

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR

Is There One? Tim Ross

Focus Biblically, there are only two groups of people: Jews and Gentiles. Jesus came and broke down walls of division and reconciled all people to God through His death on the cross. Jesus created a new group, and those found in Jesus are “one” regardless of race, background, or ethnicity.

Fun What is your favorite store to shop at and why?

Review Key Scriptures: Ephesians 2:14–18

1. Jesus broke down the wall.

Ephesians 2:14 states that Jesus brought peace by giving Himself to us. He is the Prince of Peace, and when we are born again, we receive His peace. Jesus’ peace in us breaks down the wall of hostility that once divided us. As part of God’s family, you are not defined by your race, color, background, social status, or anything else. You are one of God’s children.

2. Jesus created a new group.

Before Jesus, there were two distinct groups of people: Jews (God’s chosen people) and Gentiles (everyone else). Jesus came and ended the system of separation between Jews and Gentiles. Jesus took the groups and created one *new* group that is found in Him. The Jews used to live by several rules and ordinances in addition to the law God gave. Jesus came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it. As the perfect fulfillment of the law, we can have unity when we are in Jesus.

3. Jesus reconciled all.

Without coming to Jesus, it is impossible for people to unify. The term “racial reconciliation” cannot happen the way it needs to without Jesus. In Jesus, there can be complete and total reconciliation to the biblical unity God intended from the beginning. Ephesians 2:17 reads, “Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.”

Group Dynamics Idea Now is a challenging time in our nation. For those in your group who might be struggling with fear, pray God’s peace for them and share with them verses of how they can trust God during these times.

Discuss

1. Read Ephesians 2:14–18. What do you think is being expressed about God’s heart through this passage? According to this passage, what should the Church look like?
2. Jesus is the Prince of Peace. What does it look like when a person’s life is full of the peace given by Jesus?
3. The Bible says the wall of hostility has been broken down. What are some walls of hostility between different people groups that exist today? What would our world look like if people allowed those walls to be torn down through Jesus?
4. What does it look like for believers to be reconciled as brothers and sisters through Jesus?
5. Why do you think Christians often follow the world’s views of division rather than embracing the biblical view of unity in Christ? How can we take steps for this to be changed?
6. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?

Take Home As we conclude, remember the following:

- Jesus broke down the wall.
- Jesus created a new group.
- Jesus reconciled all.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus to tear down the walls of hostility that divide us. Thank You for creating one new group of people found in Jesus. Please help us walk in true biblical reconciliation and have the unity Jesus died to

give us. We also pray that You would heal our country from the divisions of racism and bring restoration. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip Read Proverbs 22:29. One way to continue to grow in your leadership skills is through mentorship and study. Prayerfully choose a leadership mentor and ask them to mentor you. Share with them the areas in your leadership you would like to grow. Read one or two books on leadership this summer. Study how you can apply these new leadership principles and never stop growing!