

EXTEND Jesus Love in Life Mission
5 of 6 in Following Jesus: Find Your Next Step

May 30, 2021

Have you ever wondered why it's so easy to have an "Us and Them" mentality?"

When I go to the grocery store, I make sure to social distance and follow all the arrows - but there are some wild people who just walk in all directions with no regard for the arrows - I know right? Me and Them.

In this pandemic there are people who were super excited to get vaccinated and others who show vaccine hesitancy. And people can get pretty passionate on either side.

There are people who really haven't seen a lot of people - if any. They've stuck with the people inside their home for over a year. There are others who connect with a small group of people and still others who connect with larger groups of people. Which group are you a part of? Do you look down on the other groups?

If you're into sports - there's Raptor's fans - and then there's weird people - but seriously - do you see how passionate people are about their teams? Montreal and the Toronto Maple Leafs faced off against each other in the NHL playoffs for like the first time in 40 years and there was definitely some us vs them going on there.

But on a more serious note, what about the racism that is happening in the world - whether it's against Black, Asian or Indigenous People or whoever it may be, there is a lot of tension in our world, and this past year highlighted that in a tragic way.

What about the way the church often responds to LGBTQ+ community? Such a tender issue and not always handled in the most delicate way.

Or what about the Israel and Palestine conflict? So sad, so serious and so painful. It's been going on for such a long time.

What about you?

Have you ever been in a conflict before? If so, type yes in the chat.

Have you ever had an "Us and Them" mentality before? Use the anonymous button if that applies to you (use the button feature)

My name is Kevin and I'm YourFriendlyNeighbourhoodYouthPastor at Cornerstone and today I'll be talking about **Extending Jesus' Love in Life mission.**

I'm indebted to the Grow Youth Curriculum that we use in the youth ministry for the structure of this sermon.

There are so many reasons why we have an "Us and Them" mentality. Maybe because they don't treat us well, or they just aren't like us.

But that's not how it's supposed to be. That's not how God created us - he created us to be in relationship with him and with each other.

God had a plan all the way from the beginning to restore the broken relationships between us and God and us and each other.

All the way back in Genesis God chose a guy named Abraham and said that his descendants would be a great nation and be a blessing to ALL people.

Genesis 12:2... All the families on earth will be blessed through you.

Back then the thought of all people being blessed together was a new thing - just like it would be now. All the nations were just looking out for themselves. Instead of blessing each other they were trying to conquer each other. Sound familiar? This thought of being a blessing to **ALL PEOPLE** would be revolutionary.

But the Israelites didn't get the memo. Instead of being a blessing to all nations, they basically tried to keep the blessings to themselves. They felt that they were special, and no one else was. They felt like they were the best. Later for the rest.

Sadly, today, we're still mostly looking out for ourselves - as individuals, as communities and even as countries. This thought of blessing all people is just as important today as it was all those thousands of years ago.

Many years after Abraham, God showed us exactly what it looked like to be FOR people instead of AGAINST them.

John 3:16-17

For this is how God **loved** the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

I remember going to a youth pastor's meeting with pastors from all over the GTA. We were talking about this verse. The Greek translation of the word "world" is COSMOS. It's more than just people, it's the world, like all of creation. But I remember this tight pants pastor saying "Jesus didn't die for no tree man." They were having a serious debate but I was laughing at how ironic it was that a group that was trying to bring people together were so divided. Random thought - but I really wanted to share it with you 😊

Back to our regularly scheduled program.

One of the commentaries I was studying was saying that God's motivation to people is love. God's motivation to people is love. Pause on that for a second.

Love.

Think about all those situations I shared in the beginning.

Israel vs. Palestine. The church and the LGBTQ+ community. Racism. What is the issue?

Love.

As the great poets of our day "Black Eyed Peas" once said, "**Where is the Love?**"

When you look at God, God's love isn't limited to a few - or to one group. It's not just for church people - or for Christians - or for people who follow some rules and then judge those who don't do the same. God's love is for everyone. The whole world. The Cosmos.

If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus.

When Jesus comes on the scene – he enters our world – a world separated from God because of sin. A world hurting each other and themselves. And he shows us how much he is for us. So much that we he was willing to put others first, suffer and even lay down his life. God calls us to have that same type of sacrificial love. To make friends with enemies, to seek the well-being of everyone around us.

Our mission is to help people to see that there is a new way of life that can be lived today - a life of truth and joy and unity that we can have now and forever. That's good news!

GOD CALLS US TO BE FOR OTHERS

At Cornerstone, we believe there's a difference between being a fan of Jesus and a follower. Pastor Steve talked about that a few messages ago.

A true follower of Jesus does what he says. And Jesus called us in Matthew 28:19 to make disciples of **ALL NATIONS**. It's crazy that when you go back and read the Bible, the idea of the whole world was always there. Abraham was called to be a blessing to **ALL NATIONS**. We are called to make disciples of **ALL NATIONS**.

GOD CALLS US TO BE FOR OTHERS

You have to be intentional about it though if you want it to happen. It's not just going to happen by chance.

To help with this journey we at Cornerstone actually have a framework called the "**Discipleship Pathway**." It has 5 E's and each is an important part of your development as a follower of Jesus. We're in the middle of a series called, "**Following Jesus, find your next step**."

Today, we're talking about **EXTEND – Extending Jesus' love in life mission**. Here's a quick review of the others:

Establish identity in Jesus – so important – we spend a lot of time on this one in the youth group.

