

The Gospel, Race, and Justice

4 Week CG Leader Study Guide

Introduction

As we look towards the Gospel, Race and Justice sermon series (starting Aug. 9), your pastors are expecting three things to happen.

First, by faith, we expect the Lord to do a mighty work of unification and healing within our congregation. **Second**, we fully expect the Enemy to use every age-old tactic at his disposal to distort, discourage, twist, and tempt our people into moving away from rather than towards one another. And **third**, our CGs will be ground zero. We expect beautiful stories of Gospel-fueled humility, love, and unity to bloom in our CGs. We also anticipate discouraging stories of hard hearts and disagreements to occur as well.

In light of this, we want to set you, our CG Leaders and Apprentices, up to lead with confidence and humility in what will undoubtedly be a monumental season for Sojourn Midtown.

So what are we asking you to do?

Our hope is for every CG Coach, Leader, and Apprentice to go through these 4 weeks of videos and discussion prompts. You are certainly welcome to invite people from your CG into this, but our main focus is on the leaders within our CG structure.

Each week we've picked about an hour's worth of videos for you to watch along with some questions to help us wrestle and process. At the very end we've included two appendices with supplementary resources and summaries for each of the sermons in the GR&J series.

Our suggestion is for each leader to watch the videos and journal on their own, then create space to talk through the questions as a CG leadership team. Maybe this looks like CG Leaders and Apprentices talking through the questions 30 minutes before or after CG starts. Or if your CG has recently multiplied, maybe it looks like pairing up with your sister CG's leaders for discussion each week. Whatever you choose, this will be more helpful if done in community with other leaders.

We're praying for you, we're grateful for you, we love you,

Pastor Josh Rothschild

***Special thanks to Pastor Rashard Barnes at [Mercy Church](#) who was a tremendous resource in the creation of this study guide.*

Week 1: The Beauty in Your Ethnicity

Videos to Watch [1 hr. 6 mins]

- [Beyond Colorblind: Overview](#) [6:31]
- [Beyond Colorblind: Beauty](#) [9:47]
- (Sermon, Bryan Loritts) [Seeing Each Other's Stories](#) [50:05]

Questions to Journal and Discuss:

- What is the Biblical basis for cross-cultural unity? Where does this theme pop up in the grand redemptive arc of the Bible?
- What are some of the things said in the videos and sermon that resonated with you? What are some of the things that did not connect with you?
- As you consider your own ethnicity, what do you feel? Pride? Shame? Have you thought deeply about it or not much at all? Why do you think you've grown to feel or think this way?
- What are the good, true, and beautiful aspects of your ethnicity and culture?
- How do you embrace your ethnic background while also pursuing unity?

Homework:

- ❑ Take a Sunday drive around Louisville this week (or any other day that works for you!) Intentionally drive through parts of Louisville that you rarely visit, maybe that's the West End. Do 2 things while you drive:
 - a. Drive with open eyes: Notice the beauty and evidence of God's goodness in those neighborhoods. How are these neighborhoods distinct from areas you are familiar with?
 - b. Talk to God: give thanks for the people and cultural expressions in these neighborhoods. Pray that God's blessing would be on them, and they'd come to know the God of all people.

Week 2: The Brokenness in Your Ethnicity

Videos to Watch [1 hr. 2 mins]

- [Beyond Colorblind: Brokenness](#) [10:47]
- [KY Places: 9th Street Divide](#) [19:02]
- (Sermon, Charlie Dates) [The Most Segregated Hour in America](#) [32:15]

Questions to Journal and Discuss:

- As you take a step back and consider your ethnicity, culture, and upbringing, where do you see brokenness? Where have you been sinned against and where have you sinned against God and man?
 - As you watched this week's videos, what were the emotions you were feeling? Do you feel angry? Guilty? Ambivalent? Take these emotions to God in prayer.
 - Are you more prone to see the brokenness in your ethnicity or the ethnicity of others? Why do you think you've developed to think this way?
 - As the Book of Common Prayer reads, "we confess that we have sinned against [God] in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone." As we think and pray this week, is the Spirit revealing ways you have sinned against God and your neighbor in what you have left undone i.e. sins of omission?
 - Charlie Dates' sermon is pretty hard-hitting, what were the parts that were hardest for you to hear? Where were you the most challenged?
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Week 3: Jesus Redeeming Your Ethnicity

