

TALKING POINTS

A CONVERSATION - WHAT I WANT MY WHITE FRIENDS TO KNOW

LEARNING IN

One of the most important things you can know about Jesus is this - from the day Jesus laid the foundation of the church, the church was formed with the idea it was for *every* tribe, *every* nation, *every* tongue, *every* people group.

All those people were *equals*, and all those people were side by side in worship and in praise. They were all equal in importance, according to the scriptures. This is an essential part of our understanding of God's word.

According to Jesus, we in the church are to be praying into existence on earth the things which are realities in heaven - like equality and love. Our problem is life on earth just doesn't match the realities of heaven - in specific, we're faced with the reality of huge problems of racism in our culture today.

Racism isn't going to go away until some fundamental things change. In conversation with African American friends, it's clear by their experiences there is a racist element in our society still present today. Being unfairly judged, hearing racially insensitive comments and being treated differently than others is a common part of their experience.

When it comes to dealing with the issue of racism, we must begin by having an honest and open conversation about it. For this conversation to be successful, we can't shut down the channel of communication before it starts. In conversation with African American friends, equivocating #blacklivesmatter with #alllivesmatter is a communication shutdown for them - not because they don't believe all lives matter (they absolutely do), but #blacklivesmatter focuses on the particular hardships they as African Americans face.

Read Galatians 3:28

When it comes to race, how do we "put ourselves in another person's shoes"?

LIVING IT OUT

In order for us to combat racism and establish racial reconciliation, there are three actions we must take:

Become A Listener - without trying to establish our position, we need to listen patiently and with an open mind. We need to devote our full attention to the perspective of others without having an agenda or looking to change their view. We must listen with openness and understanding so we can truly hear and reflect where they're coming from.

Read James 1:19, Romans 12:9-10

How would you approach having a conversation about race?

Lament the Injustice - lamenting is mourning or grieving over something. In the case of racism, we can have compassion (which literally means "to suffer with") towards those affected by this injustice. We can recognize and empathize with the pain others experience.

Read Romans 13:8-10

How can we be more empathetic towards those who are different than us?

Speak Out - when we see injustice like racism being practiced (even in the subtlest ways) we have to speak out. We have to speak against racism wherever we may find it - at home, at work, wherever. God loves justice, and we should show His character in this way.

Read Proverbs 31:8-9

How can we speak out against racism without breaking down bridges of communication?