

RISK IT

Skin in the Game

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Discussion Notes

The Crossing Church

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OPENING

Being on this journey of faith can get risky. We might be called to share our faith, or live it out in a way we never have before. There are certain risks that we may choose to take and others we pass on. At the same time there are a couple of risks that we are compelled to take as followers of Christ. This Sunday, we are concluding our series called "Risk It" that focuses on what it looks like to share our faith and live it out in our lives. Today we are talking about taking the risk to share our faith, to be in community and to lead the way in racial reconciliation.

SCRIPTURE¹

2 Chronicles 19:7 "Now let the fear of the Lord be on you. Judge carefully, for with the Lord our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery."

Acts 10:23b - 29 "The next day Peter started out with them and some of the brothers from Joppa went along. The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. But Peter made him get up. 'Stand up,' he said, 'I am only a man myself.' Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. He said to them: 'You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?' "

Acts 10:34-36 "Then Peter began to speak: 'I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right. You know the message that God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.' "

Acts 11:19-21 "Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord."

Acts 11:26c "The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch."

Revelation 7:9 "After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands."

James 1:19 "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry."

1 Peter 2:17a "Show proper respect to everyone."

Galatians 3:26-28 "So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Micah 6:8 "What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

¹ All scripture listed is NIV unless otherwise indicated

OBSERVATION

In the story today, God speaks to Peter and about a Roman named Cornelius who was eager to learn about salvation through Christ. Jews were never to associate Gentiles who were considered to be unclean. In a dream, God showed Peter that, not only were animals no longer unclean, but neither were people. God changed Peter's heart and He can change ours as well.

Question: If God has changed your heart, what changes have taken place in your thoughts and behavior?

APPLICATION

Racism is perhaps the biggest issue of our day, but racism is not a problem of skin, it is a problem of sin. In our society we are prone to build walls between people who are different from us. But with God there is no injustice or prejudice. Racial reconciliation is at the heart of the Gospel and how we treat other people is at the heart of God.

Question: If you are ready to confront your own prejudices, what do you plan to do?

The church ought to reflect the heart of God. Whether a person has Christ is all that matters and He is equally available to all. This is the radical foundation of racial reconciliation and only the church can offer this hope to the world. So where do we begin?

- We must tear down walls by confronting our own prejudices;

Question: Where have you built a wall? What do you plan to do about it?

- We must build bridges through conversation;

Question: Where do you plan to build a bridge?

- We must listen to one another;
- We must interact with respect;

Question: How do you demonstrate respect for someone?

- We must practice inclusion;
- We must engage in our community;
- We must love one another.

Question: What plans do you have to not fall silent about racial issues in our community?

Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that."

Question: If you were to converse with a black person about racial issues, what would you ask?

Question: If you were to talk to a policeman about racial issues, what would you ask?

You know that God never made a person He didn't love or that Jesus didn't die for."

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, our nation is desperate for healing. We know that You hate prejudice and that our hearts harbor ungodly thoughts about people who are different from us. Help us to love all of Your people and then You can heal our land. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Beginning on September 18th, The Crossing Church will be starting a six week study called "Transformed" which will combine Sunday morning sermons with small group studies. Watch for information and study materials which can be purchased at every service beginning August 28th.