



Our World Needs You: For Reconciliation

Message Notes, August 19, 2018

John 4, 2 Corinthians 5:18, Micah 6:8

“Our World Needs YOU:” This series title is both our cry *to God* for our world, but then we also hear *His cry* back to us...

- My world needs *you*, my people, my salt and light, my hands and feet, vessels of my Spirit.

John 17:15-23: On the night he was arrested, Jesus prayed for his disciples (and for us who now believe because of them) that we, his people, “would be ONE, even as he and the Father are One, so that the world will know that you (the Father) have sent me.”

- Jesus is passionate about our unity. It reveals his glory in the world.
- Our world needs us *for reconciliation!*

Many brothers and sisters (*OneRace*) are gathering next Saturday at Stone Mountain to worship and proclaim the power of the gospel of Jesus to bring **reconciliation and revival**; thereby renouncing the evil declaration on the mountain some 100 years ago that re-launched the racist and dead-religion ideas of the Ku Klux Klan.

- Many of us from CCC are going, but **ALL of us** can participate by praying through this week and ON Saturday.
- God yearns to reconcile – cultures, races, hearts, PEOPLE.

Jesus embodied (and embodies) this heart of God and he walked it out in his years on the earth. He gives us an inspiring model for living out reconciliation in John 4: Story of the woman at the well is a great example of Jesus living out reconciliation. There are many rich perspectives and truths in this story, but let’s see it through the lens of reconciliation:

1. Jesus modeled intentionality ... in addressing a social issue of his day.

- “and Jesus HAD to go through Samaria.” (vs. 4) This “had-ness” does not reflect the accepted geographical path, for Jews would go miles out of their way to go AROUND Samaria because they despised the Samaritans: a “half-breed” people who compromised many laws and customs of Judaism.
- We in the church have a tendency to resist social ministry for several reasons:
 - We often dislike *the methods* of those addressing social issues (too political or pressuring)
 - We often disapprove of *the message* of those addressing social issues (not biblically sound)
 - We often over-compartmentalize life into sacred and secular “boxes.” We tend to keep faith and cultural matters separate.
- Rather than resisting and checking out, perhaps we need to:
 - Repent that we have defaulted on our kingdom responsibility to be salt and light in our world.

- Get involved and bring the love and truth of the gospel into the places of injustice and oppression.
- 3. Recognize that all of life is sacred when we see and honor God in it. Yes, there is right and wrong, surrender and rebellion, love and selfishness, but these are about our *posture*, our hearts! God wants to bring His “river of life” into all the world, *in the midst* of culture and society. We are His salt and light agents of change *throughout* the earth.
 - **Amos 5:11-15, Micah 6:8**
- William Wilberforce, a man of high standing in England in the late 1700’s, wrestled with the urging of political colleagues to engage in the political efforts to eliminate the (oppressive) slave trade industry. He so wanted to devote his life to the love and pursuit of God; he came to realize he could do **BOTH** – love God and work fervently for justice.
- Jesus clearly affirmed this “Both” in declaring that “all the law and prophets are summed up in this – Love God with all your being and love your neighbor as yourself.” (Luke 10:27)

2. Jesus modeled finding common ground:

- Jesus met this Samaritan woman, despised and ostracized by the Jews, on the common ground of Jacob’s well. Jacob was a faith father for both of them – Jews and Samaritans alike.
- * We in America have a history of racial divide. We, too, must find our common grounds and pursue these:
 - our common faith in the one true Creator God
 - our common need for grace and salvation
 - our *other* common needs, our “thirsts for living water” – significance, safety, love, joy, peace, etc.

3. Jesus modeled stepping out of one’s comfort zone without compromising truth:

- Not living in his culture, we might miss Jesus’ significant departure from cultural convention (comfort) He was a Jew speaking with a Samaritan. He was a man speaking with a woman. And he was a Rabbi speaking with a sinner (she was a woman with questionable character; seen as a “sinner”)
 - These cultural boundaries were not scripturally founded; they were *added* laws that came to be (incorrectly) regarded as having equal authority to scripture.
- We have to examine our own “standards” to see if they are indeed true to scripture and the heart of God.
- From the very beginning God gave CCC the conviction and core value of “unity and diversity.” This cut against the grain of contemporary “growth strategies” that asserted – if you want to grow a church, *homogeneity* is the way to go.
 - It’s easier to bring people together if everyone is the same.
- This is **NOT** God’s vision for His people. Homogeneity misses:
 - the Kingdom call to be “ministers of reconciliation”
 - the life-giving stretching and growth that comes with diversity
 - the enriching beauty of diversity (that reflects the glory of God)
- Diversity is more challenging, but richer.
 - Let’s push through the awkward challenges.
 - Let’s just commit to “doing it scared” or “doing it awkward.”
- Part of getting out of his comfort zone, was Jesus’ *vulnerability* to admit his own need – “for a drink.”
- Reconciliation requires humility and vulnerability. We need to recognize our need for other’s perspectives.

- Diversity will help us see our own blind-spots.

4. Result of Jesus' relational model – Reconciliation and Revival!

- The woman was freed and transformed and went from being an ostracized outcast to a bold evangelist:
 - “running back to tell everyone the Messiah she had met.” Spiritual revival broke out in their village!

II Corinthians 5:18-19: “He has given US the ministry of reconciliation .”

May we embrace this privilege with joy and passion - being intentional, finding common ground, stretching beyond our comfort, expecting revival. “Holy Spirit, help us.”