



GOING DEEPER

CONNECTING VERTICALLY

SEPTEMBER 15, 2019

TEXT: *John 15.1-8*

How might we live a ground and stable life in our world today?

A rooted life has the person of _____ at the center.

An important next step on our faith journey involves moving from experiencing Jesus as an external reality to experiencing Jesus as an internal reality.

POINTS TO PONDER

- Do you find yourself feeling unsettled or struggling with fear? If so, what are the ways you have been seeking to handle these experiences? In what ways, if any, do you resonate with the invitation to live with Jesus at the center of your life?
- In what ways, if any, do you feel stuck or frustrated on the journey of faith? How might this experience be related to the way you experience and follow Jesus?
- What thoughts or feelings are stirred when you consider the reality that all of Jesus is already inside those who have begun to follow him?

TAKING A NEXT STEP

The journey of faith is one in which we orient our lives around the person of Jesus. While this orientation around Jesus begins with encountering the physical person of Jesus, the journey of faith does not stop with us experiencing Jesus as an external reality: teacher, friend, companion. Going deeper on the faith journey involves transitioning from experiencing Jesus as an external companion to an internal resident, one who lives his life in and through us. This is necessary because we cannot live the life Jesus invites us to live unless he lives it through us. The best news many people have never heard is the truth that Jesus is already in them if they have encountered and begun to follow him. Jesus lives within them making it possible for Jesus to live his life through them as they recognize and respond to his presence. Community plays an important role in recognizing and responding to God's presence within us, but this journey begins with us taking individual steps.

- *Listening to the internal voice:* Recognizing Jesus is within us requires us to slow down and pay attention to what is inside us. One first step involves listening to God's voice within us by reading Scripture slowly, paying attention to his word spoken directly to us. We can do this by choosing a short passage of Scripture and reading it once to grasp the content and context. We then read it once more paying attention to what words or phrases "light up" for us. This is God's word to us. Finally, we hold this word or phrase and ponder it, asking what God has in it for us personally. Often we will find God speaking to areas of our lives quite hidden or pressing, about areas only someone inside us would know.
- *Watching for the God who leaks out:* God is infinite. We are finite. If you put an infinite God in finite bodies, he leaks out. Ending each day, paying attention to what we did and said and noticing where God leaked out of us will show us how God is active inside us in ways we might find surprising.
- *Enjoying the God who is in us:* As we recognize God's presence in us, we respond by slowing down to simply be with and know God. We can do this by setting aside 20 minutes a day to be still and contemplate God's presence within us. In this time, we allow God to captivate our attention while we let our reactive and active mind let go of problems and concerns. As we surrender in this way to God, we make room for God to have all of us in ways which carry more and more into our daily lives.