

Lutherans Talk About...Scripture, Marriage, Ordination and LGBTQIA+: A Bible Study
Reconciling in Christ Team of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Missoula, MT Rev. Jean Larson

Session 2: The Essential Stories of the New Testament

Welcome (back)! What stuck with you from last week's class?

Prayer

Finishing up the OT Stories

Brief review

Challenges to Community: Sodom and Gomorrah Genesis 19: 1-11

(Parallel story – more gruesome – Gibeah: Judges 19:22-30)

Background: Near-Eastern hospitality ethic

Read: What do you notice? What is this story really about?

OT history: Faithlessness, Fall of Jerusalem (587 BCE), Exile – Isaiah 58, 2 Kings 25

Story #2: Restoring the Community: Outsiders become Insiders – Isaiah 56: 1-8

Return from Babylonian Exile (539 BCE): How to rebuild faithfully?

Two answers: 1. Keep to ourselves! Don't mess with foreigners! (Ezra 9)

2. The prophet Isaiah got a different word (Is 56)

Read: What do you notice?

OT summary: What is God doing with the old boundaries? What defines community identity?

The Essential New Testament Stories and their Challenges

>Red Thread #2: In Jesus, God's community continues to expand beyond old boundaries, gathering the outcasts of Israel

Story #3: The Syro-Phoenician Woman Mark 7: 24-30 read; what do you notice?

Other stories of Jesus expanding boundaries

Summary: How Jesus' welcome was picked up in the early church:

(Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch Acts 8:26-40; see Molly's sermon of May 2, 2021)

(Peter and the Baptism of Cornelius Acts 10 – 11:18)

Paul's essential teaching on community: Galatians 3: 23-29

Challenges to Jesus' Welcome: Paul's churches—I Corinthians 6:9-11, 1 Timothy 1: 8-11

What do you notice?

Situation in these churches: Gentiles, false teachers, 'free from the law'

Which Lutheran principle of interpretation helps you with these texts?

The special case of **Romans 1:16-20, 26-32, 2:1-4; 3:21-24**

What do you notice? Law or grace?

Reflections:

1. Recognize the tension between salvation by grace and human need to know where we stand.
2. Dilemma: If all are welcome, then are there no boundaries? What is core of identity?
3. What is the Big Story of the whole Bible? How does Jesus' story fit in?