

After George Floyd



Tim Green reflected on the worldwide unrest following the death of George Floyd in police custody.

Tim started by pondering his own weaknesses, such as unkindness, his proneness still to do things that he would criticise in others. Reminding of us of Isaiah (in chapter 6), Peter (Luke 5) and David (Psalm 13), who all realised their sinfulness, he urged us to feel sadness and urgency over faults in our own behaviour and character, moving beyond that into lament.

Pondering the widespread anger and demonstrations over George Floyd's death, he noted that this did not just relate to a single terrible incident but to the experience of systematic prejudice and mistreatment over centuries. Just as in Psalm 13, there is a cry of "How long?"

Tim suggested three aspects of a proper response:

1. **Stay with the lament** rather than moving quickly into the solution. Honour the lament of others, don't apply spiritual sticking plasters.
2. **Identify with the lament.** We cannot be divorced from the society in which we live and to which we contribute. We all have prejudices, whether conscious or sub-conscious. The issues being protested are **our** issues and we need to acknowledge our sins.
3. **Listen and empathise.** Weep with those who weep, listen to stories of pain and injustice.

Questions

1. Read Isaiah 6:1-8 and Luke 5:1-11. How did Isaiah and Peter come to a realisation of their sin? What were they ashamed of? What was the answer to their need?
2. 1 Peter 4:17 says "It is time for judgment to begin in the household of God". In what ways have we as Christians been complicit in discrimination toward others or contributed to such discrimination? Are there issues we need to face in Gateway?
3. How can we respond to "Black Lives Matter" in our relationships with family, friends, colleagues and neighbours?

Resources

The following resources have been recommended by Josh Bissell to help us as leaders. Feel free also to share them with group members.

Andrew Wilson on the difference between Pastoring and Posturing
https://thinktheology.co.uk/blog/article/pastoring_and_posturing

Krish Kandiah on ways that leaders can fight racism in their context
<https://globalleadership.org/articles/leading-others/5-things-leaders-can-do-to-fight-racism/>

A short article by Tim Keller on what the Bible says about race and racism. Really powerful to outfit our leaders with a well-informed understanding of the Biblical language and perspective.

<https://quarterly.gospelinlife.com/the-bible-and-race/>

And finally Ben Lindsay at this year's Ekklesia conference talking about racial barriers and about why we need to have a conversation about race. Great talk that highlights some of the important pieces from his book. (24 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFtmwLw5pgc>

Ben Lindsay's book can be found at https://smile.amazon.co.uk/Need-Talk-About-Race-Understanding/dp/0281080178/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1Y09GD542JJV&dchild=1&keywords=ben+lindsay+we+need+to+talk+about+race&qid=1592162052&prefix=Ben+Lindsay%2Caps%2C233&sr=8-1

It is currently number 1 Best-seller in Amazon's category of Religious Studies History. Ben is the senior elder in a Newfrontiers church in London, so speaks from a church background very similar to ours.