

Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

June 1, 2025

The Circle

[John 17:20-26](#)

²⁰ “I ask not only on behalf of these but also on behalf of those who believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us,^[a] so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, ²³ I 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. ²⁴ Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ “Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you, and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them and I in them.”

The lectionary text this week points us to a text that we might easily skip over otherwise, as one that would seem more obvious than more challenging passages. The passage, set on Maundy Thursday, is a prayer Jesus delivers to His disciples at the end of their evening together. This prayer is intended as much for us as it was for His disciples on that last evening with Him. Thomas points out Jesus’ use of the word “in” eight times throughout the passage. **Read through the passage listening specifically for the word “in” and reflect on the overlapping relationships. Knowing Jesus was at the end of His life, how much more significant does it make this prayer and what He chose to focus on?**

This passage reinforces to us how our lives overlap with both Jesus and His Father, how they live in each other, how we live in them, and how they live in us. Thomas’ use of a concentric circle helps us understand the overlapping relationships:

Jesus and the Father both live in us: We are never alone. Jesus and God dwell within us and are ready to listen to us and help direct the course of our lives. We allow ourselves to become so distracted by the world that we lose our ability to seek solitude. In solitude we are able to hear God whispering to us, reminding us of our belovedness, and directing our paths. **How do you currently seek solitude? What practices do you need to add or modify to better connect with God and hear His voice?**

We live in both Jesus and the Father: Of all the characteristics that define us, our identity first and foremost in that we are in the family of Christ. With our world in tumult and beliefs dividing us more than ever, it’s difficult for most people to realize that we all actually have more in common than what separates us. When we live life claiming Christ as our primary identity, we are better able to respect and admire others for who they are, not only for what they believe. **In what areas of your life does your identity in Christ help foster relationships with those who have been otherwise difficult to befriend?**