A close-up photograph of a woman with long brown hair, wearing a light-colored, textured knit sweater, hugging a baby. The baby is also wearing a similar textured knit sweater. The woman's hands are visible, resting on the baby's back and chest. The background is softly blurred, showing a wooden surface and a green plant. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

What does it mean to be **INCLUSIVE?**

A Biblical Foundation

from Acts 6 – 12

LIVING LOVE – INCLUSIVE across ethnic boundaries



Acts 6:1.7 – In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. ...



TELLING TRUTH



Acts 6:8-10 – ⁸ Now Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people.

⁹ Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen. ¹⁰ But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke.

TELLING TRUTH



Acts 7:1ff – Then the high priest asked Stephen, “Are these charges [of blasphemy] true?” ² To this he replied: “Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Harran. ...

⁵¹ “You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! ⁵² Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him.

TELLING TRUTH + LIVING LOVE – INCLUSIVE across ethnic boundaries



Acts 8:4-8 – ⁴ Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. ⁵ Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. ⁶ When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. ⁷ For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. ⁸ So there was great joy in that city.

TELLING TRUTH



Acts 8:25 – After they had further proclaimed the word of the Lord and testified about Jesus, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages.



LIVING LOVE – INCLUSIVE across race boundaries and of mutilated



Acts 8:26-30 – ²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” ²⁷ So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” ³⁰ Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked.

LIVING LOVE – INCLUSIVE of enemies



Acts 9:1-6 – Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples. He went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. ³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” ⁵ “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. ⁶ “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

LIVING LOVE – INCLUSIVE of enemies, ctd.



Acts 9:26-28 – ²⁶ When Paul came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. ²⁹ Paul talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews, but they tried to kill him.

LIVING LOVE – INCLUSIVE of the poor



Acts 9:36 – In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor.



LIVING LOVE – INCLUSIVE across traditional Bible understandings



Acts 10:9-16 – ⁹ About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹ He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹² It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. ¹³ Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.” ¹⁴ “Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.” ¹⁵ The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.” ¹⁶ This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

LIVING LOVE – INCLUSIVE of oppressors



Acts 10:17-23 – ¹⁷ While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon’s house was and stopped at the gate. ¹⁸ They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there. ¹⁹ While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three men are looking for you. ²⁰ So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.” ²¹ Peter went down and said to the men, “I’m the one you’re looking for. Why have you come?” ²² The men replied, “We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say.” ²³ Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

TELLING TRUTH



Acts 10:34-36.42 – ³⁴ Then Peter began to speak [to Cornelius’ household]: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism ³⁵ but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. ³⁶ You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ... ⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.

TELLING TRUTH



Acts 11:19-20 – ¹⁹ Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. ²⁰ Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus.



