

The New Humanity #4: Other Sheep

READ through the Bible passage. WRITE your thoughts, reactions, observations. ANSWER THE QUESTION to begin connecting the Bible with your life experience. Use additional paper or your own notebook if you need more space to write.

Monday, 5/26/08 – Read Acts 10:9-16

My Observations _____

A Question to Answer: Religion has often been divisive. Religion has often been used as a reason for dividing people into groups and factions and for living in hostility toward one another. This week we'll see that God's desire for a New Humanity means that trusting God can overcome these divisions. ... In today's reading Peter's vision challenges him to rise above the Jewish dietary restrictions that separated Jews and Gentiles. ... What conventional practices (religious or otherwise) keep you separated from others? Are there people you think of as "unclean" in some way, people that God wants you to be more open to?

Tuesday, 5/27/08 – Read Acts 10:34-48

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Following Peter's vision (see yesterday's reading), he experienced the Gentiles responding to his preaching about Jesus and receiving the Holy Spirit. ... Have you ever been surprised when you saw who responded to gospel and who didn't? What was it about them that made you expect that they would not receive the Good News? ... Thinking now about these people, how would you respond to the question in verse 47: "Can anyone withhold ...?"

Wednesday, 5/28/08 – Read Galatians 2:11-14

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Even Peter (in today's reading called "Cephas") had trouble living the New Humanity consistently. He had seen the vision which declared nothing unclean; he had seen the Holy Spirit poured out on the Gentiles. Yet he pulled back from these brothers and sisters in Christ. ... Are there some people, your brothers and sisters in faith, that you tend to pull back from? How can you guard against that?

Thursday, 5/29/08 – Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: The church at Corinth in Greece also had trouble living the New Humanity. The issue for them was not Jews and Gentiles but the common human tendency to divide groups into factions -- to line up behind one or another competing leader. ... What factions do you notice in the church today? In the larger church? In our own local church (CUMC)? ... Name one thing you could do to break down the barriers between factions.

Friday, 5/30/08 – Read 1 Corinthians 11:17-22

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: In the church at Corinth, even the Lord's Supper was an occasion for divisiveness and factions. The Corinthians did not all share the Lord's Supper together; for them it was not the banquet of God's New Humanity. Instead they divided themselves along the lines of rich and poor. ... When you participate in the Lord's Supper, do you

welcome all God's people at the Lord's Table? Do you let communion draw you into God's New Humanity?

Saturday, 5/31/08 – Read Mark 14:22-25 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Both today's readings recount the church's memories of Jesus' inauguration of the Lord's Supper. What thoughts and feelings are you aware of as you read these two passages? ... Notice just one word in Mark 14:24 -- Jesus speaks of a covenant which is for "MANY"! ... Who do you think Jesus included in "many"? Are there some you would not include? Why?

Sunday, 6/1/08 – Read Philippians 4:2-6

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Living in God's New Humanity is not always easy. Our tensions with one another often threaten to break us into factions. Paul spoke directly to two women in today's reading -- Euodia and Syntyche. He asks them to be of the same mind in the Lord. What do you think he meant? Do you think that "being of the same mind" means agreeing on everything? Is being of the same mind IN THE LORD different that just being of the same mind? How is that different?

My Faith Journal, May 25, 2008

The New Humanity #4:

Other Sheep

What do I want to remember out of today's message?

What action do I intend to take as a result of today's message?