

# God Loves Everyone

Lesson 05 of the series "Foundations"

## 1. We are all created in God's image.

"Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." Genesis 1:26-27 (NIV)

## 2. Jesus commanded us to love our neighbors as much as we love ourselves.

"One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: 'Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus replied, 'What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?' The man answered, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.' And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 'Right!' Jesus told him. 'Do this and you will live!' The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' Jesus replied with a story: 'A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road. By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side. Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins telling him, 'Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.' Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?' Jesus asked. The man replied, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Then Jesus said, 'Yes, now go and do the same.'" Luke 10:25-37 (NLT)

## 3. Racism is sinful and wrong.

- a. God doesn't show favoritism or judge us by our outward appearance.

"I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right." Acts 10:34-35 (NLT)

"The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7 (NIV)

- b. God doesn't want us to show favoritism or judge each other by outward appearance.

"My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, 'Here's a good seat for you,' but say to the poor man, 'You stand there' or 'Sit on the floor by my feet,' have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?" James 2:1-4 (NIV)

## 4. Jesus came into our world in order to destroy barriers.

- a. ...between us and God.

"Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us." Romans 5:1 (NLT)

- b. ...between us and others.

"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." Ephesians 2:14 (NLT)

"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 3:27-28 (NLT)

- c. In Heaven, there will be no racial barriers of any kind.

"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 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 (NLT)

## 5. We have a tremendous opportunity to demonstrate God's love.

- a. We can ask God to root out racism and prejudice in our hearts.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life." Psalm 139:23-24 (NLT)

- b. We can do what's right.

"O people, the Lord has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8 (NIV)

"...the tongue... is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right!" James 3:7-10 (NLT)

- c. We can overcome evil with good.

"Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. Dear friends, never take revenge... Instead, 'If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads.' Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good." Romans 12:17-21 (NLT)

**Good News!** Real change is possible through power of the Holy Spirit.

"I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13 (NLT)

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## Connect Group Questions

1. Why do you think many Christians have a hard time talking about racial issues?
2. Read 2 Timothy 3:16. At Centerpoint, we continually refer to the Bible as our guide in all matters of faith and practice. What does this mean to you?
3. Read Genesis 1:26-27 & James 2:1-4. What do you think it means to be created in the image of God?
4. Read Luke 10:25-37. Who can you most relate to in this story? Why? Why do you think Jesus chose a Samaritan to be the hero of his story?
5. Read Acts 10. How do you think this event changed the church? ...changed Peter? (see Acts 11)
6. Read James 2:1-4. Why is showing favoritism such a serious issue to James? Do you think it is still a problem among Christians today?
7. Read Revelation 7:9. How does it make you feel to know that there will be no racial barriers in heaven?
8. Discuss the following three ways Christians can demonstrate God's love for everyone:
  - We can ask God to root out racism and prejudice in our hearts. (Psalm 139:23-24)
  - We can do what's right. (Micah 6:8)
  - We can overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:17-21)
9. Spend some time praying as a group for Christians in our country. We live in a divided, angry culture still dealing with coronavirus. How do we love? How do we heal? How do we live as witnesses for Jesus?