

The Season of Epiphany

The Third Sunday of Epiphany

INTRODUCTION: A Quick Review

- A. Jesus Appeared as the Embodiment of God's mercy
 - He brings forgiveness of sins / restoration of God's favor
- B. Jesus Appeared as the Embodiment of the Believers Obedience
 - He lived perfectly *for you* the life you never could never live
- C. You have appeared as the Embodiment of Jesus in the World.
 - You are his hands and feet.

I. JESUS APPEARED TO INVITE YOU INTO A NEW RELATIONSHIP: with God & Yourself

- A. Our Gospel Story
 - Fishermen become fishers of men
- B. God has a plan for your life
 - He wants to use you in ways you never thought possible

II. SO WHAT? WHAT NOW?

- A. Today's emphasis on prayer....
 - Prayer is about relationship – knowing *God* / knowing *yourself*

³ *And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. (John 17)*

- B. John 17
 - Longest Prayer in NT - an entire chapter!
 - Prayed by God the Son to God the Father

C. Why not?

1. Not for sin

¹⁵ *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4)*

2. Not to be heard –

⁴¹ *... And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me"* (John 11)

3. Not for stuff that Jesus needed

⁷ *And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. (Matthew 6)*

¹¹ *Give us this day our daily bread... (Matt 6)*

4. Not to inform the Father of what He doesn't know

⁸ *Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. (Matthew 6)*

D. Why?

1. To focus our desires

Jesus:

²⁴ *Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. (John 17)*

David:

⁶ *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it. ¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! (Psalm 139)*

2. To relieve our anxieties

Jesus:

¹⁴ *I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. (John 17)*

David:

⁹ *If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, ¹⁰ even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. ¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," ¹² even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you. (Psalm 139)*

3. To clarify our purposes

Jesus:

¹¹ *And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. ²⁶ I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them." (John 17)*

David:

¹ *O LORD, you have searched me and known me! ² You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. ³ You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. ⁴ Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. (Psalm 139)*

4. To align our hearts with the Father's

Jesus:

²⁵ *O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. (John 17)*

David:

¹⁴ *I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well....¹⁸ If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you. (Psalm 139)*