

Day 8 Devotion

"I'm not ashamed of the gospel; it is God's own power for salvation to all who have faith in God, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." Romans 1:16

It was Easter break 1966 in my first year of seminary. My home pastor leaned on me to lead a workshop on the Civil Rights movement for 7th and 8th graders at a presbytery-wide event. My involvement in the movement had been minimal, but he prevailed.

I related to the kids a study I had done on demonstrations that had turned violent in a nearby town. The violence had been of the police and other whites routing peaceful marches. I assured them the demonstrations were no threat to them. To their questions about blacks, I responded that they were like the white people in their lives, that all black folks wanted was what was fair. I assured them that there was no reason to expect black people to do anything bad to them and that most would probably make good friends once you got to know them. My being open, calm and normal with them in those very troubled times was the most important aspect of the workshop.

That was Saturday afternoon. Monday morning, I got a group phone call from three ministers asking me what I had said. A prominent presbyterian layman was accusing them of letting a "_____ - loving communist" infiltrate the youth event and poison their minds. He was planning to run for Congress and make this a campaign issue.

I gave an account of what I said and of the discussion. They pushed to see if I had done anything worse and were considering having me talk with the accuser. Then they thought better and just asked me to tell them what they might say to him. I said to tell him "Nobody loves despicable people. . .except for God . . .and God loves you." Nothing more came of his objections.

That is the power of the gospel for salvation. It may have served as a rebuke to him, but it also hit me with the truth that God really did love him too. To use Paul's words, if he was a Jew, I was a Greek. Since then, God often reminds me of his love for those who challenge me whether an angry youth on an inner-city street or rural adult feeling left out and acting out. Isn't there powerful good news for each and every one in the midst of all the rancor?

Rev. Bob Morgan, Honorably Retired

*Jesus, people are as upset today as they were toward you
and insurrection is in the air like it was in the air you breathed.*

It even spilled over to death which hangs over us today.

Yet, you gave us the gospel and its power for salvation beyond the ripe divisions of our day.

May its hope and joy be our witness to the demands made on our lives in this time.

Amen

Resource: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/explaining-white-privilege-to-a-broke-white-person_b_5269255?utm_hp_ref=tw