

“A Compassionate, Counter-Cultural, Christian Response”

Here are some reminders for the Church in the wake of George Floyd’s tragic death and the current nation-wide turmoil:

- **To grieve and lament over the tragic death of George Floyd is *not* an affirmation of the cultural narrative.** Jesus wept over Lazarus but for different reasons, which were unbeknownst to the on-looking professional mourners (Jn 11:35). The issue is *how* and *why* we grieve. Satan has always attempted to infiltrate the Church and lure her away at points where the world seems to share a common cause (2 Cor 11:14-15). He is both a liar *and* a murderer from the beginning (Jn 8:44). He is behind George Floyd’s death, and he is also behind the cunning cultural narrative that exploits George Floyd’s death.
- **To mourn with those who mourn does *not necessarily* mean protesting with those who protest, or posting on social media with those who post on social media.** Rom 12:15 is not a politically correct maneuver, it is a personal expression of compassion.
- **To vehemently denounce and oppose the evil of racism and the error of ethnocentrism is *not* to automatically agree with secular and worldly philosophies that seem to do the same, such as “Critical Race Theory” and “Intersectionality”.** There are biblical reasons to oppose something that the world also seems to oppose, while also rejecting the reasons why they oppose it. Motives, presuppositions, and underlying ideologies matter (2 Cor 10:5).
- **To have a true holy indignation is to “*not* let the sun go down on your anger” (Eph 4:26), to “*not* give the devil an opportunity” (Eph 4:27), to “*never* pay back evil for evil” (Rom 12:17), to “*never* take your own revenge” (Rom 12:19).** If the unbelieving world doesn’t see a radical difference between its own outrage and the Church’s zeal against sin, something is wrong. Pride, self-righteousness, and personal vengeance are tell-tale fruits of sinful anger, not righteous anger. Christians may be angry and Christians may protest, but “be angry [and protest], and *do not sin*” (Eph 4:26).
- **To peacefully protest is a civil decision *not* a Christian duty, a human work *not* a Gospel work.** The former is a unique social privilege, the latter is a universal Christian mandate. Christians are free to work for social reform, but social reform is *not* spiritual Reformation. The two must not be confused (Mt 22:21).
- **To be silent is *not always* to be complicit and guilty.** Jesus was silent before His accusers (Isa 53:7; Mt 27:14; Mk 15:5; Lk 23:9). To be silent is *sometimes* to mourn (Lam 3:28-29). To be silent is *sometimes* to be wise (Prov 18:13). To be silent is *sometimes* to be humble (Eccl 5:2). To be silent is *sometimes* to be prayerful (Rom 8:26). To be silent is *sometimes* to wait on the Lord (Lam 3:26). To be silent is *sometimes* to hope (Ps 62:5). To be silent is *sometimes* to speak God’s Word and *not* the world’s agenda. It is far too simplistic to assume that silence is *always* complicity and guilt.

- **To call for biblical discernment and definitions in this discussion, and to refuse wholesale/blanket acceptance of cultural ideas and assumptions is *not* less compassionate, but more (Phil 1:9-10).** God is love and love is defined by God (1 Jn 4:8). Therefore, true love is theological. Compassion is not truly loving if it is not also biblical. Let us be as “quick to hear” God’s perspective as we are to hear the marginalized (Jas 1:19).
- **To say that the killing of George Floyd was a grave sin because it took the life of a man made in God’s image (Gen 9:6) is *not* to minimize the heinous nature of the crime by de-emphasizing racial prejudice as a *possible* motive.** Rather, to emphasize the biblical nature of the offense is to treat it *more* seriously, not less (Ps 51:4). When a biblical category for condemning sin is no longer enough, we should recognize that we may be in danger of calling for penance rather than repentance.
- **To say that mankind is one race, i.e. the human race, is *not* to dismiss real differences between cultures and ethnicities.** Rather it is to affirm that there is an essential unity in our humanity even amid much diversity, all of which has been designed and determined by God (Acts 17:26), and all of which is to be reflected in the ‘new humanity’ of the Church (Eph 2:11-22; Rev 5:9). Biblically speaking, as human beings we are *all* in a way like George Floyd, and we are *also* all in a way like his killer, Derek Chauvin. Not by way of shared experience or shared guilt for the same crime, but *because we all share in fallen humanness* as descendants from Adam (Rom 5:12, 15; 1 Cor 15:22).
- **To value the image of God in man means to courageously stand against murder, abuse, and racism, but *also* the cursing of our fellow man (Jas 3:9-10).** Murderous, abusive, racist *words* reflect a murderous, abusive, racist *heart* (Mt 5:22; 15:18-20).
- **To condemn the evil of racism is to specifically condemn the biblical sin of “personal favoritism” and “partiality” (Jas 2:1, 9; Deut 1:17; Lev 19:15-16).** This can be over skin color or social status, profession or political association, ethnicity or income, morality or personality, sub-culture or style, personal opinion or privilege. Even an oppressed minority who is calling for justice can themselves be guilty of ethnic prejudice against other ethnicities (Jon 4, Hab 1:13).
- **To call for justice, if it is biblical, is to call for God’s perfect justice against every form of evil, public or private, societal or personal, popular or unpopular.** This means righteous indignation over *every* sin, including racism and abortion, but also pride, theft, bitterness, sexual deviancy, idolatry, deceit, malice, envy, coveting, rebellion, slander, selfishness, greed, etc. (Jas 2:10; 1 Thess 5:22). Let those of us who call for God’s perfect justice likewise acknowledge that we ourselves are accountable to the same standard (Mt 7:1; Jas 4:11-12).
- **To admit that we could never fully understand someone else’s experience does *not* mean that truth is relative (the postmodern idea of standpoint epistemology), *nor* is it to say that our ministry cannot be sincere or effective.** Just because our position in

life is different than another's does not make our expression of compassion any less authentic, meaningful, or helpful, so long as it comes from the heart and accords with the Scriptures. The Bible and the Gospel are transcendent. Jesus alone is our perfect, sympathetic High Priest (Heb 4:14-16). We point others to Him, not our own experience, for "we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord" (2 Cor 4:5).

- **To question or push back on the theory of systemic racism and oppression is *not* to deny or justify the sin of racism, *nor* is it to say that racism doesn't exist in this country, *nor* is it to say that our own hearts are immune to committing such a sin.** True humility acknowledges that our depraved hearts are capable of any sin, but it also doesn't force us to acknowledge a guilt that isn't necessarily there (Rom 12:3). True humility acknowledges that God alone perfectly knows all of our motives (1 Cor 4:4-5). Therefore, true humility also refrains from definitively judging the motives of others.
- **To point to the future hope of perfect justice is *not* a trite way of dismissing current issues.** This is what the prophets did without fail, and yet they never minimized their own suffering (Lam 3). To admit that we ourselves cannot accomplish perfect justice by human means is not to excuse or ignore the sins that confront us in this fallen world. Rather, it is to increase our longing for *another* world. The Christian's hope is a Messianic hope, an eschatological hope, a future hope (Rom 8:24-25).
- **To remind the Church that the Gospel is the only real answer is *not* to simply bypass or ignore the obvious social problems that exist in our world and opt for a superficial, spiritual solution.** The Gospel addresses sin. Sin is at the heart of all of society's problems. Therefore, addressing sin with the Gospel is not a superficial answer. Rather, addressing society's problems *without* the Gospel is a superficial answer. May we not be ashamed of the Gospel as God's all-sufficient tool of salvation for all ethnicities, both Jew and Greek (Rom 1:16).