

Study notes, Sunday 10th November 2019 (Revelation 12–14)

Welcome

- How would you explain to someone what is meant by Christian discipleship? What are the elements involved?

Worship

Psalm 44 contains both a declaration of God's victory and also words of lament. Read through it together and allow it to lead you into prayers of praise and worship, repentance and supplication...

Word – The realities of discipleship... “this calls for patient endurance and faithfulness” (Revelation 12-14)...

- Chap 12 - Stand firm in the witness of your lives and the word of your testimony, there will be opposition and persecution, but we're in it together.
- Chap 13 – “The patient ferment of the early church” (Alain Kreider). Whose mark do we bear?
- Chap 14 – Disciples of Christ are visibly different, those who belong to the Lamb follow him **wherever** he goes, the Gospel includes judgment and justice.
- Conclusion – Authentic Christian discipleship is tough and will involve suffering. Despite opposition, it is important to be wise, patient, persevering and faithful in our witness to Jesus and in following God's commands.

Possible discussion questions (select a few)

1. Do we, typically, in the Protestant Church in the West have an approach to discipleship that is too individualistic? What can we learn from other societies/church traditions about their approach to discipleship in community?
2. Do you agree that there is a risk that a knowledge of God's commands and an understanding of who Jesus is could soon disappear from our society? What can we do about this in practical terms?
3. Have you ever experienced any kind of persecution e.g. social, economic or physical as a result of your Christian faith? Were you able to “stand firm”? What helped? What made things difficult?
4. What can we learn from today's persecuted church about the need for patient endurance and faithfulness? How can we best support our brothers and sisters in these situations? Do we do enough?
5. Do you agree that “patient ferment” is an effective strategy in the face of opposition, or should Christians respond “more pro-actively”?
6. What are the practical ways in which day to day Christian living should look different from the prevailing cultural norms?
7. Are we *all* called to follow Jesus *wherever* he goes? Why? Why not? What might this look like for us at NMBC?
8. Do you have anyone (apart from a spouse) with whom you meet regularly to pray or to hold each other accountable in the witness of your Christian lives? Share any stories of how this has helped or encouraged you. If not, who could you ask to partner with you and spur you on in your Christian discipleship?

Prayer and witness

- Pray for each other for patience, endurance and faithfulness of testimony, particularly in any areas of current or ongoing trial.
- Pray for CSW and their work in fighting for justice for those persecuted for their faith. Pray about (and consider responding to?) their need for office-based admin support.
- Pray for the Khourys, their work amongst Muslims and their update evening at the Delves on 22nd November.
- Pray for Neil and Jane and for all those involved in the church “out East”.
- Pray for the Alpha Course's “Holy Spirit Day” on Saturday 16th Nov. Pray that the Spirit will move, will touch and transform lives.
- Pray for the Fuller family and MMCC as a whole as they seek to reach out and to be salt and light in the Malden Manor Community.