



THIS IS US, PART 5 B4: RADICAL RELATIONSHIPS

February 17, 2019
Pastor Randy Remington

BIBLICAL TEXT(S)

*"Paul's teaching clearly implies that a Christian in the U.S. has more in common with an Iraqi Believer than with a next door neighbor who doesn't follow Jesus. The Gospel argues for a radical idea of unity that transcends political and geographic boundaries."
-Pastor Randy*

MAIN:

*"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)*

"I will demand an accounting for the life of another human being. "Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind." (Genesis 9:5-6)

"Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?" But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius, and he asked them, "Whose image is this? And whose inscription?" "Caesar's," they replied. Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away." (Matthew 22:15-22)

"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us." (Acts 17:24-27)

"Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul." (Acts 13:1)

*"So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."
(Galatians 3:26-28)*

MESSAGE SUMMARY

Christ is bringing together by tearing down walls that previously divided people. Humans alone in creation bare the image of God, therefore there is intrinsic value because of whose image they bare. In Matthew 22, Jesus says because Caesar's image is stamped on a coin, to give it to Caesar. Yet, each of us is stamped with the image of the Creator, so we are to honor people because they bear the image of God. In the ancient world, a king would erect an image or statue of himself in the reaches of his kingdom. If his image flourished, his kingdom was flourishing. But if the statues were defaced or torn down, it was tantamount to declaring war on that king's kingdom. God has no racial favorites. Every person is made in the image of God. So to tear another person down is to declare war on the king whose image that person bears.

cont.,

Sin, fear, ignorance, and pride has resulted in ethnocentrism, or the tendency to evaluate other groups according to the values and standards of one's own ethnic group, especially with the conviction that one's own ethnic group is superior to the other groups. Similarly, prejudice is making a preconceived adverse judgment based on things that don't tell you anything about that individual. But Jesus spoke with the Samaritan woman, he constantly references Old Testament stories that exalted the Gentile or outsider, he made the Samaritan the hero of his parable. Diversity training and identity politics fail so miserably because they major on minors by focusing on differences, rather than on the common humanity we have. We are more than our ethnicities, but not less than. Because we have the same lineage (image bearers of God), we bear the same name (Christ's), we can recognize and celebrate our differences.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage and the speaker's message, helping them understand and apply the teaching.

LEAN IN

These are icebreaker/warm up questions, mostly just to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. What stood out to you in Sunday's sermon? Why was it significant to you?
2. What was your high/low for this past week (or since group last met)? What was the best thing that happened and the worst thing that happened?
3. Last time we met, we talked about [whatever you talked about]. Has anyone had a chance to put that lesson into practice? Has it has an impact on your life in anyway?
4. What is one thing that you're looking forward to this week?
What's one that you are dreading?

LOOK DOWN

These are questions on the passage and observations about what's been read.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. In your own words, what do you think it means to bear the image of God?
2. Why do you think Jesus calls the Pharisees and Herodians hypocrites for asking whether or not to pay the imperial tax? (Matt 22:18)
3. List two or three implications of Jesus' answer? (Matt 22:21)
4. Why does you think Jesus says to give to Caesar what is Caesar's? In light of this, what do you think Jesus means when he says, "give to God what is God's?"
5. Who does Paul say is our family through faith in Galatians 3:26-28?

LOOK OUT

These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. The Pharisees were anti-tax because they opposed the Roman government.
"The Herodians supported the Roman government. So when Jesus was asked whether or not to pay tax, they were really asking, "what political party are you part of?"
What is a modern day equivalent to asking God whether or not to pay tax to Caesar?
2. Jesus responded to the Pharisees and Herodians with a matter of conscience.
He said to show honor to the person whose image is on that coin. If people bear the image of God, how do we show honor to God by how we treat fellow humans?
3. In Acts 17, when Paul preached that God gives life and breath and everything in it, he was turning Greek thought on its head. Paul said that people in every nation have a common source. The Athenians thought that they were a superior race and had sprung from their native soil. Paul, however, teaches that all humans have the same origin.
Where do you see this line of thinking in our current day?

**DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS,
CONT.**

4. The first time the word “Christian” is used is in reference to a church in Syria in Acts 13. Acts 13 is not color blind, but actually includes information on backgrounds, ethnicities, etc. He’s not saying that there are no distinguishing characteristics. However, those differences do not separate us. How do differences in the church (racially, politically, etc.) make the church a more beautiful community?
5. In Acts 13:1, Luke includes some biographical details, including the ethnicities, of some of the early church leaders, indicating that church is not color blind. In what ways would becoming more culturally aware benefit the church body?

LOOK IN

These are questions that help you consider personal application.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. Where does the attitude that other people need to be “put in their place” come from?
2. Our ultimate citizenship is with the Kingdom of God. The kingdoms of this earth will come to an end, but the Kingdom of God has no end. What does it mean to live as citizens of heaven?
3. Do you ever find yourself wishing that Jesus would take your side on a particular issue? Why?
4. Is there a group of people whom you find it difficult to want to spend time with or be close to? How would you interact with them differently by remembering that you have the same Maker and that they bear the image of God?
5. Do you have internalized thoughts of oppression or inferiority that you need to work through? Or do you have internalized thoughts about power or superiority that you need to work through?

LIVE IT OUT

These action steps help apply this week’s message to day to day life.

Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. There’s a tendency that pulls us towards likeness, so intentionality is required to interact with people who are not like us. How will you take the initiative to learn from the personal experience of individuals who at first glance may not appear to be very much like you?
2. What are some good questions you could ask to better understand another person’s experience with charitable curiosity?
3. How will you find encouragement and accountability to lean into the tension and stay at it when our patience is tested?