Going Deeper - Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide
Racism, Injustice, and Inequality Panel Discussion
Psalm 139:1, 23-24
06/14/2020

The idea of racism being alive, active and permeating the fabric of our culture may be new to you or it may be something that has brought deep pain to you your entire life (or you may be somewhere in-between). You may be experiencing a variety of feelings right now. And, that is ok. We are committed to having healthy and honest conversations about racism in order to move forward. We are living in a moment that cannot slip by, this moment we are living in is turning into momentum that will bring about justice and equality for future generations. This moment we are living in is a call to the Church to bring Heaven to earth.

During the panel discussion, Whitney mentioned how vital it is for the church to lead the charge against racism, agreeing with Jesus and bringing about justice and equality. She mentioned it's not ok to just "not be racist" but our call as followers of Jesus is to be anti-racist and to be change makers in every area of our lives. She mentioned the importance of self-educating and becoming a learner. The panel discussed biases against black individuals, biases that our panel members had personally been affected by (both subtle and overt) and how these biases perpetuate racism in our culture. These biases become the mortar to the dividing walls of hostility of racism.

In Ephesians 2, Paul mentions how Jesus tore down the "dividing wall of hostility" among the Jews and Gentiles. Addressing the barriers that had been set up between Gentiles and Jews, Paul states that Jesus' death and resurrection had reconciled them to God as One Body through the cross. Jesus put to death their hostility, and as mentioned in Galatians 2:28, we are all one in Christ. The Kingdom of God is a display of diversity and diversity celebrates what God is like and what Heaven is like: Revelation 7:9-11 "After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

When Jesus taught his disciples how to pray, he taught them to say: "Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven" To simply not be racist is not enough. We as Kingdom people need to be anti-racist. Racism does not exist in the Kingdom of God.

Last Sunday, Pastor Bill mentioned a story author Robert Louis Stevenson told about himself as a boy. Robert lived in Scotland in the 19th century. As a boy, his family lived on a hillside overlooking a small town. Robert was intrigued by the work of the old lamplighters who went throughout the town with a ladder and a torch, lighting the streetlights for the night. One evening, as Robert stood watching with fascination, his parents asked him "Robert, what in the world are you looking at out there?" With great excitement he exclaimed: "Look at that man! He's punching holes in the darkness!" With that one statement, Robert Louis Stevenson summed

up Jesus' time on earth and the call of the Church.

May we be people, called by God to be the light of the world, who do just that - punch holes in the darkness. (Matthew 5:16) And, may our lives reflect the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.

So, Consider:
1. What biases do I have against other people that perpetuate a dividing wall of hostility?
2. What does it mean to be anti-racist? And do I identify as anti-racist?
3. What areas of influence do I have where I can make an impact for change: personally, culturally, and/or institutionally?

Take Action:
Whitney provided resources to inform, educate, and empower us in our journey as the Church to be anti-racist. Choose a few of the resources you will find in the weekly update to watch, read, or listen to and invite others to join you.

On earth as it is in Heaven,
Julie Briley