



## Week 4 // Reconciling

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### Big Idea from the Message

When we profess that the Church is 'catholic', we are drawn into the missionary activity of the Triune God as a 'reconciling' church. ACTS churches are given the ministry of peacemaking - not just peacekeeping - in the midst of hatred, racism, division, and brokenness.

### Connect

1. What is a rivalry that you have been involved with at some point in your life? It could be a rival school, an opposing team, a neighbor that had Christmas decorations up six months out of the year, etc
2. What was the starting point to the rivalry? Is/was the rivalry a friendly one or was there real animosity there?

### Digging Deeper

3. There is a tipping point where a person goes from an acquaintance, friend, or even rival and turns into an enemy. What does it mean for someone to be considered an enemy?
4. Should Christians have enemies? Did Jesus have enemies?
5. If someone is an enemy, what are your interactions with them like? What is that based on?

Open your Bible to Matthew 5

This section of Matthew is commonly referred to as the Sermon on the Mount. These are a series of teachings that Jesus is sharing with a crowd on what the follower's life was meant to resemble. It was in this sermon that Jesus gives specific instructions on how we should interact with those we might consider an enemy.

6. Read Matthew 5:43. This was a common mindset in Jewish culture at the time. How does this thought match up with the majority of our culture? Is it similar or opposing?

7. Read Matthew 5:44-45. What are we called to do? Why is this so hard?
8. Jesus would not give us this instruction if it were not possible for us to live out. What would it take for someone to love his or her enemy? What insight into how this can be done can we find in verse 45?
9. Read Matthew 5:46-48. It is easy for us to be friends with a friend or an enemy to an enemy. Jesus is calling for us to become a friend to an enemy. What does it take to get to that point? Is it realistic?

## **Live It Out**

10. Read Ephesians 5:1-2. We know we are not going to be perfect. We also know that God is perfect. So what hope can we find in these verses to be able to work towards living this charge from Jesus out?

## **Lifting it up**

Our God is defined by the love shown to us, His creation. It is then from that point, our job to share that love with the world we have been placed in. Think through each of these locations and pray for insight and inspiration for a way you can show love this week.

- In your home/family
- In your neighborhood you live
- In your church
- In your local community