

Shoreline, November 1, 2017

Opener

A captivating image, personal story, or illustration that connects with the audience and sets up the message.

(\$100 Race Video)

Tonight we're going to be talking about the topics of racial diversity, inequality, and unity in the body of Christ. This is an important topic that affects everyone in this room.

Need

Why is this subject important? Why should a Dallas high school student listen to this message?

Barak Obama was president, The Black Panther is getting his own movie, and PK Subban is in the NHL. Isn't racism basically over in America? Tell me everything's okay.

No! I'm sorry to say, racism is not over in America. Let me share with you some examples to show you that racism is a very big problem in our society.

We asked several of our Small Group leaders about their personal experiences of racism. I want you to hear from them that racism is still happening all around us. As you listen to these actual stories, put yourself in their shoes...imagine what this would feel like and how it might impact the way you see the world.

1. Last week, after sitting next to a police car at a light, I was pulled over and then scolded for waiting to turn off into a residential street instead of immediately pulling over on Abrams in high traffic. The male officer said, "How am I supposed to know that you aren't trying to run, or if you are going to pull a gun?" In that situation, I feel like I was profiled because of the color of my skin.
2. In high school I was often made fun of for not being Mexican enough, by the other Hispanic kids.
3. I have been confused to be a service worker in multiple venues. For example, at a restaurant where I was going to eat, someone I assumed I was a valet driver.

4. People often comment that I “sound so white”
5. On an almost daily basis, my co-workers make crude and generalized statements about the Vietnam war, North Korea, Kim Jong, Pearl Harbor attacks, etc.
6. I have been told I should go back from where I'm from (btw, I'm from Dallas).
7. In 5th grade at a private school in Plano, a classmate told me he wanted to grow up to be a KKK Klansman, just like his grandfather and brought some KKK memorabilia to class.
8. In 2012, I stopped to eat at a Dairy Queen after LAUNCH, a man called me the n-word after he thought I was looking at him. He did this in front of his family (wife and two kids).
9. A friend and I were driving somewhere together (she was driving) and her dad called. She answered the phone via Bluetooth and he had no idea I was with her. They were talking about plans to attend the state fair for the next day when her dad mentioned he did not want to be around any n-words.
10. One day at Watermark I saw a Confederate flag sticker on a car, a Confederate flag on someone's hat, and a Confederate flag on someone's belt buckle...all in the same day. I was by myself without any friends and felt vulnerable, unwanted, and unsafe at church.

Are you beginning to see how this isn't just a problem of the past or somewhere out there among uneducated, out of touch people? This problem is in this room affecting people sitting in these rows.

And this problem is more than just isolated incidences with ignorant people. This problem is part of the fabric of the world we live in. It's a historical problem that impacts our entire society in many ways. Look at this slide with some facts that I discovered while learning about this topic:

- According to one study, white families hold 90% of the national wealth, black families hold 2.6%, and Latino families hold 2.3%
- Black unemployment has been consistently twice that of whites
- This isn't just a result of education. Blacks with college degrees are twice as likely to be unemployed as all other graduates.

- One study found that job applicants with white-sounding names get called back about 50% more of the time than applicants with black-sounding names, even when they have the same exact resumes.
- Black students are three times more likely to be suspended than white students, even when their infractions are similar.
- And once black children are in the criminal justice system, they are 18 times more likely than white children to be sentenced as adults.
- Blacks make up 13% of the general population, but they represent about 40% of the prison population.
- Why is that? If a black person and a white person each commit the same crime, the black person has a better chance of being arrested. Once arrested, black people are convicted more often than white people. Finally, when black people are convicted, they are more likely to be sent to jail.
- A felony conviction means that you lose your right to vote. Right now in America, as many as 13% of black men are not allowed to vote.
- Statistics also show that black drivers are about 30% more likely than whites to be pulled over by the police.

These facts (not opinions) show us that something is clearly off balance when it comes to equality and justice in our nation overall. This isn't just a case by case problem...it's a national problem.

So here are a few quotes that we think summarize the issue of racism that we are facing today...We want to make sure you understand that this is an issue and that it is our issue.

