

Reach the world: a church for all nations

discussion guide

based on **Mark 11.12-19** (Linked to sermon from 28/1/18)
which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series

This was part of our 'Love is an action' series, unpacking what it means for us to 'Love God, Love each other, Reach the world'.

Intro: How have you benefited from friendship with someone from a different culture?

Read Mark 11.12-19

When we look at this passage, we often focus on what the temple had become in Jesus' day. But what was Jesus' positive vision about what it should have been (v17)?

What were the Jews of Jesus' day doing that prevented the Gentiles from discovering and worshipping God?

In what ways might we prevent people from other cultures discovering and worshipping God?

Read Genesis 12.1-3; Psalm 67; Ephesians 2.11-19; Revelation 7.9-10

God's plan has always been to create one multi-ethnic people who will bless the world. What was the purpose of the cross, according to Ephesians 2.15-16?

Considerable parts of Acts and the Epistles are spent trying to explain the basis for peoples from different cultures (Jew and Gentile) to be part of the *same* church body, on *equal* footing. A far easier option would have been for Paul to allow two separate churches to develop. Why was it so important to insist on one church?

If the church is to be a house of prayer for all nations, what steps can we take to become more like that?

If 100 Polish people joined our church fellowship over the next 6 months, how might we need to change?

Mohan pointed out that Peter, despite spending 3 years with Jesus, still had cultural prejudices (Acts 10.9-15; Galatians 2.11-14). What cultural prejudices can you spot in yourself?

How do all these passages speak to our desire to be a God-dependent, grace-filled, Bible-based, mission-focused, authentic community?

Up (love God): Spend some time praising God as the God of all nations. Chris Tomlin's 'world edition' of 'How great is our God' is inspiring! See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vq5qDljEw7Q>

In (love each other): Take a step to building friendship and sharing hospitality with someone from a different culture in our church. How can you help each other do this?

Out (reach the world): How could you express the biblical vision of people from every people group and language being perfectly united – to a friend or colleague who isn't a Christian? How would you start that conversation? Pray for that opportunity this week.