

CHARLES KIMBANGI

The gospel, meaning the good news of Jesus Christ, the wonderful invitation to all people regarding of background, gender or economic status. Many people often think that being a follower of Jesus is an obligation when actually it's an opportunity. It's an invitation. This invitation is to a new life, lived out in a relationship with Jesus. It's also an invitation to a new start, with a new purpose, more than that - it's an invitation to a whole new community of people. Part of the brokenness of this world I'm sure we will all agree is our inability to relate to one another. But the gospel is an invitation to change the way we relate to one another. It's an invitation to change how we individually look at people who are different to us. It's an invitation not only to change ourselves but to change the whole world by changing the way we relate to one another and by breaking down those walls that often divide us.

This series is called 'Invited' and we are going to be looking at the issues around diversity, there will be some pain, there will be some challenge but there will also be lots to celebrate as we think about the issues that are brought about through diversity and what God has done for us through the gospel. One of the verses that you will hear time and time again is from Luke 13: 29 'People will come from east and west and north and south and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.' We are going to be talking a lot about how in the gospel people from everywhere come together to eat at God's table. It's going to be an amazing time where we embrace one another, where we listen to one another's stories, where we learn to love one another and we celebrate grace and mercy in the Christian gospel.

We would love for you to make the most out of this series and so we think that it is really important that you do four things:

Firstly, get here on a Sunday, it's only seven weeks, Why don't you commit to being here every Sunday?

Secondly, why don't you be part of a group. This is a great opportunity to make friends and also just discuss the topics each week. Also, in part, most of our groups will be breaking bread with one another, this is another way we can reflect on Jesus and how He shared His blood and He broke His body for us. Get along and hear more about the grace and mercy that comes from Jesus.

Thirdly we are going to be eating together. We would love to encourage you to share your story and to think about how people are different from you and perhaps you can invite them around for a meal or go out for an evening or just have a drink together, coffee or tea or whatever it might be. It's really important that we meet together, hear one another's stories and learn to love people who are different from ourselves.

Lastly and fourthly, we would really encourage you to get a daily devotional and for the whole church to go through the Book of Acts tracing the story of how the early church dealt with the issues of diversity and we would love for you to just get into the Bible perhaps each day and just be transformed by reading God's word. We are going to do that all together and would encourage you not to miss out but to pick up the daily devotional and be transformed. It's going to be a great series, there will be some pain and challenge but there will also be moments of real celebration as we can praise God for all that He has done amongst us and amongst Christians all over the world.

In a moment we are going to hear from Owen Hylton. He is a pastor and author of the book 'Crossing the Divide' which is another resource book we would encourage you to pick up. It will help you to go deeper into the issues of diversity and he writes the book really, really well. Why don't you pick it up? But for now we are going to listen to Owen. Enjoy listening to what he's got to say and then we will be back next time. Bye for now.