

Who's Invited?

March 17, 2019

Matthew 8:5-13

OPENING PRAYER:

Gracious God, we sing of love and kindness; we say that we are friends of Jesus. In this hour, we revel in your blessings to all creation. We are grateful for Jesus and his teachings which impel us to love one another — east, west, north, south! Liberal and conservative, large and small, ordinary and extraordinary, — we listen for your guidance.

BREAKING THE ICE:

- What did you agree/disagree with the sermon this week?
- Where have you seen people who were different than you this week? They could be of other religions, speak other languages, or even act differently.

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:

Matthew 8:5-13

- What does it mean to fully accept the authority of Jesus?
- The disciples must have been surprised that a Roman officer would believe Jesus. How would you have felt if someone powerful that you didn't like approached Jesus? Came to church?
- What warning does Jesus have for those following him?
- Jesus was open toward the officer even though officers were not liked. How can you be to those whom you disagree with, don't like, or are in power in your community?

Read the following scriptures about God's love for all people. What do you learn about who is invited to be part of God's family? Matthew 9:9-12; Acts 8:26-40, 10:1-48 (whole chapter).

NEXT STEPS:

- Read the whole book of Jonah to see how God included people who are considered enemies. (The Message version is easiest and most entertaining.) How does that apply today?
- Who is in your community? Go to a website such as www.factfinder.census.gov and look at the demographics in your zip code. How diverse is your community? Are there any surprises? How can you welcome others in the name of Christ?
- What other religions are present in your community? Look up information and find common ground.
- Say hello and compliment someone who speaks a different language.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Dear God, thank you for loving the entire world so much as to send Jesus to us. Help us welcome others. Show us where we need to be more welcoming and increase our love for all of your people. In Jesus' name, Amen.