



WEEK FIVE | THE CULTURAL AND POLITICAL WARS

If you haven't completed it yet, finish sharing your faith stories this week. Remember, this isn't your life story but the development and changes in your faith until now. Trust me, you will hear elements of deconstruction and reconstruction. Once your last group member has shared, save the rest of your time discussing the sermon topic.

GETTING STARTED

Don't be afraid. Seriously, don't be afraid to have this discussion. Start with prayer and ask Jesus to be present. Nothing gets people bound up like religion and politics. We talk about religious things every week. No sweat because that's what churches are "supposed" to do. It's never simple when we inject real, everyday life into the discussion. That's where it gets messy. That's where "safe" Christian life meets the real Jesus. We are people of the *real* Jesus. Pray.

Why would (should) we talk about sensitive issues that we know people have strong feelings about?

TALK ABOUT IT

Transparency is hard but try. How do you really feel about your conduct and feelings toward others on the opposite side of you politically and culturally?

Read 1 Peter 3:8-17

Your reputation matters more than your political or cultural victories because we are representatives of Christ.

First, what do you think about that statement?

Second, how are you doing at it in your thoughts and actions?

Where does grace fit in with politics and culture?

APPLY IT

"The truth is the church doesn't offer a cure. It doesn't offer a quick fix. The church offers death & resurrection. The church offers the messy, inconvenient, gut-wrenching, never-ending work of healing and reconciliation. The church offers grace."

Read John 17:13–20 (Jesus praying for his followers)

What damage do we do to Christ's sacrifice of grace when we succumb to the temptation to go to battle politically and culturally rather than love in response?

Why do we always want people to hear the truth but not as passionate about giving them grace?

What does it mean to be a *Jesus* church rather than a progressive or conservative church?

PRAY

Love is our guide, truth is our foundation, gentleness and respect are our approach, Jesus is our unity. None of that is easy but Jesus never promised that following him would be easy. Let's pray.