“The problem is that most people see racism as conscious hate, when racism is bigger than that. Racism is a complex system of social and political levers and pulleys set up generations ago to continue working on the behalf of whites at other people's expense, whether whites know it, like it, or not. Racism is an insidious cultural disease. It is so insidious that it doesn't care if you are a white person who likes black people; it's still going to find a way to infect how you deal with people who don't look like you. Yes, racism looks like hate, but hate is just one manifestation. Privilege is another. Access is another. Ignorance is another.

Apathy is another. And so on. While no one is born racist, it remains a powerful system that we're immediately born into."

- Scott Woods

"Racism and white supremacy in the United States is like a moving walkway under our feet. Active racism like racist slurs, overt discrimination, hate crimes, etc. equals walking fast the same direction the walkway is moving. Active racism allows the participant to arrive at the destination faster. Passive racism is like standing still on the walkway: we still move toward the same destination and don't have to exert any effort at all. The only way to counter the walkway is to constantly walk or run in the opposite direction. Otherwise the result of active and passive racism is exactly the same—just achieved in different amounts of time."

Beverly Tatum

Truth

Explain and illustrate supporting points

So...If stories and statistics show us that these statements are true...that racism is a very big problem in our society and in this room...If even part of those quotes is true...we find ourselves right in the middle of a very broken place. What do the scriptures say that might give us perspective, hope, and direction? We want to share with you 5 important truths from God's word that we must know if anything is ever to change:

1. **All people are created in God's image. We are one family.**

Genesis 1:27

So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

2. **Sin has broken our family apart.**

James 4:1

What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you?

3. We should grieve and repent for our personal and our national sins.

Daniel 9:4-9

I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed: "O Lord, you are a great and awesome God! You always fulfill your covenant and keep your promises of unfailing love to those who love you and obey your commands. 5 But we have sinned and done wrong. We have rebelled against you and scorned your commands and regulations. 6 We have refused to listen to your servants the prophets, who spoke on your authority to our kings and princes and ancestors and to all the people of the land.

8 O Lord, we and our kings, princes, and ancestors are covered with shame because we have sinned against you. 9 But the Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him.

4. Jesus Christ can bring us back together.

Colossians 3:10-17

10 Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. 11 In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

12 Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. 13 Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. 14 Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

16 Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. 17 And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

5. Racial reconciliation and unity within the church should glorify God and point the world to Jesus Christ.

Matthew 5:14-16

14 “You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. 15 No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

Application

What do you hope the audience walks away thinking, feeling, or doing?

What do we do with all of this information? In light of these 5 truths from scriptures, here are two things all of us can do.

1. Don't settle for avoiding active racism. Actively pursue unity in Jesus Christ.

For white people, most of our lives are free from racial conflict. But unity is way more than lack of conflict. Unity requires Christ-like humility and uncomfortable, sacrificial effort.

Ephesians 4:2-6

2 Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. 3 Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. 4 For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. 5 There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.

Move *towards*, not *away from* people who look different than you. Start here. Start with people in this room...in your Small Group. Unity will require you to humbly admit your faults like ignorance or anger and to be gentle and patient with the faults of others. Unity requires building an environment of trust. Unity requires you to express genuine interest in the experiences and feelings of others. Unity requires you to make the effort to

understand and even embrace the differences you find in others. Do a lot of listening and learning. God gave you two ears and one mouth.

2. **Speak up when you see injustice caused by sin.**

"In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."

Martin Luther King Jr.

Proverbs 31:8-9

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.

Tweet (140 characters): I have a lot to learn, but I am trying to understand. I am praying for my brothers & sisters who are victimized by racism.

Text: I heard about _____ and I thought about you because we're family. I'd love to hear your thoughts.

What could happen if we all started actively pursuing unity and speaking out against injustice? What could happen if we listened, learned from, and truly loved each other as family? Would your Small Group change? Would our ministry change? Would our church change? What about your schools? What about our city? Our country? Our world? Our past is dark. Could it be that your generation will be remembered as the one who shined brightly for the glory of God?

Closer

Close with an inspirational image, personal story, or illustration that moves the audience to apply the message they just heard.

Revelation 7:9-10

9 After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands. 10 And they were shouting with a great roar, "Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!"