



Family Ties: Becoming the Family of God – Ethnic Reconciliation
Pastor Harvey | May 13th, 2018

SCRIPTURE FOCUS: John 17:20-23; Revelation 7:9

Pastor Harvey introduced the next installment of our Family Ties: Becoming the Family of God series. The first four weeks focused on the natural family. The next six-weeks will focus on our spiritual family in general with a specific focus on Ethnic (racial) reconciliation. This past Sunday Pastor reminded us that reconciliation is one of [ECBF's seven values](#). He also reminded us that to be reconciled requires us to be intentional and that we must be willing to wrestle with the issues that preclude us from being the family that God has called us to be. The goal is that the entire church would engage in this process via our Sunday service plus either a connect group or our Wednesday night Bible study. We will delve into the meat of the topic starting next week.

As you engage in these conversations, please be both prayerful and watchful, as the enemy of our souls will do all that he can to hinder what the Lord wants to do in, through and among us.

Any profitable and meaningful conversation requires a common understanding for engagement. Before we start let's review the 2 sets of ground rules below.

1) Taken from Courageous Conversation document:

- Stay engaged
- Speak your truth
- Experience discomfort
- Expect and accept non-closure
- Listen for understanding not responding (PHD addition)

2) Built on scripture from Scripture on Race doc created by Jon Abe:

- Be completely humble and gentle; be patient bearing with one another in love (Eph 4:2)
- Speak "the truth in love" (Eph 4:15)
- Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." (Eph 4:32)
- Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Eph 5:21)
- Do things God's way (PHD)

What is the goal of this series?

- Understand that God cares about reconciliation
- Build your day-to-day awareness
- Wrestle with what it means to be the family of God
- Understand the church's role and our personal role in ending racial tension
- How to be a model for those around us

SHARE Read John 17:20-23; Revelation 7:9

Identify other passages of scripture that speaks to reconciliation us being one.

DIG What is Reconciliation?

Brenda Salter McNeil, in her book Roadmap to Reconciliation, posits the following definition of reconciliation: "Reconciliation is an ongoing spiritual process involving forgiveness, repentance, and justice that restores broken relationships and systems to reflect God's original intention for all creation to flourish. Muse on this and comment.

In what ways is reconciliation at the heart of the gospel?

Discuss the things going on in our society that could hinder us from living as the family of God.

DEEPER What is the problem?

There are many problems when it comes to race relations and the church, but pastor Harvey mentioned two:

1) The church being squeezed into the mold of ungodly ideas, philosophies and practices (conforming to the ways of the world - Rom 12:2) - The problem is the church! Being squeezed into the mold of ungodly ideas, philosophies and practices (Rom 12:2 gives us an imperative... Do not be conformed to the ways of the world but be transformed). The church is the problem because we have acquiesced to a way of being that is so out of step with what God had in mind that we have no moral authority to speak prophetically to our culture.

2) The problem with our vision which is our inability to see things from God's perspective (Gen 1:26-27) - The problem is with our vision. Gen 1:26-27 It's differently than the Lord's

We all need to confess that we have contributed to the on-going problem of race in America and in our communities. The church has some work to do. And that work starts with repentance. Repenting of conforming to the ways of an untoward and self-serving world.

Discuss the ways that we are conforming to the ways of the world and how we need to start viewing things differently.

TIME WITH GOD THIS WEEK Why Reconciliation?

Our nation, cities and communities are hurting. AR Bernard, an African American pastor, in New York points out that H. Clinton/Trump election and Trump being in the WH exposed the spiritual and moral condition of our nation. He submits that it has forced us to have conversations that we have avoided (example: Race, Justice, Equality, Culture, Safety and Morality).

It's popular to blame one group or another for our ethnic conflicts. But truth be told we are all complicit in the ongoing problem of race around us because you cannot heal a wound if you deny that it exists. If we are not part of the solution we are part of the problem. Be honest and reflect on where you participate in.

Additional Resource: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s [Birmingham Jail Letter](#) with Pastor Harvey's summary and notes –

“On the edges of a newspaper behind the bars of a Birmingham jail Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In no uncertain terms stated that the problems of race and justice and segregation in America was a church problem. He argued that the problem was not with the extremist groups of clansman and citizen councils but with the white Christian moderate. With white people of good genuine will who we're hesitant to press against the clear issues of injustice that crippled black and brown people. Many of whom were Christian. It was White pastors who while preaching the gospel denied its power to the disinherited it was predominately southern white church pastors who further marginalize black and brown people by leveraging the collective rebellion against the ethics of the gospel in the cities where they preached.”

And In this the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. detected a strange dichotomy between the message of Jesus Christ and the practice of his church in America. And though this is a hard-historical truth it needs to be proclaimed to you by a chocolate man like me. It needs to be said to you in love, by choosing to conform to the world Christians have created a segregated church. The history of racism in the American church has been long hiding in plain sight. the consequences of not confronting racism and removing the systems of injustice has led to decades long Theological arrogance and sociological privilege. The truth is that the Black and brown churches are a direct product of a White racist church.