



THIS MONTH'S SHARED VISION:

"We will discover how Christ is calling us to act beyond ourselves in our community."



THIS MONTH'S MISSIONAL VALUES

*Build
Community*

Q?

Besides the church,
where is Jesus in
your community?

Christ Lutheran Church Visalia

SHIFT

"Living the truth of Christ's radical acceptance, we are committed to bridging the gaps of our community with unconditional love and grace."

February 2024

Overview:

Jesus knew the importance of people and community, and throughout scripture, we read stories of the way that Jesus brought people into new relationships with one another. Jesus built community through healing, teaching, and being present with those who had been marginalized by the general population.

The story of Jesus healing Simon's mother-in-law (**Mark 1:29-39**) is an interesting story of the way that Jesus restores people to health, and to their communities. Jesus takes her hand and lifts her from her bed, and it seems that these simple acts are that are necessary to bring healing to this woman. According to Jewish law, those who had been sick were 'unclean' and must be declared 'clean' by a rabbi at the temple before resuming their communal tasks, including the serving of food.

However, this woman gets up and begins to serve Jesus and his disciples. Jesus does not just cure this woman of her fever but fully restores her to her role in the community.

Mark 9:2-9 is known as "The Transfiguration" (which is why this text was chosen for *Transfiguration Sunday*.) What does it mean that Jesus was 'transfigured' before the disciples? It is possible that the author of this Gospel is referencing the popular Greek idea that the gods would often walk among the humans and then "transform" by revealing their godly nature (usually to "catch" someone in a compromising position.) Here, Jesus is revealing his divine nature, but it is Peter who seems to

want to do the 'catching.' However, Jesus recognizes that it is important not to stay on the mountaintop because a dwelling is not where Jesus needs to be but among the people who seek his help.

Jesus experiences a bit of "whiplash" in **Mark 1:9-13**. A few verses prior, we read that "people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem" (Mark 1:5), so it's likely that there was a pretty big crowd present when Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River. Then, *immediately*, he is driven to the Judean desert to be apart from his community. Mark, the gospel writer, does not go into specifics about how Jesus was tempted in the wilderness. So much is left to the imagination about how Jesus used this time to prepare for his public ministry. But what is known is that after Jesus returns, his very first ministerial act is to start calling disciples to work alongside him.

One of the many gifts we've received through our Lutheran heritage is Martin Luther's theological idea of *Deus Revelatus* (the revealed God). **Ephesians 1:3-10** highlights Luther's concept of the way that God's will is revealed to us through Christ Jesus. God isn't trying to frustrate us by trying to make us figure out His will for humanity because Jesus came to reveal God's will, which the epistle-writer spells out as the desire for all things (in heaven and earth) will be redeemed and gathered together, united in Christ through the freely given gifts of grace and forgiveness that we receive by our adoption into this body, this community, of Christ's Beloved.

“Living the truth of Christ’s radical acceptance, we are committed to bridging the gaps of our community with unconditional love and grace.”

02/04—Mark 1:29-39

02/11—Mark 4:2-9

02/18—Mark 1:9-13

02/25—Ephesians 1:3-10

Each week, groups may discuss any of the following questions regarding the scripture and sermon for the week...

First thoughts...

- ♦ What is the “good news” of this passage?
- ♦ What do you feel affirmed by?
- ♦ What challenges you, and why?

SHARED VISION:

- ♦ Do you see this month’s Shared Vision in this passage?
- ♦ How does this passage call you to see Jesus and his work in the world? Who

MISSIONAL VALUE:

- ♦ How does this passage relate to our Core Values “Build Community”?
- ♦ Where did you experience a sense of community this week? How did help create a sense of community this week?

SHIFT...

- ♦ How does this week’s message and passage *shift* you?
- ♦ What does this passage say about the Kingdom of God?
- ♦ Where do you feel the nudge from the Holy Spirit in this passage?

Group Prayer Concerns....

CORE VALUES: “As a community of faith we will **“Build Community”**

SHARED VISION: “We will discover how Christ is calling us to act beyond ourselves in our community.”