**The Word On Racism**

Small Group Questions

1. What at school (friends, teachers, etc) influences you to have racist feelings?

2. Are people racist towards you? Why or why not?

3. How can the Bible help us overcome our prejudicial feelings towards another culture or race?

I hope you have enjoyed your holidays. It is good being back with you this morning. Today we are going to be speaking about race.

As South Africans I am sure we can share many stories of times when we experienced racism. Sometimes towards us, but also times when were racist towards other people. Racism is not of God. It is something that we learn, from family, friends, leaders.

Personal

I feel that racism stems from the unknown. We are afraid of what we do not know, what is different from ourselves. We can stereotype and label an entire race or culture, that just seems absurd and unhelpful. Just think how different you are to your own siblings, who are exactly the same race race and culture as you. Isn't it amazing how our feelings and opinions can change about someone when we actually get to know them, by name. Not just those bloody whites but Mike or Leandro, and not just those blacks but Nkosi or Jesse.

I just want to make this clear. I don't have all the answers and this is still something I am living out in my own life. I am very aware that just because this white church boy wants to bring up race one Thursday morning, this is not going to all of a sudden solve the race issue in your school or in our country. However, I do believe the Bible has the answer for us, and I believe God wants to start here with us, before we start telling your school and community. We need to get it right in here. Us being people that are submitted to God who have hearts soft towards him. God wants us to be one.

If we go through history we will see how the face of Christianity has changed. It started off as a Middle Eastern faith, 150 years ago it had a Northern European face to it, Christianity today the majority of Christians are in the 3rd world and the Southern Hemisphere. It's not a white Anglo-Saxon face anymore. It shows us that the gospel is relevant to each and every culture on earth.

I want to give you a biblical vision for pursuing diversity, it is not my personal agenda. This is God's agenda. I'm just going to dip into the Bible to show that Scripture shows us the heart of God, that with Him as our Father we are meant to be brothers. One big family really.

Let's starts with the end in mind. John is speaking here and he has a vision for the future – one in which all races worship God together:

“You are worthy to take the scroll and break it seals to open it. For you were slaughtered, and your blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.” (Revelation 5:7)

“After this I saw a vast crowd, to great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb.” (Revelation 7:9)

If you have a problem with racism on earth you are going to really not enjoy heaven.

Jesus prayed for his disciples to be one: “I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will be one, just as you and I are one - as you are in me Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.” (John 17:20)

“For God so loved the world...” (John 3:16). That includes all of us. All races. All ethnic groups.

Love your neighbour as you love yourself. (James 2:4)

What can you do if you have been a victim of racism?

“Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.” (Ephesians 4:32). You might be thinking "Racists may not deserve your forgiveness, but we deserved God’s forgiveness far less."

I believe God is more glorified in diversity than in uniformity. Why? It shows that He is Lord over everything.