

**To: My current and soon-to-be-friends @ Indian Springs Holiness Camp,**

**From: Dave Smith, an evangelist at Indian Springs 2022**

When I attend conferences, such as the upcoming Indian Springs Camp (July 14<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>), I feel as if I am just a bit under-prepared. I often do not know much about the evangelists or teacher. Nor do I have any insight into the overall thrust of the topics they will be sharing. So, I asked the camp leadership if I could send you a more detailed introduction to help take care of this dilemma.

First, my name is Dave Smith. I've been a professor of Bible for the last 3+ decades. But the truth is *I am a pastor masquerading as a professor*. Students in my classes start each semester thinking that I am primarily focused on teaching their heads. But in actuality, I am seeking to impact their hearts to fall in love with Jesus and His Word. That will equally be so at Indian Springs!

Since I have only met a few of you. I thought it might be helpful for me to share just a few words about myself. For you will not understand my sermons or any private conversations we might have without this background. *I am a sinner saved by grace*. No; I mean I was a really good sinner. Drugs, alcohol, and all the other issues which flows from that kind of lifestyle comprised the first 25 years of my life. You can probably hear my brokenness in that simple sentence. Then a woman introduced me to the man named Jesus. She miraculously became my wife, Angie. So, I get to do life together with the one who led me to the Lord. All I do and all I say, flows directly out of the gracious work of the Lord in my life. He also created peace with so many that I had wronged over the years. That reconciliation and unity with others has become a value in my life second to none. I pray that that will become clear to each of you as we walk together through the Biblical text this coming July.

For the last 40 years, I have been married to Angie. She is a home-maker and a mentor of young women on the Indiana Wesleyan campus. We have two grown children, Joshua (married to Laura) and Hannah (married to Brian), and five grandchildren. My wife and I love to watch old movies together. I love the movies. She loves cuddling during the movies, which I have never complained about. To relieve daily tension, I love to read and lift weights (though to look at me you might be surprised. I did however, look more like it at age 25 than the present day).

Angie and I have pastored two churches; our last role was as solo pastor of a Free Methodist Church in Cleveland, Ohio for five years. We loved it. It was a great incubator for me to develop a practical philosophy of ministry. More so, serving in the local church is a prerequisite for teaching current and future pastors at Indiana Wesleyan.

To give you a bit of my professional and academic training, I am a second career pastor-professor. I spent 10 years as a Computer Systems Analyst with Nationwide Insurance in Columbus, Ohio. So, my languages are not just Hebrew, Greek but I also talk "computereze." My undergraduate training was done at Circleville Bible College (Circleville, Ohio, now called Ohio Christian University) and Asbury University (B.A.; Bible). I then went to Asbury Theological Seminary for an M.A. in Biblical Literature (Old Testament). After several years of pastoring, we returned to Asbury Seminary for

me to work on an M. Div. and then move on to Durham University (England not N.C.) for a Ph.D. in New Testament Studies.

I am passionate about the Gospels and Paul's letters. But I have also done extensive study and teaching in the Hebrew Bible. Angie and I have traveled around the world teaching and doing leadership development. Most recently we have been working in local Church-based Community Development in Malawi, Africa through [Circle of Hope, International](#). We have also started a new ministry this last year called [True^North](#) through which we train laity in local churches how to read, interpret and apply the Scriptures as the key act of Discipleship.

Now, how about our time together at Indian Springs Holiness Camp? As I prayed about the material to share, I sensed the Spirit leading me towards this topic, "*Holiness Housed in a Prayer*." My primary focus be John Chapter 17, Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. But of course, John 17 is wonderfully nestled in the larger context of John 13-17; Jesus' Final words to His disciples. Thus, I will move throughout those 5 chapters of John. If you feel so inclined, I might suggest that you read John 13-17 in preparation for our time together. *May I humbly ask you to read 13-17 a few times?* Maybe even more than a few times. If you enjoy the process of biblical storytelling, maybe try to read it aloud. If you are married, may I suggest that you read the passage aloud "over on another" as if your covenant partner is being baptized in the spoken Words of Jesus. Moreover, the way you pronounce the words of Jesus is your initial entrance into the living Word. You will never regret reading Scripture this way. I pray that in our time together, I will show you many new ways to hear John 13-17 as if Jesus is right in the tabernacle with us in July...BECAUSE HE IS!

Friends, it is my hope and prayer that you will encounter the Gospel of John in new and fresh ways BEFORE we get together. In our time together in just a few months, I equally pray that the Spirit will refresh, renew, awaken, and speak with clarity the depth of the call upon each of our lives. May we realize that He is not just our Savior who forgives sin but He is the Lord God of the Universe, who desires to reconcile all things unto Himself. (Sorry, that is the Apostle Paul in Col 1:20 and not the Gospel of John). May we never forget just how big our God is and how transformative His Gospel message can be. Complete Re-Creation is His Mission (Yes, that is goal of John...but found in the Book of Revelation Chapters 21-22).

May we settle for nothing less than the full salvation He offers as His Easter gift to *each of us* as His children and to *all of us* as the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

Lord, hear our prayers.

In Jesus' joy,

Rev. Dave Smith

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