

MS/HS Chapel

21V

21V: Race Relations and the Gospel

LIVING WITH VIRTUE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Suggested Topics or Discussion Points

Defining, Reviewing, and/or Discussing Important Terms

- Critical Theory
- Critical Race Theory (CRT)
- Marxism
- Socialism
- Privilege
- Microaggression
- Intersectionality
- Systemic Racism
- Systemic Bias

Historical Perspective

- What historical events related to Marxism are important to consider?
- What historical outcomes related to Marxism are important to consider?

Let's talk about you.

What resonates with you?

- The abusive use of power
- The unfairness of life and its distribution of resources and opportunities
- The need for someone or something to fight against
- The need for 'naming' what is wrong

Critical Race Theory Compared & Contrasted to a Biblical Perspective

- Consider the popular idea of 'redresses' for historical discrimination.
- CRT sees this as a way to disempower oppression and aim for equity/justice.
- In what ways is the idea of redress a Biblical idea?
 - Ex: How do Jubilee years align to this concept?
- In what ways is the idea of redress not a Biblical idea?
 - Ex: Do children pay for the sins of their parents?

- Will distributing redress payments serve to empower others and equalize the 'playing field'?
- Will redresses reinforce victimization and polarize people even more?
- Many people feel the shadow of racial oppression over them and feel isolated, afraid, and alone. What does the Gospel have to say to them?
- Many people invested in CRT can feel continually guilty for just being white. How does the Gospel address this?
- Many people hearing conversations about CRT will dismiss everything and deny the existence of any racism, especially systemic racism. What does the Gospel have to say about this?

Experience and Response

- Are there examples of systemic racism that you have experienced?
- What would be a Christ-centered, Spirit-lead response to that event?
 - Perhaps replay it with the best response in mind, or consider what actions could be taken in the future.
 - Are there examples of times where people were being accused of systemic racism or racism in general that turned out to not be those things?
- Have you experienced, observed, or heard of microaggressions in your circle of relations?
 - If comfortable, perhaps sharing an experience would be helpful.
 - What would be a Christ-centered, Spirit-lead response to that event?
 - Perhaps replay it with the best response in mind, or consider what actions could be taken in the future.
 - Have you experienced or heard of something you thought was a microaggression, but it turned out that (while still stressful), something else was going on?

Temptations and Response

- The temptations are many:
 - Demonization of others (whites, liberals, blacks, conservatives, etc.)
 - Purposeful or unintentional blindness
 - Self-justification and pride
 - Over-simplification
 - Despair
 - Confirmation bias (to either see oppression everywhere or nowhere)
 - Passive, private, inward "spirituality"

How does the Gospel ask us to respond to these temptations?

The lens used by CRT is almost exclusively that of Oppressor/Oppressed or care/harm.

While this is a valuable and biblical lens, other categories that we might consider are:

- fairness/cheating
- loyalty/betrayal
- authority/subversion
- reformation/revolution
- purity/degradation

How does including these categories change the way we think and talk about racism, discrimination, privilege, or any of the other related issues here?

What is the consequence of only using oppressor/oppressed as a way to view the world?

How do the books of Ruth and Philemon speak to issues of discrimination?

- What lessons can be learned from them about God's heart and intended actions for us?

Consider your privilege.

- Does everyone have something to give to the community?
- What does the Gospel have to say? (Ex: Consider 1 Corinthians 12-13)
- What ways can you "reach back" with the resources you have to benefit the community around you?

Are there ways that we participate in negative biases?

- If so, what are some ways we can move from bystanders to ambassadors?
- What does it mean to be an ambassador of God's kingdom?

Discuss this quote: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." ~ Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

- Why did God make diversity in his good creation?
- What do we miss when we don't have a diverse community?
- What do we gain when we do have a diverse community?
- What are the pros and cons of working towards a unified diversity?

- What scriptures encourage us to care for those who are poor, oppressed, wrongly imprisoned, sick, or hungry?
- Do these scriptures apply to the issues of discrimination and race relations or not? Why?

What does scripture say about forgiveness?

- Does that apply to the issues of discrimination and race relations? How? Why?
- If comfortable sharing, what one thing did you want to own? Why?