

Church of Christ at White Station
Shepherd's Encouragement on Behalf of our Elders

Sunday, May 10, 2020

Love God with all of your heart and all of your being. Love your neighbor as yourself.

Today cannot go by without the Body of Christ and the Kingdom of God speaking about matters that are dear to God's heart. This week many of us are aware of Ahmaud Arbery and the tragedy that he experienced running. Jogging as I'm told he has done many, many times in a small city in Georgia. As an African-American, 25 year old man, then seen by 2 white men, they presumed, it is stated, that he had done something wrong. And they went after him. And I have seen the video that was taken. It is gruesome. I don't recommend that you necessarily watch that but I had to watch it. And they killed that young man, that young African American man. And that happened on February 23rd, two and a half months ago. And this has only become public as far as I can tell, because that video went viral this week. No one was charged until this week.

We cannot love our God if we do not love our neighbor. And we cannot love our neighbor if we do not love God. We've gone through a long series of God's justice and righteousness. We can't read the book, we can't hear what Isaiah has to say in the first chapter. He says I don't want your worship if you don't show justice to the people. Hosea, in chapter 4, talks about that same time frame, 8th century BC, much like our time right now. The murderers were pandemic, he said they've got to stop. And I'm deeply, personally in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Ezra gives leadership around the building back of the temple and Nehemiah's building a wall around. And in chapter 5 of Nehemiah, he stops everything, they're building that wall in 52 days and he stops everything because of the injustices going on and how the very people who are doing the work are having to put their kids in slavery for food and land and keeping their land.

We cannot, not speak about this today. God's people has to speak about matters of justice and righteousness. As some have said this is akin to a modern day lynching. It is unjust, it is wrong.

Theresa and I have a son who is 26 years old. This young man, Ahmaud, would have been 26 on Friday. Andrew runs quite a bit. I've never had to think once of will he be safe? Will he be OK? I've never had the

conversation that many African Americans have to have with their boys and girls, their sons and their daughters. To be aware of what you are wearing, be aware if somebody stops you, where your hands are at, say yes sir, no sir, yes ma'am, not ma'am. Be very aware. I've never had that conversation with Andrew because I don't have to. Andrew's a white male.

I raise this because this is happening too much and the Body of Christ has to speak. As Proverbs would say, speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. Ahmaud can no longer speak for himself, but the Body of Christ can speak. And so as we do, with our mission out of Ephesians 4, speak truth in love. We must speak truth. And we must do it in love. I'm thankful to be with a Body and be a part of the Kingdom that would say we worship God and we love you God with all of our heart. As we love our neighbor and we want to go deep in Your heart and who You are. So in that regard we raise up and we speak truth. So I ask you to be mindful of that, consider this week. Think about how you use your words, how you tweet, what you say on Facebook. We have a Racial Justice Committee. If you want to be a part of that, let us know. We would like for you to be a part of that as God takes us deeper into His justice and His righteousness.

God bless you this week. Thank you