

In the words of Coach Tony Dungy from a Social Media Post from last week:

“America is in a very sad place today. We have seen a man die senselessly, at the hands of the very people who are supposed to be protecting our citizens. We have seen people protest his death by destroying the property and dreams of people in their own community, the very people they are protesting for. We have many people pointing fingers of blame, painting the opposite side with a broad brush. We have anger and bitterness winning out over logic and reason. We have distrust and prejudice winning out over love and respect.

What happened to George Floyd was inexcusable and it should never happen. Justice needs to be served, but in seeking justice we can't fall into the trap of prejudging every police officer we see. What started out as peaceful protests have devolved into arson and looting and that should never happen, either. Yes, there should be protest. But we do not have license to perform criminal acts because we're angry.

Today we are a divided country. We're divided racially, politically, and socio-economically. And Satan is laughing at us because that is exactly what he wants. Dysfunction, mistrust, and hatred help his kingdom flourish.

Well, what is the answer then? I believe it has to start with those of us who claim to be Christians. We have to come to the forefront and demonstrate the qualities of the One we claim to follow, Jesus Christ. We can't be silent. As Dr. King said many years ago, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to

justice everywhere!” But we can’t go forward with judgmental, bitter, spirits. We need to be proactive, but do it in the spirit of trying to make things better. And it can’t be just the African American churches. It has to be ALL churches taking a stand and saying, “We are going to be on the forefront of meaningful dialogue and meaningful change.” We have to be willing to speak the truth in love but we have to recognize that we are not fighting against other people. We are fighting against Satan and his kingdom of spiritual darkness.

In the words of the Apostle Paul, “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:21 NIV)

Why do a series on Racial Reconciliation?

2 Corinthians 5:17-19 (NKJV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (18) Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, (19) that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:18 (MSG) All this comes from the God who settled the relationship between us and him, and then called us to settle our relationships with each other.

Proverbs 31:8-9 (NLT) Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed. (9) Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless, and

see that they get justice.

2 Corinthians 2:11 (NKJV) lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

2 Corinthians 2:11 (MSG) After all, we don't want to unwittingly give Satan an opening for yet more mischief—we're not oblivious to his sly ways!

✓ **Jesus told us these things would happen:**

Matthew 24:6-7 (NKJV) And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. (7) For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.

“Nation”: Greek “*ethnos*” - race or tribe of people

Mark 3:24-25 (NKJV) If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. (25) And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

✓ **What the devil does is cause division by highlighting differences and perspectives causing hate based on those differences.**

✓ **God desires to take our differences and unite us around those differences for His purpose because that is the way He made us.**

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (NKJV) There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. (5) There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. (6) And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

Creflo Dollar said: White folks might clap on one and three and black folks might clap on two and four but together we don't miss a beat.

✓ ***Integration* is not a Biblical word (although there is nothing wrong with it) - but *reconciliation* is a Biblical word.**

Reconciliation: (Greek) actually means to restore or an exchange that takes place as a result of change within a man.

I believe one of the first things that white Americans can do is to learn and be educated regarding the truth about what our black brothers and sisters experience and have experienced.

Proverbs 16:16 (TPT) Everyone wants gold, but wisdom's worth is far greater. Silver is sought after, but a heart of understanding yields a greater return.

Steven Covey in his book *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* said habit five is: "seek first to understand, then to be understood."

Author and Pastor Nona Jones said,

Pride: "I don't understand so you're wrong."

Humility: “I don’t understand. Will you help me try?”

✓ I support the thought of “Black Lives Matter” (not so much the organization) because of what Jesus taught is Luke 15:

Luke 15:1-7 (NKJV) Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. (2) And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them." (3) So He spoke this parable to them, saying: (4) "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? (5) And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. (6) And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' (7) I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

Luke 4:18-19 (NKJV) "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE HAS ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR; HE HAS SENT ME TO HEAL THE BROKENHEARTED, TO PROCLAIM LIBERTY TO THE CAPTIVES AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET AT LIBERTY THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED; (19) TO PROCLAIM THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD."

Luke 10:25-37 (NKJV) And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (26) He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" (27) So he answered and said, "'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND,' and 'YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'" (28) And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." (29) But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" (30) Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. (31) Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. (32) Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. (33) But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. (34) So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. (35) On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.'" (36) So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" (37) And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Neighbor - Greek - the one closest to him

Compassion - Greek - a yearning in his bowels, feel deeply, to feel something viscerally

✓ You cannot have compassion for someone you do not understand!

So I will in the days to come have more conversations, some even uncomfortable as I attempt to understand, empathize and then be moved by compassion to act and help in any way that I can.