



ALL SAINTS

PREBYTERIAN

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR ALL SAINTS SMALL GROUPS

"A Community of Life" | Trinity Sunday | Rev. Craig Chapman | May 30, 2021

John 16:7-15

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. **8** And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: **9** concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; **10** concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; **11** concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. **13** When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. **14** He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. **15** All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Acts 2:41-47

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. **42** And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. **43** And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. **44** And all who believed were together and had all things in common. **45** And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the

Key Points and Discussion Questions from Craig's Sermon:

Introductory Exercise

Open in prayer. Read Genesis 11:1-9 and Acts 2:41-47. Discuss the disruption and dispersion that occur in each. How are they similar? How are they different? Why do you think God responded so differently to these two different gatherings? How is this comparison/contrast relevant to the cultural disruptions we have experienced in the past year?

1. About "Trinity" Sunday . . .

- o What did Craig tell us makes Trinity Sunday unique among all of the named Sundays of our Church Calendar?
- o Discuss some of the essence(es) of this mystery we call the Trinity?
- o Craig asks rhetorically, "don't we all have a fear of being left out?" If you are comfortable, share a time in your life when you have felt left out. Now imagine the experience of fellowship the Persons of the Trinity have with each other. What are some relational images that come to mind? How does this exercise make you feel about the times you have felt exiled or alone? How does this make you feel towards our Triune God?
- o Is it hard for you to reconcile your current or past experiences of deep loneliness with the indescribable fellowship of the Trinity? How so? Why not? Discuss.

2. About Christian Community: All Saints at a Crossroads

- o Craig suggests our community is at a crossroads as we emerge from "our Covid Apocalypse." Do you agree? Disagree? Discuss.
- o What types of things/habits do we collectively need to leave behind? How about individually? Share with your group what comes to mind for you.
- o Are there any good things/habits you want to keep from your Covid experience? Discuss.

3. A Post-Covid "Recalibration": learning from the earliest church as we move out of our Covid experience

- o To what did the earliest church devote itself? (see v. 42) Is this a mandate for us, now? Discuss.
- o What differences are there between the Teaching of the God through the Apostles and the Teachings of Man. Why is this practically important?
- o What does it mean *practically* for us to devote ourselves to "the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers?" Put in the negative, what things must we never forsake?
- o Craig makes a very specific and practical appeal in our approach to gathered worship, here: what was it? Do you agree with this for yourself? Discuss.
- o Read aloud Acts 2:43-47. Consider both the experience of the early church and the experience of international worship Craig described of his own journeys in ministry. In what ways does this type of ecumenical experience excite you? Does it threaten or scare you in any way?

proceeds to all, as any had need. **46** And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Genesis 11:1-9 (The Message)

11 1-2 At one time, the whole Earth spoke the same language. It so happened that as they moved out of the east, they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar and settled down.

3 They said to one another, "Come, let's make bricks and fire them well." They used brick for stone and tar for mortar.

4 Then they said, "Come, let's build ourselves a city and a tower that reaches Heaven. Let's make ourselves famous so we won't be scattered here and there across the Earth."

5 God came down to look over the city and the tower those people had built.

6-9 God took one look and said, "One people, one language; why, this is only a first step. No telling what they'll come up with next—they'll stop at nothing! Come, we'll go down and garble their speech so they won't understand each other." Then God scattered them from there all over the world. And they had to quit building the city. That's how it came to be called Babel, because there God turned their language into "babble." From there God scattered them all over the world.

- o Discuss. True or false: this type of experience would be true for our community if we devoted ourselves in similar ways as the church described in the early chapters of Acts.
- o Group Exercise: using the early church as a frame of reference, make a side-by-side list of what you see is both *missing* and *present* in our experience of community here at All Saints.

Closing Exercises:

1. Craig identified several ministries and efforts in which our church is presently engaged. He invited us to pray for them, and perhaps get involved with them more directly. Did anything he shared strike at your heart? What accountability do you want from your group to take action in this area?
2. Using the list you created together in the last exercise of Section 3, take turns praying for All Saints and each other.