

5 Core values 4: the inclusive Jesus. Main passage: Mark 2.1-17

#5 Core values

#BUGB slide: READ IT.

#An Inclusive community:

- again we look at the life and teaching of Jesus for our model, so;

#The Inclusive Jesus

1. He called people of all walks of life to follow Him.
 - As an Inclusive Community we see that consistent with his prophetic lifestyle, Jesus called people of all walks of life to follow him
 - Both men and women, beggars >tradesmen > 'white collar' workers, educated and uneducated, young and old. In Acts the Sanhedrin say 'these men are unlearned'
2. He targeted the marginalised and excluded from 'normal' society
 - He called Matthew to follow him
 - Jesus was criticized for being a 'friend of sinners'¹ and for eating with tax collectors and prostitutes².
 - Women, children, Samaritans (esp. using them as an example of godly compassion), tax collectors
 - See the Samaritan woman at the well
3. He welcomed and valued every person
 - The woman caught in adultery
 - The leper who would have been excluded from family life and been treated as unclean
 - Those who were born disabled, blind, deaf or dumb or 'crippled' in some way who would have been excluded from temple worship
 - The man on the mat – his needs were greater than religious correctness
 - The thief on the cross

We can see that Jesus was consistently and deliberately seeking 'outsiders' the people whose face 'didn't fit', and he told the religious people who in their pursuit of correctness had drawn increasingly detailed lines, which then were treated as boundaries to keep themselves right with God – Insiders; the trouble is, as they made their

¹ Matthew 11.19

² Mark 2.6

theological box tighter and tighter, it made more and more people 'outsiders' – Jesus was less bothered about boundary lines for the security of knowing you are IN, than people turning towards him and following, moving in the right direction.

Col. 1:20 (MsgB) "all the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe—people and things, animals and atoms—get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies, all because of his death, his blood that poured down from the Cross."

Like an Old Testament prophet Jesus spotlighted the plight of the needy, fallen, excluded, voiceless, oppressed and powerless. This valuing and welcome of all people regardless of gender, age, race, class or disability is an attitude by which we are able to demonstrate God's love to a culture divided by difference.

4. An Inclusive Community

- **In the local church:**

- we will welcome everyone
 - To listen to, value and address the particular needs of people who are often under-represented or absent from leadership and decision-making, and to develop effective strategies to ensure full participation. Another reason why the church meeting is so important to us.
 - To welcome and affirm those who do not fit commonly accepted norms of speech, dress and appearance.
 - making our buildings and services 'user-friendly', and by ensuring that all are genuinely welcomed when coming to worship
- we will value everyone
 - To be open to those who are theologically different from us.
 - For their intrinsic value, as being made in the image of God, rather than by what they can do, or add to our 'image' of the church.
- we will be a place of belonging
 - To create a community where those often excluded can feel they really belong.
- we will speak up for those with no voice
 - Combining this with our prophetic value means we will not only provide a **place of welcome for all**, but we will

advocate for the rights of any group or individual who are discriminated against.

In the denomination:

- To reflect Christ's bias to the poor.
- To challenge continually all racist, ageist and sexist attitudes and structures,

In society and world:

- To promote positive attitudes to the two-thirds world and active support for mission and development agencies.
- To work with and act as advocates for marginalised groups.
- To encourage promotion of better education and training for those most in need.

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#"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those who are perishing. Yes, speak up for the poor and the helpless, and see that they get justice." Proverbs 31.8-9 NLT