Videos to Watch [1 hr. 8 mins]

- [Beyond Colorblind: Redemption](#) [12:57]
- (Sermon, Matt Chandler) [Racial Reconciliation](#) [55:47]

Questions to Journal and Discuss:

- Where do you see our culture trying to redeem ethnic/cultural brokenness apart from the Gospel? What happens when Jesus is not the redemptive center of your White/Black/Asian/Latino/etc. identity?
 - What part of your ethnic identity and cultural heritage is Jesus redeeming? Where is He bringing healing? Where is He bringing conviction and correction?
 - Prior to redemption, there is always an acknowledgment of the brokenness, sin, and/or pain we are being redeemed from. Yet as CG Leaders, letting these loaded conversations about race fly under the radar is much easier and (at least in the short term) causes much less discomfort. What does your CG lose if these tensions/pain/sins go uncovered, undiscussed, and unacknowledged? And what do you foresee (and maybe fear!) happening in your CG (both good and hard!) when we go through our Gospel, Race, and Justice sermon series?
 - The path our church is on leads to a beautiful place of multicultural expression and representation that puts a giant spotlight on our King and His redeeming power. But the path leading there has been bumpy and will continue to be difficult. Why is the place we are headed to better than the place we are coming from? In other words, this cannot be your pastors' conviction, it needs to be yours -- so why is this difficult journey worth it to you?
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Week 4: Jesus Restoring Your Ethnicity

Videos to Watch [34 mins]

- [Beyond Colorblind: Restoration](#) [10:43]
- [Cultural Intelligence: High/Low Power Distance Cultures](#) [5:34]
- [Case Study: Power Distance Example Video](#) [1:49]
- [Cultural Intelligence: Individualism/Collectivism](#) [5:16]
- [Cultural Intelligence: High/Low Uncertainty Avoidance](#) [5:15]
- [Cultural Intelligence: High/Low Context Cultures](#) [5:18]

Questions to Journal and Discuss:

- After having watched all the “Beyond Colorblind” videos, how has your perspective on your own ethnicity changed? How about other people’s ethnicities you come in contact with?
- As we begin the Gospel, Race, and Justice sermon series, what are you excited about and what are you nervous about? How are you praying for the Spirit to work in your CG and in Midtown?
- After learning about the 4 cultural spectrums in the Cultural Intelligence Videos, where does your culture fall in each of these categories?
- How might unrecognized cultural differences (particularly the 4 described here) cause conflict/tension in your CG? And how might these impact your CGs discussion of the upcoming sermon series?

Homework:

- ❑ Complete the [Gospel and Your Ethnic Story Worksheet](#). Share this with someone you trust (co-CG Leaders, CG Coach, spouse, friend, etc).

Appendix 1: Additional Resources

We're not asking our leaders to read/watch all of these. They're just a few resources we've found helpful. Enjoy!

Articles

[American Racism: We've Got So Very Far to Go](#), David French
[Christian Friendship](#), Jamaal Williams and Jim Tipton
[Self-Care in Times fo Racial Tension](#), Jamaal Williams
[Black Lives Matter in the Bible](#), Jarvis Williams
[A Prayer of Lament](#), Jarvis Williams
[How Scripture Became Part of the Story that Ended Slavery](#), Timothy Paul Jones
[A Biblical Critique of Secular Justice and Critical Theory](#), Tim Keller
[Not White Fragility - Mutual Responsibility](#), George Yancey

Videos

[Race in America](#), Phil Vischer (the Veggie Tales guy)
[What is Systemic Racism](#), Tony Evans
[The U.S. Racial Crisis and World Evangelism](#), Tom Skinner
[Color of Compromise Video Series](#), Jemar Tisby

Books

[Divided by Faith](#), Smith and Emerson
[Oneness Embraced](#), Tony Evans
[The Color of Compromise](#), Jemar Tisby
[Full list](#) of Pastor Jamaal's book suggestions.

