

ULC Sermon Study Resource

Fear // Fear of the Other

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Prayer: Pause for a few moments to go to the Lord in prayer. Ask that He would draw near to you in this time, and open your heart and mind to hear His Word.

Icebreaker: Which social media platforms do you use the least and which the most?

Reading: John 4:27-38

Outline:

- I. Fear of the Other (v.27-30)
 - a. Social media has created a detective like characteristic in our communities that looks for guilt and crime before innocence which lies in stark contrast to Christian love
 - b. Like the woman at the well, sometimes we're kept from community because our pain and experiences are devalued in comparison to others
Q: How do we see this discrimination today?
- II. Sent to the Other (v. 34-36)
 - a. In these verses, Jesus keeps the conversation on what the woman brought up and talks about the fields being white for harvest and the grains being ready to pick
 - b. Samaritans customarily wear white, so the fact that Jesus calls the fields completely white reflects the lack of division now that He has come
Q: How does Jesus' coming unify us all?
- III. The Image in the Other (Colossians 3:9-11)
 - a. The action that Paul offers us to respond with in this passage helps us to look and reflect less of what divides us and more of what connects us to each other
 - b. We bear the same flesh as our neighbors, so just like the renewal He's given us, He desires to give the same to them. They're just as sacred as us
Q: How can keeping our personal renewal in mind help us better understand our neighbors?

Reflection/Application Questions:

- 1) Why did the disciples naturally dismiss the message the woman at the well brought?
- 2) How can differences make it hard to get along with our neighbors?
- 3) What was the significance of Jesus comparing the fields to the Samaritans clothing color?
- 4) What challenges come with putting on the new self as Paul proposes?
- 5) How can the hope of the gospel make these relational problems easier?

Suggestions for further study:

- Ephesians 2:14-16 **Q: How did Jesus represent both Jew and Gentile people?**
- 1 Corinthians 11:26 **Q: How does the Lord's Supper unify us?**

Closing Prayer:

Father, the reality of division, of those who seem so other and different from us, is inescapable. But you have spoken our entire worth when you sent your son Jesus into the world to take on our frail flesh, our humanity. You invite us to remember what it is we share. It's not only that we share flesh and blood, but that we share the blood that was shed for us and all our sins. May it be through this gift that we find the power to reflect His love, and be sent to the one who sees differently. All this we pray in your name, Amen.