

## **EXPERIENCING the POWER of “ONE ACCORD”**

*“...they lifted up their voice to God with one accord...And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.” Acts 4:24, 31-33 (KJV)*



### ***This Week’s Thought – February 7, 2016***

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*“Peter addressed them, “you know, I’m sure that this is highly irregular. Jews just don’t do this – visit and relax with people of another race. But God has just shown me that no race is better than any other.” Acts 10:27-28 (The Message)*

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We are all born with a heritage. We have parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents behind us who give us both a genetic heritage and a cultural heritage (ethnicity). We learn our childhood and it becomes part of our self-identity: however, the thought of one human being treating another human being less than human because of their skin color or race – is indeed a stark example of the racism that has plagued our country’s history. Even today, our hearts quiver in grief and our eyes fill with tears when we feel the pain of injustice from those who will experience the sting of racism and racial injustices.

**Thankfully, the unmerited suffering of racism is Christ’s call to embrace His unmerited grace.**

Peter confesses to a diverse group of Jews and Gentiles his culture’s sin of racism. God showed Peter (one of the most influential leaders of the infant Christian faith) that no race is better than any other – to think, believe or act superior to another group of people is to commit the sin of racism. One Race’s claim of elitism over another grieves God. What one person may call unclean by his/her smug arrogance or shameless ignorance is what the Lord calls clean.. The birthplace of a person does not determine their value – being born in God’s image defines a person’s value.

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*“After a long debate, Peter got up and said to them, “Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the message of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows and understands the heart, testifies to them, giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us: and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith [in Jesus].” Acts 15:7-9 (AMP)*

Are you or someone you know a victim of racism? If you have been treated harshly by other people because of your race, gender, ethnicity, faith, etc., speak the language of forgiveness. Like Jesus proclaimed from the cross, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34) – you live up the cross of love and forgiveness. Those guilty of crimes should be punished by the law, but as a Christian ask the Lord for the ability to stop condemning, criticizing or being down on others or yourself. God is the only one in position to correctly judge all things and all people for all times. **Enjoy greater peace, joy and less stress when you give all responsibilities for judging to the Lord!**

It is imperative for those of us who follow Jesus as savior and Lord to individually treat all races with respect, kindness and love. Passive racism is overcome by active inclusiveness of others different than ourselves. We work together, we worship together, and we socialize together – all for the glory of God!

**Words from the Master during your time of reflection is week: “Seek My face, and you will find not only My Presence but also My Peace. To receive My Peace, you must change your grasping, controlling stance to one of openness and trust. The only thing you can grasp without damaging your soul is My Hand. As My Spirit within you to order your day and control your thoughts, for the mind controlled by the Spirit is Life and Peace. You will never run out of things to worry about, but you can choose to trust Me no matter what.”** (Romans 8:6; Numbers 6:26; Psalm 46:1-2)

*“And then God answered: “Write this. Write what you see. Write it out in big block letters so that it can be read on the run. This vision-message is a witness pointing to what's coming. It aches for the coming—it can hardly wait! And it doesn't lie. If it seems slow in coming, wait. It's on its way. It will come right on time.” Habakkuk 2:2-3 (MSG)*

Yours in Christ, Pastor King