Kids in Community

Sojourn Kids Gospel in Color Video Series

[Week 1](#), [Week 2](#), [Week 3](#), & [Week 4](#)

Ages 0-1

[All the Colors That I See](#), Pamela Kennedy

Ages 2-3

[ColorFull](#), Dorena Williamson
[ThoughtFull](#), Dorena Williamson

Ages 4-5

[God's Very Good Idea](#), Trillia Newbell

- Corresponding [Coloring and Activity Book](#)

[God Made Me and You](#), Shai Linne (available on Kindle)

[Love Gave](#), Quina Aragon (pre-order, Feb. 2021 release)

Age 6+

[Gospel in Color](#) (only PDF/ePub available), Jarvis Williams and Curtis Woods

[Mother to Son](#), Jasmine Holmes (more for parents)

Appendix 2: GR&J Sermon Summaries

Each summary was written for you by the pastor who will be preaching that sermon.

Sermon 1 (8/9): The Gospel, Race, and Justice - Jamaal Williams

Text: Genesis 1:26,27; Genesis 3; Revelation 7:9

What does the Gospel mean for this cultural moment of great and widespread racial injustice and social unrest in America? Is there a framework that the Bible provides to help us reframe the conflicts that have followed the deaths of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and others beyond political categories and loyalties? If there is, the Church is responsible for working to see it clearly and carry its redemptive power into this suffering city. No government is up to the task of reconciling divided peoples stricken with sin, but Jesus has the power to bring beauty out of our ugliest brokenness. We need to reexamine the power and purpose of the Gospel if white and black Americans are to be truly reconciled. Our search begins with God's reasons for creation, where we see His hopes for many ethnicities to fill the earth as kings and queens, reflecting His image together. The Fall is what distorted humankind's vision to construct the categories of race that divide and subjugate; Jesus, however, recovered the true meaning of justice and now asks us to join Him on the painful walk of restoring it throughout our neighborhoods and into the world. Let's seriously count the cost of living the end of Jesus's story now, and prayerfully reflect so that we, too, will embody true justice to our city. In this sermon, we will go through creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. We will also define key terms like race and justice and preview the rest of the series.

Sermon 2 (8/16): The Gospel Crisis in the Church - Jarvis Williams

Text: Galatians 2:11-14

In sermon 2 in our series on the Gospel, race, and justice, the sermon will focus on Gal 2:11-14. The sermon's primary purpose will be to show the saints at Midtown that ethnic and racial divisions are Gospel matters and to discuss the vertical, horizontal, and cosmological elements of the Gospel. The Gospel justifies us by faith (Gal 2:16), reconciles us to God (Rom 5:8-9) and to each other (Eph 2:11-22), and promises to restore everything Adam and Eve lost in the Garden of Eden (Gal 6:15; Rom 8:19-22; Isa 65:17-25; Rev 21-22). In Gal 1:15-16, Paul says he preached Jesus as the Gospel to the Gentiles. The sermon will refer to

numerous texts in Galatians to support these truths and a few texts elsewhere. But the primary point of the sermon will be that Paul condemns Peter (a Jewish Christian) as walking against the Gospel when he began to withdraw from table fellowship with the Gentile Christians in Antioch and compelled them to live a Jewish way of life. This text makes it clear that to be wrong on the ethnic question, (i.e. who are the people of God: Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians by faith in Christ or Jewish Christians and Gentiles Christians only if Gentile Christians trust in Christ and live a Jewish way of life by doing works of the Jewish life?), is to be wrong on the Gospel. Since the Gospel deals with vertical, horizontal, and cosmological matters, then if anyone adds to or takes away from the Gospel, Christians will not be able to walk in a straightforward manner in the truth of the Gospel. The sermon will also offer specific contemporary applications related to Midtown's context.

Sermon 3 (8/23): The Gospel and Social Structures - Timothy Paul Jones

Text: Acts 6

The widows in a particular ethnic group in the church were being overlooked. The church's response wasn't to play down their concern ("After all, don't all widows matter?"). It was rather to deal with specific injustices by establishing leadership that challenged the prevailing power structures. What might this look like for us today? It looks like recognizing and naming instances of injustice. It looks like challenging power structures that enable racism. It looks like doing all of this not because of any secular agenda but because God in Christ has already broken down every wall of ethnic division and racial superiority by the power of the Gospel.

