

Daily Devotional, June 2, 2020 You are All One in Christ

In 1st century Rome, a time when Christians were brutally persecuted and still very much a small minority group, they spoke freely of how God equally valued people of all different ethnicities. The Apostle Paul at that time wrote in ***Galatians 3:27-28***, for those who ***“have clothed yourselves with Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, for you are all one in Christ”***.

They sang songs of bringing the powerful to their knees, such as Mary’s Magnificat in Luke 1: ***“He has brought down rulers from their thrones, but has lifted up the humble; he has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. Luke 1:52-53 (NIV)”***

When Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire in the 4th century many of these voices were loudly heard. Then as the centuries passed by, race was barely spoken of, perhaps in part because many parts of the church that have held the most power, prestige, and wealth benefitted greatly from how the ‘system’ is set up. So, what reason would they have to change it?

In white America, “The status quo is silence about racism other than pointing out the overt cases,” wrote Drew G.I. Hart in The Christian Century magazine. But since Jesus died to bring *absolute* peace on earth, we cannot turn a deaf ear or a blind eye to racism if we want to follow Jesus faithfully.

Are there ways you have benefitted from the established system that is in place and have not wanted to ‘upset the applecart’? Or are there ways you have felt your conscience has called you to speak out only to be silenced by others when you tried to make your voice heard? Or it could be that you have many questions but are afraid to begin a conversation. Or possibly you have determined that there is no hope left for this time and place, so why even bother?

This is a time for real inspection, reflection, and deep-soul intervention. Ask Jesus to lead you - and to lead us as a church – into uncharted waters. Remember when Jesus said to Peter in Matthew 14: Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid. (v.27) Peter stepped out in faith and began to walk on top of the water and approached Jesus. But his fear made him sink because he took his eyes off Jesus and instead focused on the high waves all around him. Fear of the forces of the unknown can do that to us. It makes us weak in the knees—weak in the heart and mind and soul.

Keeping our eyes set on Jesus and nowhere else gives us the confidence and the faith we need to begin to move away from what holds us back—to overcome fear and uncertainty. Are you ready to step out of your boat and test the waters? Don’t be afraid. Step out in faith. You are safe in His love and strength.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, each day is a struggle against sin and temptation and those things that are an unknown to me. Give me the strength to overcome cruelty with grace, and hatred with love. God, remind me that my actions matter. I do not fight a physical battle but a spiritual one, and with each act of compassion I help to build your kingdom. Help us all to be kingdom-builders today. Amen.