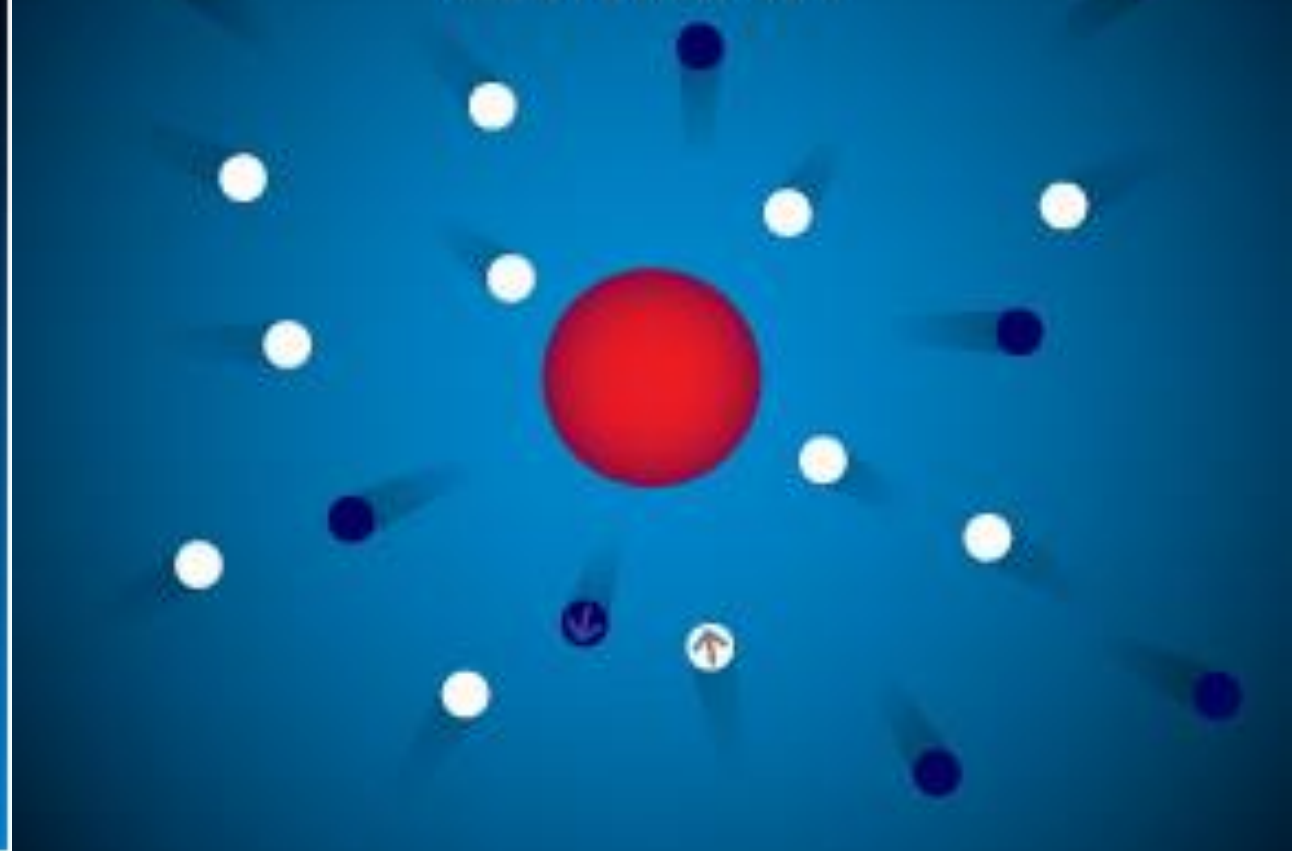
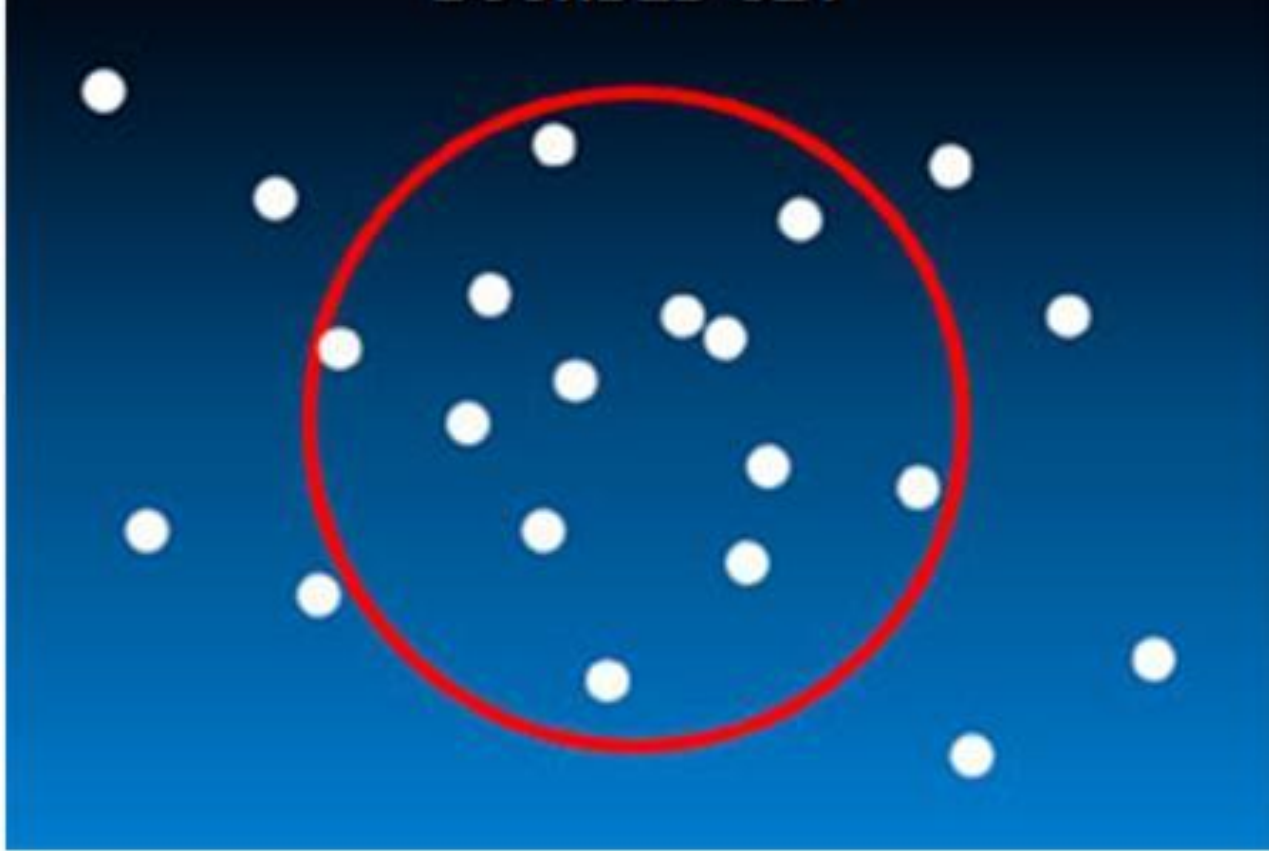
Summary Verses



Acts 10:34 – Then Peter opened his mouth and said: “In **truth** I perceive that God shows **no partiality** / favouritism / does not discriminate.

John 1:17 – The law was given through Moses; **grace** and **truth** came through Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:15 – Speaking the **truth** in **love**, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of Christ.



Are we a bounded or a centered church?





LIVING LOVE + TELLING TRUTH *practical*



- Develop a mind-set and heart
- Set the intention every morning
- Express love tangibly
- Tell truth boldly
- Ask yourself every evening: How loving have I been today? Who has heard truth from me today?

