

Weekly Devotional
June 10, 2020

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.
(Revelation 22:1-3 ESV)

The current issues of racism, injustice, violence, and destruction have us all wondering when a peaceful and satisfactory resolution will arrive. And let us not forget: COVID-19 has not left us, either. At times, it can feel as though our culture is a tinderbox waiting for a spark. It leaves us with a strong desire for change. Real change. The kind of change that results in peace, justice, and racial unity.

We desire change, but how do we accomplish that desire? The esteemed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., had a beautiful dream. Significant progress has been made toward that dream, but—sadly—it remains an unfulfilled dream. Prejudices are still alive. Racism is still existent. Hearts are still filled with murderous hate. Here is a humbling thought: If people of the same ethnicity, tribe, and language struggle with peaceful unity, how can the world possibly achieve the ideal of Dr. King's dream on its own? It cannot. Sin always gets in the way, and that should break our hearts.

Of course, this does not mean we do not work toward change. *Change is needed.* But humanity has a towering wall it cannot overcome on its own. We know that wall as our very own sin nature. The change we desire is on the other side of that looming wall. We can stack ladders, but they never fully reach the top. We can throw rope, but our arms get tired as we exert ourselves, never having the strength and endurance we need to reach the top to then rappel ourselves down the other side. Oh, but we desire to get there, to the genuine, long-lasting change we dream of.

Here is some good news for you today: The change we dream of is promised in Christ Jesus. Today's passage reveals a vision of our Lord's heavenly throne, which we will one day behold with our very eyes. When this future vision becomes reality, all God's people—from every tribe, nation, and language—will worship and enjoy the Lord together in perfect unity (Revelation 5:9; 7:9). No longer will there be anything accursed. Not even racism or injustice. The old will pass away and Jesus will make all things new. In other words, Jesus will demolish once for all the wall of sin, and we will simply walk past the crumbled barrier into eternal glory and everlasting joy. We will be forever united in Christ. White, Black, and every shade in between. What a glorious day that will be!

We desire change. But—ultimately—the change we desire can only be found in Christ. So, it is my full conviction that the only true solution for the issues of racism, injustice, and violence is the solution for sin itself. *We need the good news of Jesus Christ.*

Yes, as we saw last week, we ought to pursue justice and kindness (Micah 6:8) in this broken world, correcting oppression and pleading on behalf of the oppressed (Isaiah 1:17). But this pursuit must go hand-in-hand with the proclamation of the gospel. As we voice the need for change, we must also voice the message that brings true change—the message of the one who is remaking us and bringing us into his glorious, eternal, righteous, multi-ethnic kingdom. Don't just say lives matter, as important as that is to say; say—*also*—the message that matters most.

Questions:

- What is your heart's reaction to the vision of all believers (from every tribe and language and people and nation) worshipping the Lord in an uncursed heaven?
- In what ways does the church today give you a taste of that future reality? How does that future reality encourage you to share the gospel to our hurting culture today?
- Spend some time praising God for the good news of Jesus Christ. Ask him to give you a heart for all humanity and boldness to lovingly share Christ with all.