

FITTING IN - Part 2

The Lakefront and First Baptist Church - Venice, Florida
One Church - Two Locations January 18, 2026

How does First Baptist and Lakefront Church continue to grow a *CULTURE THAT CARES?*

1. Live, Serve, Preach, Sing, Teach, and Pray the truth of the Bible.
2. With love and compassion, reach out to others and then receive them.
 - Jesus does not erase our story;
 - He redeems it and uses it for His glory - YOUR TESTIMONY

The events in the Bible are not historical accounts of the lives and times of people 2,000-plus years ago. If we relegate these true stories to a history lesson, then the Bible becomes, at best, nothing more than inspirational reading. But the Bible is God's living Word to us on how to live joyfully today!

Matthew 8:1-3 (CSB) *When He [Jesus] came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him. ²Right away a man with leprosy came up and knelt before Him, saying, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." ³Reaching out His hand, Jesus touched him, saying, "I am willing; be made clean." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed."*

Leviticus 13:45-46 (CSB) *"The person who has a case of serious skin disease is to have his clothes torn and his hair hanging loose, and he must cover his mouth and cry out, 'Unclean, unclean!' ⁴⁶He will remain unclean as long as he has the disease; he is unclean. He must live alone in a place outside the camp.*

Emotional reality:

- Lepers were rejected, isolated, alone, had to say it out loud, I am unclean, I don't fit in.
- These lepers had contracted a disease of unknown origin. It was not their fault.
- Leprosy has a long incubation period.
- 2 to 10 years (or longer) to show symptoms.
- No cure, no treatment, only exclusion.
- It was slow, mysterious, disfiguring, and socially deadly.
- People greatly feared touching or being touched by a leper.

"Everyone else fits in. I don't."

Mark 5:25-34 (CSB) Now a woman suffering from bleeding for twelve years ²⁶had endured much under many doctors. She had spent everything she had and was not helped at all. On the contrary, she became worse. ²⁷Having heard about Jesus, she came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His clothing. ²⁸For she said, "If I just touch His clothes, I'll be made well." ²⁹Instantly her flow of blood ceased, and she sensed in her body that she was healed of her affliction. ³⁰Immediately Jesus realized that power had gone out from Him. He turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" ³¹His disciples said to Him, "You see the crowd pressing against you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" ³²But He was looking around to see who had done this. ³³The woman, with fear and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him the whole truth. ³⁴"Daughter," He said to her, "your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be healed from your affliction."

BOTH THE LEPER AND THE WOMAN WERE UNTOUCHABLE!

Around us are people who feel like they don't quite belong, who sense they are tolerated but not embraced.

The misunderstood, the lonely, the addicted, the poor, the homeless, the elderly

Jesus never rejected anyone who came to Him.

Not once.

- The crowd rejected them.
- Religion rejected them.
- Culture rejected them.
- But Jesus never did.

And He won't start with you.

Matthew 26:26-30 (CSB) As they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take and eat it; this is my body." ²⁷Then He took a cup, and after giving thanks, He gave it to them and said, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹But I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." ³⁰After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.