

Welcome the Foreigner

A note to the leader

Obviously, your group is made up of perfectly calm, reasonable people who have never once raised their voice about a public issue. For everyone else's groups, here's a reminder: this series covers contentious social issues, so engage with love, humility, and respect.

Connect

If you could live in any fictional place, where would you choose, and what would you love most about living there?

Review

Take a couple of minutes to review some of the main ideas from the sermon:

1. **A Prominent Issue.** Throughout the Bible, many people of faith experienced immigration, including Abraham, Moses, Ruth, and even Jesus, and Scripture repeatedly emphasizes God's concern for how we treat foreigners. As Christ followers, we are also immigrants in a spiritual sense, called to remember our true heavenly home and to love and care for others, including those who come from other countries.
2. **A Compassion Issue.** Immigration is a compassion issue because God commands us to love foreigners, reminding us that he loves them, loved us when we were foreigners to his Kingdom, and calls us to love others as ourselves. This love must be demonstrated in tangible ways, even when it is costly or risky.
3. **A Legal Issue.** God's Word affirms the role of governing authorities in establishing laws and boundaries. However, just because a country has the right to make laws doesn't mean all laws are good or reflect biblical values. As Christ followers, we are called to support balanced immigration policies, speak up for compassion, and build relationships with immigrants.

Read Deuteronomy 10:18-19

Make Observations: After reading Deuteronomy 10:18-19 out loud, give your group a few minutes to make observations on their own. Then go around the group and share the things you observed and discuss them.

Discuss

1. Immigration is often a challenging and divisive issue, even among Christ followers. Why do you think that is? What makes it so challenging to discuss?
2. Who are the immigrants you encounter in your actual weekly routine: at work, in your neighborhood, at your kids' activities, at church, etc.? Name a few of them. What do you know of their story?
3. The sermon talked about the importance of having compassion towards immigrants but also respecting the law. Why do you think it's important for us to hold both of these ideas together when thinking about this issue? What happens when you drop one or the other? Which side of the tension do you tend to hold onto more strongly?
4. The sermon mentioned that welcoming immigrants may be risky and costly, as in the parable of the Good Samaritan. What would need to shift in a person's heart for those risks and costs to feel worth taking on?
5. Pastor Jim said, "Just because a country has a right to endorse laws — a right endorsed by God's Word — doesn't mean all the laws are good laws." How can you discern when a law or policy conflicts with biblical values such as justice, mercy, and compassion?
6. The sermon mentioned three ways we can advocate for better immigration laws: vote, speak up, and build relationships. Which of these do you find difficult to engage in, and which of them may come more naturally to you?

Apply

Break up into smaller groups of three, and respond to this question: Reflecting on the sermon, what is one tangible way you can better love and care for immigrants and foreigners? What is one small step that you could take, starting this week?

Pray

As a group, take some time to pray for Christians around the world who are living as foreigners, facing persecution, or navigating life in a new country. Focus on our own communities and our partner countries: Bangladesh/West Bengal, Brazil, Czech Republic, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Sierra Leone. Ask God to grow your hearts for believers around the world and help you extend that same compassion, love, and hospitality to immigrants in your own communities.