

# Unexpected Inclusivity

September 13, 2020



## Reading/Group Discussion

### Begin with prayer

As you begin your gathering, designate someone to pray the Holy Spirit would lead and guide your time together. Before they do so, spend a few moments together in prayerful silence. Then, after a few seconds of quiet and centering, have the specified person pray for the group.

### Read this overview

During this 13-week series, we are going to be opening up the book of Mark together to study the life of Jesus—The Unexpected King. During this series, we will gain a better understanding of who Jesus is and what it really means to be his disciple.

This past weekend Dan preached on **Mark 7-8** and Jesus' Unexpected Inclusivity.

### Scripture + Discussion

*The goal of your discussion this week is to discuss the inclusivity of the gospel of Jesus...and in what ways you yourself either contribute or do not contribute to that being a reality.*

Take turns reading through all the way through **Mark 7:1-8:10**. Then, use the questions below to guide your discussion to hit on the above objectives.

Here are a few questions to guide this time:

- Who is someone you admire who crossed a barrier to open up a world of possibilities for others? Consider examples like Jackie Robinson, the person who crossed the racial barrier in Major League Baseball to break open brand-new possibilities for people of color in our country.
- How does the narrative arc of **Mark 7-8** show Jesus' radical inclusivity?
- In **Mark 7**, the Pharisees weren't able to be inclusive because they held to traditions that excluded others. As you think about people around you, what traditions (spoken or unspoken) do you think people hold that precludes them from being inclusive? What traditions (spoken or unspoken) might *you* hold to personally that preclude you from being inclusive (think things learned from your family of origin, friend groups, work, church, organizations, etc.)?

- What prejudices might you have that make you dismiss a person completely (political perspective, views on COVID, parenting philosophy, socio-economic status, taste in music...)? Are there certain behaviors, lifestyle choices, mindsets, or sins that you believe should exclude someone from the Kingdom of God?
- In what ways does God's mercy and grace *to us* speak to this kind of thinking (see **Romans 3:9-26**)?
- Imagine you are planning a gathering around your dinner table...
  - Who are the people you would include?
  - Who are the people you would tend to exclude?
  - Are they specific individuals? Individuals who look different from you? Families who are in a different income bracket than you? People who vote differently from you? Individuals with different lifestyles from you?
  - Is there an individual or group that you go out of your way to avoid?
- In **Mark 7:23**, Jesus says what's inside us will determine what comes out of us. What are you allowing to influence your heart? What needs to change? What's one way Jesus has changed you recently? What was that process like for you?
- In this sermon, Dan challenged us to do three things: (1) to intentionally cross racial, socio-economic, and religious lines; (2) to indiscriminately share with others what God has given you; and (3) to purposefully advocate for outsiders to those who are insiders to you. Which of these three challenges do you feel God inviting you into? In what way might you be able to take one small step towards heeding God's call this next week in one of these areas?
- What from this sermon especially challenged you or deepened your love for Jesus?

### **Accountability**

Take some time again this week to split your group into smaller or gendered groups and share your answers to the questions below. Be sure to follow up on anything that was shared last week.

- What has your time in God's word and prayer been like this week?
- What have you learned from Jesus this week?
- Have you consistently reflected the love of Christ to those in your life this week (such as your spouse, children, or co-workers)?
- Where have you wrestled with temptation this week?
- What sins do you need to confess right now?
- Have you been 100% honest?

### **Finish with prayer**

Like each week, finish your group session with prayer. You might designate someone in your group to write down everyone's prayer requests and then send them to the whole group for everyone to be praying about through the week.

- What is on your heart that you need prayer for?
- Who in your life needs prayer?

Have someone close your time together by interceding for the requests that were shared.