



Identity Markers

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GROUP ICE BREAKER

Does your family have a story about you that they always re-tell when you are together?

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

- I will ask God to help me see what he sees in people.
- I will practice looking at people differently this week.
- I will study Matthew 5-7.
- I will stop admiring Jesus and start following him.
- I will become a student of Jesus and learn whatever he teaches.

MESSAGE SUMMARY

Identity markers are characteristics, attributes, and actions you are known for. Jesus began to explain living in the Kingdom of God by listing eight identity markers of a Christ-centered life, and we looked at four.

First, those *who hunger and thirst for righteousness*. Righteousness is "doing right in the eyes of God and right behavior within community." You find three aspects of righteousness in the Bible; legal, moral, and social. Legal righteousness is our justification, to be declared innocent and forgiven of our sins through the person and work of Jesus. Moral righteousness is right living before God and others. Social righteousness is treating everyone with love, dignity, and respect as made in the image of God.

Second, *the merciful*. Mercy is holding back a deserved punishment or the release of a debt. It flows out of those who have experienced it's healing power, the freedom it brings.

Third, *the pure in heart*. Your heart reveals who you are in the secrecy of your thoughts and motives. The key to a pure heart is to make space for the Holy Spirit to work in you, transforming your heart.

Fourth, *the peacemakers*. Peace expresses a desire that another person will have all the righteousness and goodness God can give. A peacemaker says I want peace FOR you and will work to establish it WITH you.

If you're thinking, "I've got some work to do," welcome to Blue Oaks, you're in good company. If you're thinking, "I am killing it at following Jesus," you've got some work to do. Welcome to Blue Oaks, you're in good company.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What would you say you are known for, or how would someone describe you?
2. Read Matthew 5:6 and Philippians 3:7–10. How do Paul’s words echo Jesus’? If we have righteousness from Christ, why do we still need to “hunger and thirst” after it?
3. Read Matthew 5:7 and James 2:12-13. Describe a time when someone showed you mercy, or a time when you extended mercy to someone else. What is meant by “mercy triumphs over judgement?”
4. Read Matthew 5:8 and Psalm 51:10. How would you define purity of heart? What kinds of diagnostic questions can you ask to help assess your heart?
5. Read Matthew 5:9 and Hebrews 12:14. Would you describe yourself as a peace-faker (avoider), peace-breaker (erupter), or a peacemaker? Explain your answer.
6. Of the four Beatitudes covered, which do you need to grow in most and why?

NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)

Use these as a guide to take your next step and commit to what you learned this week:

- I will seek satisfaction in God rather than in things of this life.
- I will show mercy to others as I have been shown mercy by God.
- I will ask God to create in me a clean heart.
- I will work for peace in my relationship with others.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Matthew 5:6-9
- 2 Corinthians 5:21
- Romans 6:13
- Matthew 15:19-20
- Psalm 51:10

PRAYER REQUESTS

Take time to share how you can be praying for each other over the next week:

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