



## Lesson 3

### Do You Know What I'm Like?

#### Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, you know us so well. You see everything about each of us. You know those who are hurting. As we understand more about the hurting, bring us hearts that want to know them better and a desire to understand their need. Use your Word to grow us in our Christian faith and actions. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

#### Introduction

How well do you know the hurting? Can you know them from their clothing? Their haircut? The way they talk? Or could you be led down a path of not really knowing much about the hurting who need help? In the last lesson we saw who the hurting were. This week we'll see what they are like. God helps us to see this in his Word.

#### Search the Scriptures

1. Gentiles and Jews are exactly alike. Sin levels the playing field. Also, by nature, there is no difference between an ex-offender, a person with sin's baggage, or an every-Sunday worship attendee. If we want to know what the hurting are really like, we need to get beyond the outward appearances. In Romans chapter 3, Paul quotes from the Psalms and Isaiah and helps us understand what the hurting are really like. Underline the two descriptions you most need to remember and why. After the reading of the verses, compare with those at your table or a person next to you. We'll hear samples.

*Answers will vary. Possible answers: No one seeks God naturally or wants to do what he commands. Everyone falls into the category of fallen sinner. It shouldn't surprise us when the hurting person's words don't reflect the pure words of Christ. The misery sin brings isn't something to be shocked at. With lives messed up by sin, peace in homes and between others can be elusive. By nature, people don't hold God in awe and respect.*

## **Romans 3:10-18**

<sup>10</sup> As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; <sup>11</sup> there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. <sup>12</sup> All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." <sup>13</sup> "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." <sup>14</sup> "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." <sup>15</sup> "Their feet are swift to shed blood; <sup>16</sup> ruin and misery mark their ways, <sup>17</sup> and the way of peace they do not know." <sup>18</sup> "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

2. God interacts with the hurting. Read each paragraph of Psalm 107:10-21 and fill in the chart below noting what the hurting are like. Use your own words to summarize the answers.

Possible answers are filled in below.

## **Psalm 107:10-21**

<sup>10</sup> Some sat in darkness, in utter darkness, prisoners suffering in iron chains, <sup>11</sup> because they rebelled against God's commands and despised the plans of the Most High. <sup>12</sup> So he subjected them to bitter labor; they stumbled, and there was no one to help. <sup>13</sup> Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. <sup>14</sup> He brought them out of darkness, the utter darkness, and broke away their chains. <sup>15</sup> Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind, <sup>16</sup> for he breaks down gates of bronze and cuts through bars of iron.

<sup>17</sup> Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities. <sup>18</sup> They loathed all food and drew near the gates of death. <sup>19</sup> Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. <sup>20</sup> He sent out his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. <sup>21</sup> Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind.

What had happened to those who needed help?	What did God do for them?	What are they like now?
They had rebelled against God and lost. Their sins imprisoned them. They despised God's plans, and he brought his judgment.	He heard their cries for help. He brought them out of the darkness of unbelief and freed them from what enslaved them (sin, death, the devil).	They now want to give thanks for God's unfailing love and his loving actions for the hurting.
Their rebellions brought affliction on them. There are consequences for sin, and they're experiencing it. They saw no future but only death facing them.	The Savior God rescued them from their distress. His word healed them and brought them from death to life.	They are encouraged to give thanks to the Savior God for his love and actions he's taken for them and the rest of humanity.

3. What three truths can we draw about what the hurting are like from Psalm 107?  
 Answers will vary. Possible answers: Sin makes it feel like someone is imprisoned with chains, and it is extremely distressful for them. God hears the cries of the hurting, and he wants to take action for them. God wants them saved. The hurting are to be given opportunities to thank the Lord for his rescue of them.

4. Read the following two Scripture sections. How would you finish this sentence?  
 "When it comes to the hurting who need help, God is a God who \_\_\_\_\_."  
 Answers will vary. Possible answers: is full of mercy and desires to help; wants all people to recognize their sins and know that it is only with him will they find mercy; helps and defends those in tough situations; can create new families from a group of believers for those who have no family upon whom they can rely; can bring joy to lives because of the freedom he gives them.

**Luke 18:13**

<sup>13</sup> "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'"

**Psalm 68:4-6a**

<sup>4</sup> Sing to God, sing in praise of his name,  
 extol him who rides on the clouds ;  
 rejoice before him—his name is the LORD.

<sup>5</sup> A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows,  
is God in his holy dwelling.

<sup>6</sup> God sets the lonely in families,  
he leads out the prisoners with singing.

5. Jesus, the perfect Shepherd, knows every one of his sheep. He knows exactly what they are like, even though every sheep is different. Read the following two passage sections and list what Jesus knows about his sheep. Tell how these will help our congregation.

