

Life Group Notes

Sunday 2nd May 2021

Speaker: David Mosimabale & Andy McCullough

Title: Belonging: When only the Strong Belong

Passage: Genesis 1-4

We encourage you to re-watch the 4 min interview between Sean and Sylvia from this week. You can find it on our YouTube, time stamp is at 54.10

“Accessibility is being able to get in the building

Diversity is getting invited to the table

Inclusion is having a voice at the table

Belonging *is having your voice heard at the table.”*

Miroslav Volf, “It may not be too much to claim that the future of our world will depend on how we deal with identity and difference. The issue is urgent.”

Gen 1:1-3 God exists in trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Not more 1 than 3 and not more 3 than 1. Perfect unity in diversity and perfect diversity in unity.

And man and woman were made in God’s image. We belong to God and to one another. To despise another person is to despise God, in whose image all were made.

Gen 3: The Fall. Sin enters the world. Personal sin and systemic sin. We stopped belonging to God and we stopped belonging to each other. The human identity crisis begins in Genesis 3. We are refugees since Eden, having lost our home, having a *longing for belonging*. Over the centuries this has snowballed into different shades of sin and wickedness.

Gen 4: The Cain and Abel story shows how sin breaks relationships. This is a story of strong-weak, rich-poor, full of prejudice and wrong attitudes and wrong actions. God made people equal, but sin is working to bring inequality. In the world of Cain and Abel, *only the strong belong*.

God asks Cain three questions. “Why are you angry?” (4:6), a heart question. “Where is your brother?” (4:9), a head question. “What have you done?” (4:10), a hands question

We hope that this 4-week series on *Belonging* will work on all three areas of our lives: heart (attitudes, motivations, feelings), head (information, knowledge, understanding), hands (action, practical ideas).

Sin creates a world where “only the strong belong.” This is not how things should be. We need Jesus to make a different world, and that starts in the church. It starts in us.

Questions:

1. Have you ever been in a situation where you felt you didn’t belong? Can you explain how you felt?
2. Did anything strike you from Sunday’s message? Will you share with the group?
3. If all people were made in the image of God, how should we behave towards one another?
4. According to the Bible, what is the origin of sins like prejudice and exclusion and racism? How do you think God feels about these attitudes?
5. How can we all work to make Reading Family Church a place where all sorts of people feel that they belong?

