

## **ULC Sermon Study Resource**

***What's up with Christians being so exclusive?***

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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.

**Reading:** Romans 3:9-26 (ESV)

### **Outline:**

- I. We all make exclusive claims about reality.
  - a. Jesus makes very explicit, universal claims about himself and the nature of everything (John 14:6).
  - b. The position of doubt and skepticism about all religious claims is itself an exclusive claim about reality.
- II. Christianity is completely exclusive (v19-20).
  - a. Everyone is sinful and broken; no one is “good enough” or righteous before God. In light of this, there is no room for arrogance in our faith.
  - b. It is in this exclusive situation that God works within his creation, calling “a few for the sake of the many” (Gen 12:1-3, 18:22-33).
- III. Christianity is completely inclusive (v21-26).
  - a. Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus, inclusion is possible. Everyone is invited to know God and receive him by faith.
  - b. God wants more than for us to have the right thoughts in our head: he sent Jesus so that we could be included in his promises and be in relationship with him.

### **Reflection/Application Questions:**

- 1) What does God's desire to include us despite our failure reveal about his character?
- 2) Reflect on times in your life when you know you've fallen short of God's commands. What does it mean to you that he has included you in his promises and called you to relationship with him, despite the total exclusion of the Law?
- 3) Do you ever find yourself feeling a bit arrogant about having “the right ideas” about religion and God? How might you remember that our inclusion is a gift of grace?
- 4) In light of God's gift of grace, how can you practice sacrificial service, generosity and peace-making? How can you give yourself away for the many?
- 5) What are some ways you can share the truth of Christianity's total inclusion in Jesus with those in your life?

### **Suggestions for further reading:**

- Matthew 20:20-28
- Acts 4:1-12
- Romans 10:1-13
- Galatians 2:15-21