

Reflection FCCS June 11, 2017

The problem of dualistic thinking...

Preparing to teach the class on White Privilege that Alan Kelchner and I have been offering the past several weeks I came aground resistance that feels very familiar.

Well-meaning progressive people understandably, want to believe that we are further along in conversations of equity than we actually are. It is hard to face the reality that no matter how aware we have become, understanding White Privilege and the societal constructs that support its survival is and will likely forever be a lifelong endeavor.

This morning, I chose to isolate the passage from Genesis about creation, because it exemplifies the intended **balance** of opposites; wind and water, light and dark, day and night, evening and morning- **beauty in balance**.

This passage is a description of the kingdom of God, the value, worth and interconnectedness of every element of creation; the world as it should be.

And while we **long** to participate in the creation of the world as it should be we **live** in the world as it is.

In the world as it **is**- light and dark are not valued equally.

In the world as it **is**- the color of our skin too often determines access and opportunity.

In the world as it **is**- if a character in a story wearing white and a character wearing black we know instinctively who represents what.

We know exactly what someone means when they say, *lock your doors it's a 'bad' neighborhood*.

We have built in triggers to react to difference. It is part of our cultural training in this country, that's a fact.

The goal of understanding White Privilege is not to beat people up, but to help all of us understand that the privileges afforded to people with skin like mine are unearned. I was born this way, I didn't do anything to earn better treatment than someone who was born with darker skin.

To understand the dualism that has been created between white and black, light and dark is to **participate** in the dismantling of systemic injustices that result in division rather than the unification of God's people.

Anti-racism work is the work of the church, it is the work of this church, we are all called to deepen our commitment to ally ship- not only for the liberation of others, but for our own liberation.

Not everyone can take a couple hours out of a Wednesday to participate in a class on anti-racism, so our goal this morning is to share a glimpse of what we are exploring in our class in an effort to expand opportunities for discussion.

Remember; a sermon is not designed to provide answers only to provoke discussion, so if you leave today with more questions than you had when you arrived that is a good thing.

There were two brave souls from our class who offered to respond to the invitation to understand the cost of privilege, to explore the toll it takes on all of us and why dismantling it is necessary for our collective liberation.

Tim and Cathy share their thoughts...

Hold fast to dreams  
For if dreams die  
Life is a broken-winged bird  
That cannot fly.  
Hold fast to dreams  
For when dreams go  
Life is a barren field  
Frozen with snow.

Langston Hughes