

## **A Letter to our Church Family in an Incredibly Challenging Time**

Church Family,

I am so deeply saddened that in the midst of an already challenging season, racial injustice in our country has reared its ugly head again.

The tragic death of George Floyd and the ensuing protests and violence have left me feeling many emotions.

This truth is evident to me: **Racism is very real.**

As people are blaming one another or different political parties, as your pastor, I'm telling you this is a spiritual issue. We are all broken, sinful, and messy. Every single one of us. White, black, male, female, rich, poor, old, young.

As Benjamin Watson said, "We do not have a skin problem, we have a sin problem."

Though our sin has been paid for eternally by Jesus, sadly, our sin has consequences in this world that don't just go away in a moment. Just by abolishing slavery and allowing blacks to vote doesn't undo decades and centuries of systemic injustice. Only a few generations ago in our country there were many black families that we uprooted and separated through slavery in the name of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for white people.

Black people in America are hurting and crying out. I hope in the midst of the protests you don't miss out on the fact that a beautiful segment of God's creation is still crying out.

There is nothing wrong with the color of anyone's skin. In fact, to say that "God is color blind," or to self-tout, "I'm not racist, I don't see color" is actually an ignorant, unbiblical statement.

**God isn't afraid of color. He celebrates color.**

He doesn't create mistakes. He finds beauty in the color of your skin, whether you are black, brown, or white. Though all people are created beautifully and wonderfully in God's image, America has a horrendous history of mistreating people of a black skin color.

As Christ followers, we have a responsibility to be a part of the solution, and the way we become the solution, is by living like Jesus.

Here are four things I see in Jesus that He calls us to:

- 1) **Jesus was a peacemaker.** We are not called to just be peace keepers, we are called to be peace makers. Indifference and apathy are not an option.
- 2) **Jesus walked to the other side.** He didn't draw lines to exclude people, but He crossed lines to love people in. Ignorance is not an option. Educating yourself with books and videos is good for your mind, but getting in a real relationship with someone who is different from you will help you change your heart.
- 3) **Jesus had a unifying voice.** We are called to speak and be a unifying voice. Silence hasn't helped and won't help. No matter what color your skin is, if God has put you in this world, your voice is to call people to peace and reconciliation.
- 4) **Jesus was proactive, not reactive.** Posting on social media after tragedy may be a nice step, but what would be more beneficial is if you do something, anything, to help.

The fact is that Jesus, a man of Jewish descent, came into our world not when we had our lives together, but rather, He demonstrated His love for us in this, **WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS**, Christ came and died for us. He was the only innocent person ever to live and He took our sin upon Him. He didn't deserve it. He proactively came and died for people that would abandon, deny, and hurt Him. That includes you.

It's understanding this fact, and receiving His grace that He won for you at the cross that will change your heart.

At the end of the day, we need more heart change that will cause us to become more like Jesus.

You may feel like you are not racist and because of that this isn't your problem.

When you signed up to follow Jesus, this became your problem.

And it's one of the many unjust causes that you can, and have, to stand up for.

We need to do better. We have to do better.

Come, Lord Jesus, Come.

### **Pastor Zach**

P.S. As a way of being proactive and helping we are shifting our 21 Days Together Platform that we have created to give messages of peace and reconciliation for the month of June. In this platform, starting in a few days, we will have leading voices of pastors, church leaders, and those in the African American community to help you understand more about who our God is, more about what others experience in life, and more about how you can be a part of the solution.