

WELCOME

We are so glad to have you on this journey with us to address, listen, think about, and consider how we, as a body of believers in Christ, deal with the overt racism we are seeing around us. We desire to be a bridge in a broken world to the Biblical justice of Christ. To begin this process, we feel we all must learn and know the hidden history of our country in order to understand what is happening now and what we have before us. This month's content may be somewhat a reminder for some, bad memories for others, or new to others. Our ultimate goal is to dig deeper into our hearts, face and acknowledge the inequities and inequalities, and seek His face toward becoming an agent of change with the hope of Christ. His love is the center of this collective and welcomes everyone to the table. Be sure to take care of your mental/emotional health while considering some of the materials we will be sharing together over time. Give yourself time to feel your feelings and ask yourself why you may be having them. Remember to keep Christ at the center.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"
(Luke 23:37-39)

Learning with you,

The Jesus & Justice Collective Team

OUR PRAYER

“Cut from me the roots and remnant of pride and hate and unjust ways. Grant me capacities of outrage at my own belittling of your glory. Open the eyes of my heart to see and savor the beauty of Christ. Incline my heart to your word, your Son, and your way. Fill me with compassionate courage. And make a name for yourself in the way I serve your people.

Stretch forth your hand in great awakening for the sake of the perishing world. Let the terrible words of Revelation not be spoken over me: “Yet still they did not repent.” As bodies have been stricken, strike now the slumbering soul. Forbid that I would remain asleep in the darkness of pride and unbelief. In your great mercy, say to these bones, “Live!” And bring the hearts and lives of millions into alignment with the infinite worth of Jesus.

In Jesus’ name, AMEN.

(from the devotional “Coronavirus and Christ” By John Piper)

KEY DEFINITIONS:

The following list of words with their definitions will give us a shared vocabulary for our discussions.

Biblical Justice	“Seeks to protect individual liberty while promoting personal responsibility. It is the equitable and impartial application of the rule of God’s moral law in society; identifies the moral standard by which God measures human conduct. It is the impartial application of God’s moral law within all realms of society including economic, political, social, or criminal justice.” (Isa. 1: 17) (<i>Devotional Biblical Justice</i> by Tony Evans)
Conciliation	the process of adjusting or settling disputes in a friendly manner through extra judicial means; bringing two sides together to reach a compromise
Reconciliation	restoration of friendly relations; the act of making one view or belief compatible with another
Racism	Policies, actions, and inactions that enforce the belief that groups of humans possess different behavioral traits corresponding to physical appearance and can be divided by the superiority of one over the other
Racist	(n. And adj.) - something or someone that, through action or inaction, affirms or creates inequity between particular racial or ethnic groups
Anti-racist	a person who opposes racism and promotes racial tolerance
Systematic	(v.) - done or acting toward a fixed plan or system; methodical
Systemic	(adj.) - relating to or common to a system
White supremacy	(n.) - the belief that white people constitute a superior race and should therefore dominate society, typically to the exclusion or detriment of other racial and ethnic groups, in particular Black or Jewish people
Privilege	(n.) - a special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group

MATERIAL LIST: (all titles are hyperlinked)

REQUIRED MATERIAL

Short Videos	
1. The Talk	1 min
2. The Tyler Merritt Project	3 min
3. \$100 Race	4 min
4. A Pastor's Perspective (Tony Evans)	3 min
5. Race: The Power of An Illusion (Several great clips)	5-60 min
Written Materials:	
1. Devotionals (see page below)	~ 10 min
2. Article: Warren, M.F. (2020). <i>To My People - The White Ones.</i>	~ 20 min
3. McNeil, B.S. (2015). <i>Roadmap to Reconciliation 2.0, Downers Grove: Intersarsity Press.</i>	~5 hrs
Longer Videos:	
1. Language and Mental Capacity (A National Perspective) - BODY LANGUAGE: A Conversation on Race + Restoration in the Body of Christ	95 min
2. Church Pastors and Leaders Raw Perspective (National and International perspective immediately after the murder of George Floyd)	60 min
3. Local Bay Area Pastors Perspective - Transforming the Bay with Christ	60 min
4. Pastors and Leaders talk regarding a recent incident at this year's Dove Awards	60 min
Documentary:	
- 13th This Netflix documentary links in a chain of racial inequality, forged by political and economic motives.	100 min

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (Highly recommended but not required)

Book	
- Morrison, L. (2019). <i>Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation</i>, Colorado Springs: Watermark.	~8 hr
Videos and Documentary	
1. Emotionally Healthy Church Podcast: God's Revelation That Burns Through Racism	35 min
2. I am Not Your Negro	93 min
Thrive Conference interviews (requires free registration)	
3. Latasha Morrison, Author of <i>Be the Bridge</i>	15 min
4. T.D.Jakes, Pastor of Potters House Church	63 min

DEVOTIONALS

THE IMAGE OF GOD

Gen. 1: 26, 27; Acts 17:23

In theology, we call this Imago Dei - referring to the concept that humans are created in God's image. An image is a mirror or a reflection. This also means that everybody, regardless of their race or ethnicity has intrinsic value and worth. Dignity is innate. All humans are born with esteem because they are created in the image of God.

Therefore, any form of racism, elitism, discrimination, or oppression is not only a social issue, but it's a sin issue at its core. By treating a fellow image-bearer inferior because they are of a different race is sin. And if we are going to achieve unity, the first thing we must do is speak honestly. That is, we must call any form of racism, elitism, discrimination, or oppression exactly what it is - sin. God can only begin the healing and unifying process when sin is addressed. Let's begin to treat each other as image-bearers -- people made in the image of God almighty.

~~~Pastor Tony Evans

Romans 15:30; Eph. 6:18

"God went looking for someone to pray or stand in the gap for sinful Jerusalem, but I believe we can apply these words to our lives as well. Did you notice God said, 'I looked for someone'? It could be that you are that someone who could stand in the gap for another person.

Paul understood the power of standing in the gap. He implored his friends in Rome to pray for him. 'I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.' (Romans 15:30, NIV).

The Greek word Paul uses for 'struggle' in Romans 15:30 is sunagonizomai, which means 'to struggle in company of, i.e., to be a partner (assistant), strive together with.' The root word means 'to endeavor to accomplish something: fight, labor fervently, strive.'

Agreeing to pray for someone isn't simply a nice platitude letting them know we're thinking of them or a pat on the back to cheer them on. When we tell someone we'll pray for them, we agree to put on God's armor and head to the front lines of battle on their behalf.

Many ancient shields had brackets attached to the sides. These brackets were a type of latch that soldiers used to lock their shields together during battle. When locked together, the soldiers moved as one, forming a barricade against the enemy. Alone, the shield was a small defense. Hooked together, they were a human wall.

When we lock arms in prayer with our friends, we lock our shields together and form a strong wall of defense. That's what my friend Mary did for me that night, and that's what we can do for each other.

Ephesians 6:18, 'And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.' (NIV)

~~~Sharon Jaynes