Sermon 4 (8/30): The Gospel and Privilege - Timothy Paul Jones

Text: 1 Corinthians 12

The church in Corinth had a problem. Some members—who happened to be those whose socioeconomic position was higher than others—saw themselves as spiritually superior to others. What's worse, they were bringing the privilege that they enjoyed in their culture into the church and allowing it to shape the church's fellowship. This attitude was tearing the church apart. Paul used a familiar image from their culture—the image of body parts working together—to wreck their assumptions about the place of privilege and power in the church of Jesus Christ. Privilege isn't to be denied or ignored; it is to be deployed in the name of Jesus for the sake of others.

Midweek Service (Date TBD) - Jarvis Williams

Halfway through our sermon series, we will take an evening in the week and do a lighter service which will be broadcasted live on Facebook. The service will consist of worship, a time of prayer, and a short homily by Jarvis Williams. Leading up to this service, we will provide an opportunity for testimony and feedback. There will be an invitation for individuals to provide feedback on how they are processing the series so far. We will create a link where they can drop thoughts and questions. During the live service, we will have five Midtown members share how the series has been so far and/or give a testimony on how being at Sojourn for the last few years has helped them grow in the area of racial reconciliation and being part of a multi-ethnic church.

Sermon 5 (9/6): The Gospel and Repentance - Jamaal Williams

Text: Luke 19

It is nothing short of overwhelming when Jesus sees and confronts the evil in your heart—not only the evil of what you’ve done but what you intend to continue doing. These are scary moments, so it’s no surprise that we’ve developed many tricks to avoid His clear gaze. But what might Jesus do if we face our fears and meet Him in the eye to see our sin in full? Upon meeting Jesus, the ancient Jewish tax collector Zacchaeus recognized that the joy Jesus offered could not coexist with his old ways of relating with the marginalized Jews from within the power structures of the oppressive Roman Empire. In fact, he had to do more than simply repent of his old ways of injustice: he needed to divest himself of what was improperly gained and repay all whom he had robbed. This reality of justice flows through the entire OT Law: A natural result of God transforming us is that we desire to make things right. We aren't separated from the pain we've caused or given the right to simply “turn a new leaf” and avoid future blunders. Fixing the injustice we’ve created flows out naturally from an honest, dedicated, face-to-face walk with the Spirit. And just as He did with Zacchaeus, Jesus will celebrate our acts of repayment.

Sermon 6 (9/13): Jesus Triumphs Over Every Earthly Power - Jamaal Williams

Text: Revelation 5

What does power really look like? What about authority, order, or influence? All of history has been humankind’s attempt to answer that question, and our answer still comes in the form of a person, or a group, who cannot be challenged. We are still looking for deliverance in the power to fashion our will into a certain reality. How can we possibly escape the cycles of injustice that plague our city and nation? This was the Apostle John’s

question, too, when he saw a scroll detailing God's plans for the final redemption of all history: Who can open this, know God's mind, and carry out his plans? His cries for justice were broken by the announcement of God's chosen candidate, and surely, he looked and expected what the earth has struggled to produce: A mighty champion, with power to subject all outcomes to his will! What he saw instead must have taken his breath away: a single lamb, decorated only with the wounds that marked its slaughter. Maybe, our deep-seated need to control our people's narrative is misguided, after all. Jesus alone in all creation was worthy to read and enact God's will, and He subjugated no one to achieve this power. Rather, when He showed John how our story will end, John met an unexpected vision: an innumerable crowd, united in joyful love, rejoicing that all power is in the hands of the Lamb who had saved them. This is our story. This is our neighborhood's story. And He is sovereign to transform your trauma and theirs—whoever they are—into part of this grand vision, where we all stand side-by-side with people long overlooked, at peace and unafraid, united to worship the One who truly is in control. Let's join him in fulfilling the Gospel.

Q R D + I I E L I I I
 G O S P E L Z J Y
 P Z K + O R A C E
 L S & G E V + Z A
 I X P J U S + I C E

CONVERSATIONS
 ABOUT ETHNICITY,
 RECONCILIATION,
 AND THE CHURCH