In the previous sessions, we ended with a larger theo­logical point. I want to start with some this time.

We talked first about lamentation, that we needed to recognize the damage in racism and to sit and mourn what had happened. We need to feel the grief.

Secondly, there is confession, where we name the harm that has been done and our part in it. We also repent, turning from our old ways to enter into new ways.

Finally, we talked about forgiveness, which is something we will be asking for more than giving, being the forgiven rather than the forgiving. Forgiveness doesn’t remove any harm done and doesn’t remove consequences, it means that the door is open to rebuild trust.

Finally, we must act to rebuild that trust.

There is a story of someone working to rebuild trust in Luke’s gospel, the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus was a tax collector who had defrauded people out of money. So his way of making it right was to return money. In a situation as big as racism, what do we do?

I’ve talked about Be the Bridge, a faith-based organization that is working to make things right. Here’s one person’s story.

<<Jeremy video 2:21 long>>

I want you to notice a few things about Jeremy’s story.

He was at a racial reconciliation event.

He was uncomfortable.

He heard someone - really heard them - and knew he needed to understand what he was hearing.

He talks about listening to people who don’t look like him, learning about systemic racism, and wanting to find a way to use his privilege to help out.

He’s part of a group of people who don’t look like him that gives him grace and allows him to ask questions and expand his understanding.

First of all - pay attention to people who don’t look like you.

One of the key aspects of privilege is you don’t need to think about what race you are and you don’t have to think about race at all. When you’re in a favored position, you don’t always see the inequities around you. Privilege makes it harder to see things. Recognize that comfort is a measure of privilege and get comfortable being uncomfortable.

If it’s true that POC see racism as systems of power and cultural rules, then where are those systems? What are the rules? It’s time to name the water you swim in. It’s time to see what others see. Read people you don’t agree with. Listen to voices you don’t normally hear. Ask questions. Beware of being in a position where you think you know.

Beware of what makes you feel good.

<<H.L. Mencken - neat simple and wrong>>

<<Attrib to Einstein - simple as possible, but never simpler>>

The CRTF wants to be one of those resources.

<<microagressions title>>

Microagressions that add up. We haven’t talked much about them, but let me tell you a story <<Brian Stampley>>. You may have interacted with him once, but he was doing this all day. A bunch of small things add up to one big thing. How do you present yourself to strangers of color?

When you’re in a meeting or where people are making decisions, look around. Who’s in the room? Who’s not in the room? You may need to speak up for those who aren’t in the room. You may need to yield the floor for someone who is. You may need to invite someone into the conversation who doesn’t feel invited to speak.

Does our congregation look like our community?

I mentioned being part of a strategic planning committee years ago. I mentioned the large Asian population in Plano and Richardson. I thought one of our strategic objectives should be getting an Asian pastor on staff or if not a pastor someone in program staff who was Asian. The idea being that you are more likely to attend a church where you see someone on staff that looks like you. That idea didn’t make it into the final recom­men­dations. However, Custer Road UMC now has a Korean pastor on staff. I don’t know the details on her appoint­ment there, but she’s not leading a Korean language service. She’s a pastor to the whole church not just to a Korean subset. I’m sure she uses her Korean language skills when needed, but she isn’t there to be the Korean pastor. It helps the church look like the community.

During a time between church jobs I was worshiping at a variety of churches, just to see how other people did things. I went to Chase Oaks Church, a non-denom in Plano. Not my theology and not my worship style, but as I walked through the lobby to the worship space, I saw Asian faces (including Asian Indians), I saw Latinx faces, I saw white faces. It looked like Plano.

If you’re outside of church, does whatever you’re in look like your community?

Pay attention to people who don’t look like you. What are they saying? Do the things that bother them bother you? Why or why not?

Pay attention to how comfortable you are. When was the last time you had to think about your race? Are the people who don’t look like you as comfortable as you are? Can you do things they can’t?

Pay attention to where you are. Are there people around you who don’t look like you? Are they welcome? Do they have a voice?

Second of all - if you see it, say something.

Calling in - having a one-on-one with someone. This is not an argument; the point is not to shame anyone. The point is to be constructive. Make sure that person knows you have their best interests at heart and you are talking to them because you care. Speak the truth in love. They may not be able to see the water they’re swimming in. But also make it clear that because they know better, they can do better.

Ephesians 4.15-16 (NRSV)

15 But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.

Nothing is more pointless than a Facebook argument, but a well-placed statement can be effective. You owe it to yourself to take a stand. It is a measure of my privilege that I don’t have a racial example to share about social media interactions, but I do have one about politics. At some point, I thought that the idea that Trump was the victim of a stolen election had gone too far. When it came up in my Facebook universe, I didn’t engage in any arguments, but I posted “The statements you’re making are false and dangerous. Please stop.” I noticed a Republican friend of my, who probably didn’t vote for Trump, would do something similar, usually telling people the claims you’re making can’t be proved in court and Biden won. Sometimes you just have to take a stand for what’s true, say it, and move on.

