention to God this week. Did you notice receiving any love in a way that you thought modelled Jesus’ way of loving?

CONTEMPLATE
Some words of Paul Umbreit, founding director of the “Centre for Restorative Justice and Peacemaking” a centre dedicated to working for unity:

“Authentic forgiveness is a gift of awakening, a freeing of one’s spirit, a release of long held toxic energy.”

Slow down your breathing and repeat these words. Hold before God a conflict situation big or small which you are part of this week, where there is not unity, but a build-up of toxic energy. Imagine the situation held in the grace and light and power of God. You may not have the willpower to remove the hurting thorn, but you can imagine that God does have that power. There may be consequences beyond your imagining. What does it feel like to let go of toxic energy?

Slowly read:
God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time; Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it;
Trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His Will;
That I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever in the next.
Amen.

Reinhold Niebuhr

CONSIDER: John 17:20-23 (NRSV)
“I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, 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. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”
**Setting:** Jesus during the last supper with his disciples prays for them. He prays that they may share his intimate relationship and connectedness with God. This will show itself in a deep connectedness with each other. This unity as they pull together for the kingdom means that many will see this new, supra human way of being human, (beyond petty ambition and conflicts) as truly coming from God.

Take some time to read through the passage each day. Look for a word, phrase or idea which lights up for you or a question that is raised. Reflect on this and come back to it the next day.

*How do you learn to love people who see things very differently from yourself?*

**COMMIT**

1. How are you going to pay more attention to God so that you live with intentional generosity this week?

2. Reflecting upon our three themes, is there another step you can take on your personal risky venture this week?

Here are some more ideas from our young people. Maybe you could take on one of these suggestions? Please continue to share your thoughts with me – it’s great to hear of all the different ways in which people are making these themes practical.

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**PRAYER**

God of amazing grace, you entrust to us the gift of your life. You invite us to notice and treasure you. May the threads of our lives, mundane and spectacular, speak of you, that your love may overflow to others and the whole world. Amen.