

## Church as Defender of Human Dignity

### Virtual Class with Rubel Shelly | Galatians 3:28

*These questions are designed to help you explore some of the texts and ideas raised in last Sunday's sermon about the biblical message of human worth and dignity.*

#### **Unit 1 – A Bit of Old Testament History**

1. Pagan creation myths represent the creation of humans to be little more than providing slave labor or service animals to do things deemed unworthy of their gods. How does the biblical account of creation represent God's decision to create humans?
2. What is the significance of Genesis 1:26-27 to the theme of human worth and dignity?
3. What impression is left in Psalm 8 relative to the deity-humanity relationship?
4. Examine the following OT texts about protection for immigrants, orphans, widows, and the poor: Lev 19:10; 25:25-39; Deut 14:28-29; 27:19; Isa 1:17.
5. What is the storyline of the book of Ruth? What are some of the unusual social provisions reflected in the story?

#### **Unit 2 – A Bit of New Testament History**

1. What are some of the dignity-affirming teachings and actions of Jesus that are important to this week's theme? Cf. Luke 4:14-21.
2. Patriarchy, slavery, and other negative features of Roman culture are found in the NT stories. Can you identify two or three examples of how the church reacted to them?
3. Would it have been possible for the early church to dismantle the social structures of its time (e.g., slavery)? How does the letter to Philemon show the "subversive" nature of Christian ethics to such a demeaning institution as slavery?
4. Explain the nature of Christian love (*agapē*) and its relationship to human interactions with God, family, or even enemies. Do you agree that it is a set of social behaviors rather than a "feeling"? Cf. 1 Cor 13:4-7. Explain.
5. How "revolutionary" was Galatians 3:28 for its time? How faithfully has the church applied and lived its implications?

#### **Unit 3 – The Church and Modern Culture**

1. Why is the biblical teaching about human dignity so central to the social issues our society is facing right now?
2. In your opinion, what is the single most important issue of social justice the church must address in 2020?
3. What is your reaction to the statement "Black Lives Matter"? Did you catch the explanation of it that Rubel's African-American friend gave him?
4. How do you interpret this statement from Dr. Tony Evans: *If we can't get it right on Sunday, we sure won't get it right the rest of the days of the week?* Do you agree with him?
5. What does White Station need to prioritize for the sake of bearing witness to this community that we love our neighbors as we love ourselves?