Calling out - doing it in front of other people. I bring it up because you’ve seen it. In some cases it may be less effective, but it also means you have others who can help hold that one accountable. Calling out may be required after repeated calling ins.

Recognize when you are being called in or out. Learn how to listen, to accept what you’re hearing and examine your own behavior.

Pay attention to people who don’t look like you.

If you see it, say something.

Third - use your privilege

People who have the power need to reach out to help those who don’t.

What does it mean for a white, upper-middle-class church to spend privilege? Think about where you have power. Think about the parts of your identity that a part of the domi­nant culture. That’s where your power is. If you are white and male, you have a position of power and privilege that others don’t have.

A rich white man bought the Whitney Plantation and turned it into a museum that showed the cruelty of slavery. It wasn’t comfortable for him, but it made a lot of sense for him to be the one to do it.

“So you want to talk about race” and “This book is anti-racist” were written by women with black fathers and white mothers. Both of them write about colorism, the bias in black communities toward people of lighter skin tones. They occupy a place of privilege and are speaking against their privilege.

By the way, did you know Ijeoma Oluo was born in Denton? Her parents split up when she was two and her mother moved the family to the Seattle area.

Think about what parts aren’t. Think about the places where you’re an outsider. That’s where your empathy comes from.

Fourth - find a people who can help you

It’s the whole idea behind Be the Bridge. It’s to bring about racial reconciliation through bringing people together of different races and backgrounds to have honest conversations,

Maybe you need to call yourself in with someone else. Maybe you aren’t confident you handled something properly. Maybe you’re about to handle something and you aren’t sure you’re doing it right. Do you people who have your back, people who have your back, even while they’re calling you in?

Be OK with mistakes and be able to ask and receive forgiveness. Repeatedly. Be able to forgive.

Having people you can speak with in friendship is important. People you can make mistakes around. Allow them to make mistakes around you.

Winston Churchill - Success is all about going from failure to failure without losing enthusiasm.

Be comfortable being uncomfortable. Being unwilling to be uncomfortable is why we’re still dealing with racial issues.

So what’s the point? What is this for? Where is it all headed?

You don’t try to live in someone else’s culture so you can better understand how to convert their culture into yours. And you’re not there to have your own identity swallowed up in some­one else’s. The goal here is not for us all to become white or black or brown or whatever. One of us doesn’t have to win. I don’t think this is something you win or lose.

That’s what I think of the Kingdom of God. We find those things in each other that bring honor to God, glorifies God, and builds each other up in Christ. There is no one way to do right, but it all points in the same direction.

And this is just the beginning.

Karen Anderson-Lain, the chair of our Combating Racism Task Force, will tell us more about next steps.

RESOURCES

So You Want to Talk About Race:

<https://www.amazon.com/You-Want-Talk-About-Race/dp/1580058825/ref=sr_1_3?keywords=so+you+want+to+talk+about+race+ijeoma&pd_rd_r=db0f2405-8a68-44d7-84d3-93536bc4e27a&pd_rd_w=BGrEr&pd_rd_wg=hNWBv&pf_rd_p=9dad86ae-1554-484b-9cc0-f9673b44705e&pf_rd_r=JMFJDEK0Y23N24Z45NBW&qid=1613155096&sr=8-3>

This Book is Anti-Racist

<https://www.amazon.com/This-Book-Anti-Racist-lessons-action/dp/0711245215/ref=sr_1_2?crid=2UMRLNDQO1PCV&dchild=1&keywords=this+book+is+antiracist+by+tiffany+jewell&qid=1613155166&sprefix=this+book+is+%2Caps%2C233&sr=8-2>

Be the Bridge

<https://www.amazon.com/Be-Bridge-Pursuing-Racial-Reconciliation/dp/0525652884/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=be+the+bridge&qid=1613155192&sr=8-1>

Caste

<https://www.amazon.com/Caste-Origins-Discontents-Isabel-Wilkerson/dp/0593230256/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=caste&qid=1613155211&sr=8-1>

Just Mercy

<https://www.amazon.com/Just-Mercy-Story-Justice-Redemption/dp/081298496X/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=just+mercy&qid=1613155233&sr=8-2>

I’m Black. I’m Christian. I’m Methodist

<https://www.amazon.com/Im-Black-Christian-Methodist/dp/1791017096/ref=sr_1_1_sspa?crid=2MNE5M8PU8L5E&dchild=1&keywords=i%27m+black+i%27m+christian+i%27m+methodist&qid=1613155306&sprefix=i%27m+black+%2Caps%2C189&sr=8-1-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUEyMVNHNTlBUTlRVFdMJmVuY3J5cHRlZElkPUEwMTE1NDM2MU82VUxLRjZZNVpPJmVuY3J5cHRlZEFkSWQ9QTAxODE3ODkyMDdLTlk3UkNNQ1FMJndpZGdldE5hbWU9c3BfYXRmJmFjdGlvbj1jbGlja1JlZGlyZWN0JmRvTm90TG9nQ2xpY2s9dHJ1ZQ==>

General Commission on Religion and Race <https://www.gcorr.org/>

General Commission on Religion and Race educational material

<https://www.r2hub.org/premium-resources>