Embody the Jesus way of life – learning how to put the commands of Jesus into practice.

Explore Jesus' call to life mission – discovering the unique calling of God on our lives.

Extend Jesus' love in life mission – what we're doing today – joining God's world restoring mission in Jesus.

Experience Jesus' care and healing – our final one – next week – spaces for Jesus to make the broken and needy whole.

It's not a linear pathway where you graduate from one to the next because we realize life is way complex than that. We trust that as we unpack what these E's mean in your actual life that it will be helpful for your own discipleship journey.

Next week, at the end of this series, we have a custom online assessment tool that we're pretty excited about. It's going to help you figure out which area of the discipleship pathway you should focus on first as well as give you several resources and opportunities to help you. Check out this short video that explains the assessment.

VIDEO

Aren't you excited? Press the button in the chat if you're looking forward to finding out which E you should start with as well as getting some FREE resources to get you on your way.

Look at me. **LOOK AT ME.** Make sure you make take the assessment next week.

Like we've been saying today, **GOD CALLS US TO BE FOR OTHERS**

We're looking at **EXTENDING Jesus' love in life mission – joining God's world restoring mission in Jesus.**

Keep in mind that that it's **"God's mission"** – as we saw in Abraham and in Jesus it's always been God's plan to be for **ALL NATIONS.**

It's a **"mission of love"** – In **John 3:17** it talks about how Jesus came to save the world, not condemn the world – so if we have to make a choice – choose to love. Love first and let God take care of the rest.

It's **"in Jesus"** – it's not just about making the world better, although that's a good thing. It's **IN JESUS.** We can't leave that part out. Jesus is what makes the world better. I wouldn't use my iPhone as a hammer. That's not what it's made for. I shouldn't use my life for condemnation. For judging or hating others. That's not what it's made for. The owner's manual says that this product – my life – was designed for a mission of love. **Extending Jesus' love in life mission**

The tension is that some of us would rather do the good the make the world better, but leave the Jesus part out because we don't want to offend anybody. And some of us only want to talk about Jesus but not do anything to make the world better. They go hand in hand. You need both. As Pastor Andrew says, "It's not either/or, it's both/and."

Here are some practical ways to be for others.

Look at me. I'm going to share a bunch of different ways that you can extend Jesus' love in life mission. If you feel God tugging at you this week with this E choose ONE of these things to try:

1. Personally

- a. Resolve a conflict
- b. Make a friend
- c. Learn from someone new
- d. Share what you have – including your faith

2. Serving in the church

Next week, when the assessment comes out, you'll be able to check out the website which will have plenty of opportunities for you to serve if you feel that the church is

where you want to start your discipleship journey of Extending Jesus love in life mission

3. Locally

- a. Make a Bloom Box – help vulnerable families in our community and partner with Markham-Stouffville Crisis Pregnancy Centre – you can fill a box with items like diapers, wipes and baby toiletries – use the link on the screen to sign up or for more info.
- b. CSO – City Street Outreach – a ministry that goes downtown to serve meals, give clothes and have conversations with those in need. They are looking for drivers.
- c. You can also write notes to the community. For more ideas on how to serve locally, go to our website <http://cornerstonechurch.ca/icanhelp>

4. Globally

You can learn about our global partners by going to our website and under the “I can help page” click “Global Impact.”

We’re not sending teams this year but Lord-willing, we’ll be sending teams in 2022. But the work and support to our partners haven’t stopped. In fact, there’s even more need for prayer and resources. We support three places: Verbo Christian Church in Bluefields, Nicaragua, Roatan Alive Mission in Roatan, Honduras and NorthWind Family Ministries in Thunder Bay, Ontario. I’ve been blessed to be to all three places and they are all incredible ministries. They have various needs including food distribution, disaster recovery, building projects, prison and addiction ministries and more. Again, you can check it all out by going to our website and clicking on “I can help.”

We’ve also been partnering with Compassion which sponsors children for many years. Stay tuned for more details about that.

Next week, when you take the assessment, if this is “E” that ends up being highlighted as your next step, there are several resources (as with all the “E’s”) including reading, media options and guide sheets. You’ll be able to do stuff on your own independently, connect with someone directly for one on one and you’ll also find specific ways to serve.

My friends, this is a radical way of living, but it’s the Jesus way. It’s what the world needs.

There’s a story in the Bible about a Rich Man and Jesus (**Mark 10:17-30** if you want to look it up) It’s a long story so I won’t get into it but I want to highlight one line. After the man runs up to him and asks him a question, Jesus responds, the man asks another question and then it says, **“Jesus looked at him and loved him.”**

That line stopped me in my tracks. Jesus looked at him and loved him. Imagine what the world would be like if we were all like that? If we started by looking at people and loving them?

Maybe YOU need to start with knowing that Jesus is looking at YOU and loving YOU.

But wow, the world would be so different if we looked at people at loved them.

For God so loved the world... God did not send his Son to condemn the world but to save the world...

God is for us, God is for others and God calls us to be for others.

GOD CALLS US TO BE FOR OTHERS

As you look at people and love them, may God touch your heart and use your hands to bless this world and extend Jesus' love.

Benediction:

John 17:18 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

GOD CALLS US TO BE FOR OTHERS.

BE BLESSED AND BE A BLESSING/

I'm gonna pass it off to Bethany who's going to tell you a cool story about Cornerstone's Food Pantry Ministry.