



**COMPASSION
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uniting to serve

STAND ON truth.
SEE THE enemy.
FACE THE fear.

THE CHURCH & RACIAL JUSTICE

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Our spiritual journey can become confusing or darkened when we face the realities surrounding us today. There are many voices of varied tones, but there is one truth most everyone agrees on: George Floyd's life was taken in a cruel manner and he was not the first. We wholeheartedly affirm this truth. We don't presume to add expertise to the vast array of current secular commentary but our passion and calling is to speak to followers of Jesus and to provoke the body of Christ to be all she is designed to be. Today we are presented with false dichotomies on every screen, which makes it essential for The Church to rise up and be people of the third way...people of honor. **To do that we must stand on truth, point out the enemy's strategies, and face the fear.**



TRUTH

1.) God is the God of justice and we are to reflect that justice on the earth. This justice looks like freedom from oppression, partiality, and exploitation. It's also a freedom **for** works of righteousness. As beloved children of God we are to speak up for the overlooked and hurting. As we ask the Lord "Your kingdom come, your will be done..." we must know this implies there is no place for racial inequality, mothers frightened for their children's lives, and other symptoms of misused power in our cities and towns.

2.) The body of Christ is the framework we must utilize when the world gets caught up in one side vs. the other side. In the body of Christ we are called to "bear one another's burdens" and "when one part suffers the whole suffers." Therefore we ask ourselves and all followers of Jesus to pursue these questions:

- "What does bearing the burden of someone from a different walk of life look like?"
- "Am I suffering alongside those parts of the body of Christ who are suffering right now?"





If you are unwilling to suffer alongside people of color who are “exhausted, frustrated, and angry,” you are either denying their vital part in the body of Christ or you are directly disobeying the scriptures.

STRATEGY OF THE REAL ENEMY

1.) We are made to think the enemy is the person(s) on the other side of the issue. In reality the enemy is the deceiver. His work is eons old and has repeating patterns. If we are wise and discerning we will name those patterns, ask the Lord to break their power, and stop attacking fellow humanity.

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2.) Division is the key strategy of the enemy and those who stand against the ways of Jesus. It is one of the easiest ways to quickly discern if what you are hearing/seeing is part of God’s ways of honor and love or not. As followers of Jesus we are called to “be one as he and the Father are one,” which is a high and holy calling. Jesus tore down dividing walls between God and humankind but also between one of the greatest social divides in history (Jew vs Gentile). It’s in Jesus’ DNA to bring those who have no worldly reason to unite, together under the banner of God’s redemption. We will not contribute to, promote, or give space for strategies that aim to divide the Church.



3.) Systems of partiality, which are heavily debated today, appear to be perfect strategies of an enemy that has worked through countless individuals over the course of human history and American history. Systems of inequality found in education, incarceration, and housing can so easily be ignored because there isn't one person to blame. This means it's easier for that system/paradigm to grow unchecked. To name a system that contains ungodly partiality is NOT political, it is pointing to "principalities and powers" while saying "we see you and we will not go along."

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FACE THE FEAR

1.) Many of us have been conditioned to believe that saying anything about social hot button issues (except those politically owned by a particular party) is to do something unChristian. In this conditioning we have so often turned a deaf ear to the hurting and oppressed because to speak up about a "complicated" issue would be inappropriate. We need to repent, name this fear, and grow past it.



2.) The fear of the “other” is profound and animating. Humanity fears what it doesn’t understand or anyone perceived as a threat to personal power and security. On the other hand, Jesus had every reason to fear the people who would jeer him, spit on him, whip him, and crucify him and yet he prays a blessing of forgiveness over them. We must name this fear that keeps us distant and grow past it. We can listen to and learn from our brothers and sisters in Christ who have varied life experiences and perspectives.

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3.) The fear of loving and honoring another is unique yet real, and has only increased in this world of misunderstandings. Many of us, me especially, don’t know if an act of honor and love to a person of color will be perceived as demeaning. Therefore it becomes safer and easier to do and say nothing. This is not the way of Jesus. To honor is to risk. To love is to deny the fear.



CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We humbly submit to the God of love, justice, righteousness, and truth. He tells us that “he is the way, the truth, and the life,” and that “all authority on heaven and on earth has been given to him.” Therefore our posture ought to be one of humility and surrender to his power.

In Isaiah 58 we have a beautiful image of what the true worshippers of God will carry out as their religious activity (acts of justice for the oppressed and overlooked), but we almost always neglect the final scene of that chapter which is actually the starting place. The first step is to rest in the Lord and surrender our own ways so that God’s mighty ways might live and breathe through us in a world struggling to breathe.

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