*Answers will vary.*

*Possible answers for what Jesus knows about his sheep: He knows they need his compassion. Although no one else may see it, Jesus sees exactly what is harassing them and what help they need. He knows that there are others (like the hurting) who need to be brought into his harvest, and there are many of them. Jesus knows that people will be attacked to keep them scattered and away from him. Jesus knows his sheep personally and all the hurts they are experiencing. Jesus knows that there are sheep who are not of his flock yet, but they will listen to his voice and need to be brought into the fold. Jesus knows that there is only one flock and one shepherd and that all his sheep, no matter how different, are part of his flock.*

*Possible answers how these will help our congregation: We have an opportunity to bring and display Jesus' compassion, which hurting people need. We may not know every detail about what is hurting a person, but we can tell them that Jesus does. With others needing to be brought into his flock, Jesus gives us the opportunity to be part of gathering his flock. It doesn't have to surprise us that sin and Satan have harassed a person so much that they are truly hurting. Jesus said this would happen. Knowing that there is one flock will help our congregation see that all Jesus' sheep are different, but they are still part of the flock with us.*

### **Matthew 9:36,37**

<sup>36</sup> When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup> Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. <sup>38</sup> Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

### **John 10:11-18**

<sup>11</sup> "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. <sup>13</sup> The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

<sup>14</sup>“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—<sup>15</sup>just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup>I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. <sup>17</sup>The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. <sup>18</sup>No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

## Bringing It Home

6. We want to know what the hurting are like, so we are prepared to help them. How can you know? Name three things we can do to know them.

Answers will vary. Possible answers: Take time to talk with them and ask them about themselves. Make a point of getting to meet or talk with someone who is not a close friend or family member before you talk after worship with those you know well. Invite them over for lunch after worship. Set up a time to meet them for coffee or ice cream. Food is a great icebreaker and uniter.

Option: Give the participants one minute to write down answers. Hear a sampling from the participants. This allows the participants to think on their own instead of only a few coming up with the answers.

7. After getting to know the hurting in today’s lesson, what would you say is important for your congregation to remember about the hurting? Can we name four things?

Answers will vary depending on the congregation. The participants might be able to point out things they see need to be improved upon at their congregation or things they are already doing well and want to keep on doing.

Option: Have the participants get into groups of three to five people and compile their list. Allow those who wish to work on their own to do so. Give them two minutes. Hear a sampling from the groups. This allows more participants to take part in the activity, instead of just the few who would answer in the large group.

8. How would you help your congregation remember what the hurting who need help are like?

Answers will vary depending on the congregation. This is where the participants could come up with something they could get started at their church, taking action. To talk about this topic is helpful, but what will be done about it to help influence and encourage the congregation? Lesson 5 will cover more specific ways the congregation will help the hurting. This question is more about getting the congregation to remember what the ones we are trying to help are like.

Option: Pair them up or put them into groups of three to five people. Let those who wish to work on their own do so. Give them two minutes to make a list of as many as they can. Hear a sampling from the groups.

9. What do you think will be the biggest challenge for your congregation to get to know what the hurting are like?

Answers will vary depending on the congregation. The participants will probably know their fellow members well enough, or the history of the congregation, or past experiences, to know what challenges the congregation will face. Every congregation has a unique dynamic of Christians brought into a family of believers.

Option 1: Give the participants one minute to write down answers. Hear a sampling from the participants. This allows the participants to think on their own instead of only a few coming up with the answers.

Option 2: Pair them up or put them into groups of three to five people. Let those who wish to work on their own do so. Give them two minutes to make a list of as many as they can. Hear a sampling from the groups.

10. #summary — If you were live-tweeting the class, come up with three hashtags that you would use from what was discussed today.

Answers will vary. Give them about 1.5 minutes to do this activity. This is a way to check for understanding of what was discussed in the lesson. Some possible examples: #taketimetotalk #oneflockoneshepherd #icanhelp #gettoknowme

## Living My Faith

No one wants to feel that they are forgotten or unknown. You learn about people by asking them questions about themselves. To practice getting to know others and see them as Jesus' sheep, pick out someone this week at church whom you have not really talked with much. Ask them questions about themselves to get comfortable getting to know what someone is like. This can help when a person who is hurting comes to your congregation.

## Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, it is easy for us to not want to know about the hurting and what they are like. To not be involved, to avoid conversations, are easy temptations. Forgive us for not wanting to know all your sheep. Bring words to our lips and love to our hearts, so we can serve the hurting, while knowing what they are like as a person, your own. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.