GET PROXIMATE WITH ALL PEOPLE

“Peter told them, ‘You know it is against our laws for a Jewish man to enter a Gentile home like this or to associate with you. But God has shown me that I should no longer think of anyone as impure or unclean... I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. In every nation He accepts those who fear Him and do what is right. This is the message of Good News for the people of Israel—that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.”  Acts 10:28,34-36 NLT

BE INTENTIONAL IN RECONCILING ALL PEOPLE

“Don’t forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called, ‘uncircumcised heathens’ by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to Him through the blood of Christ. For Christ Himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in His own body on the cross, He broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in Himself one new people from the two groups. Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of His death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death. He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from Him, and peace to the Jews who were near. Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.”  Ephesians 2:11-18 NLT

“And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to Himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to Him.”  2 Corinthians 5:18 NLT

January 14, 2018

Unity Of Grace
RON THOMPSON

“See to it that no one fails to obtain (or misses out on) the grace of God...”  Hebrews 12:15a ESV

“After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands. And they were shouting with a great roar, ‘Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!’”  Revelation 7:9-10 NLT

“You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.”  Galatians 3:26-28 NLT

Expressing The Unity Of Grace

AFFIRM THE DIGNITY OF ALL PEOPLE

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make human beings in Our own image, to be like Us:...’ So God created human beings in His own image. In the image of God He created them; male and female He created them.”  Genesis 1:26a-27 NLT

“Treat everyone you meet with dignity. Love your spiritual family. Revere God. Respect the government.”  1 Peter 2:17 Message
This Study Guide is designed to help you apply Sunday’s message. Join one of our message-based Community Groups to do this study together. Visit the Groups table after service to find a group!

LESSON AIM: The aim of this lesson is to learn to practice unity through grace.

BELONG in God’s family:

CHECK IN: (optional) Let's briefly share with each other how we've been doing this week.

OPENING PRAYER

ICEBREAKER: Read Revelation 7:9. When you think of Christians from all generations, cultures, and backgrounds united in Heaven, describe what that looks like in your mind.

BECOME like Jesus:

1. Sunday’s message focused on unity through God’s grace. Which point will help you live a more unified life with those who are different from you? How might that be challenging?

2. Read Ephesians 2:11-22. As we see with the Jews and Gentiles described here, how can focusing on our differences cause us to divide and separate? If you were to look at others with the same measure of grace given to you, how could that be an opportunity for unity and understanding? What was Paul saying when he said, “we are made one in Christ?”

3. Read Galatians 3:26-28. How does the grace given through Jesus reconcile us to God and one another? How is our identity changed from male and female, bonded and free... to that of unity in Christ? How does that become our common denominator with others? What are some social and cultural barriers to the unity of believers in our time?

4. Read Acts 10:28-43. What was the wedge that caused Peter’s prejudice against Gentiles, and how did he overcome it? How can we take steps toward reconciliation with those who are not like us?

5. See Galatians 2:11-21. Peter, “The Rock,” temporarily succumbed to peer pressure and caved to cultural prejudice rather than extending the grace he had received. What can we learn NOT to do from his example? See verse 21. How are we to dispense the grace of God in relation to people that are different from us, especially fellow believers?

BLESS others:

Read John 13:34-35 and discuss how having grace with each other helps fulfill this commandment to love one another. How important is this? How is unity in diversity such a strong testimony to our community and the greater world (v35)?

BUILD God’s kingdom:

In Acts 8:26-38 Philip had just left Samaria where he had been preaching, the last place most Jews would go because of age-old prejudices. Do you think the Ethiopian foreigner looked like Philip? Spoke like him? Had the same customs and habits? Why is it so important to remember we cannot disqualify anyone from hearing about Jesus?

BELIEVE God and act in faith:

Grace levels the playing field for every human being created. In our local community what barriers can we cross to extend God’s love and grace to the undeserving?

PRAYER: What challenge are you facing this week? How can our group pray and support you?

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