

### 3. Healing and Hope

**Read Isaiah 58:5-10 aloud from your bible.** There are many in this world who have been both figuratively and literally badly beaten and left for dead. God isn't interested in us going through the motions of religion.

*What is listed in Isaiah 58:5-10 as the kinds of "fasting" that God wants?*  
This is the practical kind of healing that we can offer people today. And this is what pleases God.

Those who are of a different race, don't think like we do, or don't vote like we do, are still our neighbors in God's eyes. Others may pass them by, but Jesus wants to heal their wounds, wash their feet and take time to meet them face to face.

*Isaiah 35:4-6 NLT - 4 Say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, and do not fear, for your God is coming to destroy your enemies. He is coming to save you." 5 And when he comes, he will open the eyes of the blind and unplug the ears of the deaf. 6 The lame will leap like a deer, and those who cannot speak will sing for joy! Springs will gush forth in the wilderness, and streams will water the wasteland.*

*Are you willing to embrace your Kingdom identity in such a way that you would bear witness to the kingdom of God described in Is 35:5-6...., testify that the world is on a trajectory of healing and restoration not of fear and despair?*

### WRAP-UP

The living God has come with healing and hope in Jesus Christ, has picked up the battered and dying world, and has bound up its wounds and set it on the road to full health. Following Him is not a matter of morality or ethics, but one of participating in the re-creation of the fallen world.

### Memory Verse

*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."*  
-Luke 10:27 NLT

### PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: \_\_\_\_\_

Pray for your group members' needs: \_\_\_\_\_

*Challenge- What is one thing you can do this week to choose the path of compassion, mercy, and empathy rather than avoidance, spite, putting in their place?*

## "Who's Your Neighbor?" "We the People" #5

### INTRODUCTION

*Micah 6:8 NIV - 8 He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

As we conclude our "We the People" series, the California Primary Election is only days away, and the level of the political rhetoric is escalating. This is a time when it is easy to find our attention focused on the election news more than the Good News. But no matter who is elected to represent us in government, we are called to represent Jesus before all the world. And if the two come into conflict, are you prepared to stand for Jesus and love your neighbor even when it doesn't line up with your candidate's viewpoint or party's platform?

### Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

Which would you say you've spent more time discussing this week, Jesus or the presidential candidates?

### STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

#### 1. Believing versus Living Out our Faith

It is safe to say that most people who claim to follow Jesus would agree with Micah 6:8, that they want to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God. But agreeing with this command from God is not the same as living it out. It is in fact pretty easy in our current culture to live in "ideological dissonance" that is, agreeing with something, but not allowing it to affect how we act.

*How would you complete this sentence;*

*"Following Jesus" means \_\_\_\_\_*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Luke 10:27-28 NLT - 27 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." 28 "Right!" Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live!"*

When you look at your definition of what it means to follow Jesus, does it include your heart, mind, soul and strength? Let's look at it differently. See if you can identify the different ways your life demonstrates your faith.

I follow Jesus physically when I \_\_\_\_\_.

I follow Jesus spiritually when I \_\_\_\_\_.

I follow Jesus relationally when I \_\_\_\_\_.

I follow Jesus mentally when I \_\_\_\_\_.

Living out your faith isn't only doing what you should, it is not doing what you shouldn't.

*Leviticus 19:18 NLT - 18 "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against a fellow Israelite, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.*

We are not following the Lord when we bear a grudge or seek revenge against someone.

*Have you ever let your need for justification outweigh God's command to love your neighbor? Is there anyone who has hurt you that you need to be reconciled with?*

Dying to yourself in this way can be painful but living before the world in humility is what allows Jesus to shine through. If we insist on saying "He was in the wrong and I deserve justice!" then we are no different from those who don't know God.

## **2. Moving from Vertical to Horizontal**

When questioned by a man trying to justify his action, Jesus was asked, "Who is my neighbor?" In response Jesus told the story of the good Samaritan.

*Luke 10:30-37 NLT - 30 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. 31 "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. 32 A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side. 33 "Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. 34 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. 35 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." 36 "Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?" Jesus asked. 37 The man replied, "The one who showed him mercy." Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same."*

Today the term "good Samaritan" is seen in a positive light. But Jews despised Samaritans. Jesus referred to one Samaritan as an alien or literally, "of another race". So, for Jesus to tell a story where the Samaritan was doing God's will, rather than the priest or Levite, would have been shocking.

*If you were going to choose an unlikely hero in this story today, who would it be?*

The priest and Levite probably had very good excuses for passing this man by. We might also have "good reasons" for not helping others.

*What things do you think keeps us from expressing compassion when we see someone in need? What steps can we take toward setting aside those excuses and expressing genuine compassion for the hurting and broken among us?*

Here is the heart of the problem; the priest and Levite were focused on the vertical side of following God's rules, but totally ignored the horizontal side of loving God; that is, loving your neighbor as yourself.

Jesus asked the man "who had been a neighbor?", to which he answered, "The one who showed mercy." It seems he got the point. Then Jesus told him to do the same.