

## PRESCRIPTION NO. 4 – Find Common Ground

- [Way of the Week No. 20 – Find Strength in Belonging](#)

At FPC Moorestown, you're loved and valued. Claim us as your family. Rather than withdrawing, allow struggles and disappointments to deepen your sense of belonging. Pray for chances to bring healing to relationships. Please be patient! God isn't yet finished with us or with you.

- **Pray Together**

Share requests with one another and spend time in prayer, bringing your joys, pains, strengths and weaknesses before God. Commit to supporting one another in prayer throughout the week.

- **Read: 1 Corinthians 13**

<sup>1</sup> If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. <sup>4</sup> Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant <sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup> it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. <sup>7</sup> It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. <sup>8</sup> Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. <sup>9</sup> For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; <sup>10</sup> but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. <sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. <sup>12</sup> For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. <sup>13</sup> And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

- **Discussion**

1. The Church (the institution as a whole) is comprised of thousands of various groups and denominations. I often assume that it hasn't always been like this; but, this is a poor assumption on my part. While I know there weren't a thousand or more denominations in 40 CE I do know from the book of Acts and Paul's various letters that divisions existed among the early followers of Christ. The early church wrestled with who was "in" and who was "out." Thinking and acting in this way is a part of human nature. Scripture also makes it clear that sin too is a part of human nature. Our division is as much a sin as the numerous other things you can mention that are not a part of God's will! In 1 Corinthians Paul is writing to a church divided – they have varying opinions and interpretations on how to follow Christ and worship together. In the letter(s) from the Corinthian church to Paul (referenced by Paul) we know the church aired their grievances and spoke about the mounting differences and disagreements between the church's earliest parishioners. Paul, in his letter, strives to promote a Spirit of unity. *In the passage we just read, 1 Corinthians 13, how does Paul appeal to unity or "finding common ground?"*

2. Our society is hyper-polarized. How is the church called to set a different standard?

a. **Read Ephesians 2:11-22** — So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called "the uncircumcision" by those who are called "the circumcision"—a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands— remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might

reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

- b. At First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown what is our role in breaking down the dividing wall of hostility? What strategies can we employ, from scripture and from *Wonder Drug* that can help us?
  - c. In what ways have we been complicit in ensuring this dividing wall stays intact?
  - d. In what ways have we contributed to breaking down the wall of hostility?
3. In *Wonder Drug*, Drs. Mazz and Trzeciak share this from a University of Toronto study, “on average, [people have approximately] *nine* unique opportunities to empathize with others ... daily.” They also ask this important question, “What can I do to help make things better for my neighbor, for the world, today? We have opportunities to intimately engage and connect with others — how can you best utilize those opportunities to Live to Give?”
4. **Read John 4: 7-26** — *A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.” Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come back.” The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!” The woman said to him, “Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.” Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”*

- a. How would most people in the first century, or even today, respond to this woman at the well? How did Jesus encounter the woman? What can we learn from Jesus' interaction? How would you respond in a similar situation?
- b. Drs. Mazz and Trzeciak suggest that using one's imagination — to put yourself in the shoes of someone else - is a powerful tool to help increase one's capacity for empathy (232-233). How might you use your own imagination to increase your empathy? Can you identify any opportunities in the past week where you were able to do this or not do this?

**Close in Prayer**