



FORMING RELATIONSHIPS

LESSON 1

“At Our Savior’s Way Lutheran Church, we make disciples to follow Jesus by forming relationships.”

GETTING STARTED:

If you were stranded on a deserted island who would you choose to be with you?

Question: Look at the following images of Jesus. Which image speaks loudest to you of His love? Explain your choice.

Question: What do these images say about Jesus and what it means to be a Christian?



DIGGING DEEPER:

I John 4: 7-21 *Dear Friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.*

We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges

that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgement, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

Question: What does it mean that everyone who loves is born of God?

Question: Why is love the antidote for fear?

Question: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Explain your answer.

Faith is not about following a set of rules or trying to improve ourselves. Faith is not about making ourselves acceptable to God, or about being good, or even about going to heaven. Faith is living out a relationship with God that is made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the working of the Holy Spirit. This relationship begins now and will continue for all eternity. *God is love, therefore God loves in all His thoughts, words and deeds (I John 4:7-8).*

Question: What connection does John make between our faith in God and our life?

Reflection: *"Original love from the Lord frees us from the endless effort to please people. When we know that He is pleased with us in spite of what we've been or done, that He offers forgiveness and a million new beginnings, we can get out of the sick syndrome of trying to please the people around us. Love compels us to say and do the things people need, but not just what a whim wants. People can play us like yo-yos in an endless up and down, alternating emotional highs and lows, if we are dependent on their fluctuating emotions. Courageous loving is rooted in the constancy of Christ's love. His love never fails!" - Lloyd John Ogilvie "Life as It Was Meant to Be."*

APPLICATION:

Sin divides. Love unites. The Bible calls us to love difficult people the way God does. If you love someone do you have to like them? And if you do not like a person are you obligated as a Christian to have a relationship with them? What does it mean to love someone?

John 17:20-23 *My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*

Question: What does Jesus pray for in John 17:20-23? What does His prayer teach us about the importance of relationships?

Revelations 21:1-4 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

Question: How is heaven described in this text from Revelations? What does it mean to pray in the Lord's Prayer "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven?" What are we really praying for?

Question: Share one thought about love, you have learned today, that you can apply to your life or to our life together at Our Savior's Way Lutheran Church?

CHALLENGE:

Think about two components of influence in your life: the things you watch and hear (TV, computer, music, etc.) and the friends you surround yourself with. Write down the top five things you watch and hear the most. Write down the five people you're around the most. Now ask the question, do these things and people help me on my journey of understanding God's love?