

## FITTING IN

The Lakefront Church and First Baptist Church - Venice, Florida  
One Church - Two Locations                      January 11, 2026

God in you and through you is producing a culture that cares!

How do we, First Baptist and Lakefront Church, stay connected with those who are attending and with those who are not?

1. Live, Serve, Preach, Sing, Teach, and Pray the truth of the Bible.

- Our nation has become a culture that has lost confidence that truth is safe, rewarded, or even possible to know truth with certainty.

John 8:31-32 (CSB) *Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in my word, you really are my disciples. <sup>32</sup>You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

- People are not free when they lie. People are not free when they are lied to.
- Transparent leaders stand out, and honest churches feel like a refuge.
- ❖ With few exceptions, people love upward; their love grows.
- ❖ With no exceptions, God loves downward. He loves you now, completely, period.
- ❖ God loves you, and He has inherently placed value in you.

Romans 5:8 (CSB) *But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

- What you appreciate, you grow to value; what you value, you grow to love.

2. Overcome the lies satan whispers in the hearts of the lost and unchurched.

Mark 5:1-20 (CSB) *They came to the other side of the sea, to the region of the Gerasenes. <sup>2</sup>As soon as He got out of the boat, a man with an unclean spirit came out of the tombs and met Him. <sup>3</sup>He lived in the tombs, and no one was able to restrain him anymore—not even with a chain— <sup>4</sup>because he often had been bound with shackles and chains, but had torn the chains apart and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him. <sup>5</sup>Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains, he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. ... <sup>15</sup>They came to Jesus and saw the man who had been demon-possessed, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. ... <sup>18</sup>As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged Him earnestly that he might remain with Him. <sup>19</sup>Jesus did not let him but told him, "Go home to your own people, and report to them how much the Lord has done for you and how He has had mercy on you." <sup>20</sup>So he went out and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and they were all amazed.*

**Luke 7:1-10 (CSB) ...He [Jesus] entered Capernaum. <sup>2</sup>A centurion's servant, who was highly valued by him, was sick and about to die. <sup>3</sup>When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to him, requesting him to come and save the life of his servant. <sup>4</sup>When they reached Jesus, they pleaded with Him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy for you to grant this, <sup>5</sup>because he loves our nation and has built us a synagogue." <sup>6</sup>Jesus went with them, and when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to tell Him, "Lord, don't trouble yourself, since I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. <sup>7</sup>That is why I didn't even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>8</sup>For I too am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under my command. I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." <sup>9</sup>Jesus heard this and was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following Him, He said, "I tell you, I have not found so great a faith even in Israel." <sup>10</sup>When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant in good health.**

**He didn't fit the religious mold in any direction:**

- He wasn't Jewish. He wasn't part of the religious system.
- He represented the *pagan, oppressive occupying force*.
- He wore the uniform of those who enforced Roman power.

**Some people hear satan's lies that they do not "fit in".**

**So, how does First Baptist and Lakefront Church continue to grow a culture that cares?**

1. Live, Serve, Preach, Sing, Teach, and Pray the truth of the Bible.
2. With love and compassion, reach out and then receive:
  - People who don't "look like" church people
  - New believers who don't know the language
  - Doubters afraid to ask questions
  - People wounded by religious people

**Who could have imagined that the first missionary to the Gentiles would be a man who had been naked, chained, and screaming among tombstones?**

**Who could have imagined that a pagan military officer would have greater faith than Israel's religious leaders?**

**God did!**