

EVERY ONE SHOULD TRY

Micah 6:8

On this Father's Day, many of us are thinking with gratitude of the valuable gifts our earthly fathers have passed along to us. I know that is not everyone's experience, which is why it so good that we all have a Heavenly Father whose love for us is perfect – even where human love isn't.

My own Dad has been the source of many more blessings than wounds in my life. So much of what I know about discipleship and leadership, I've learned from him. Today, I think of a poster my father had framed and hung up on the wall of our house as an inspiration to me and my siblings. As a young Republican, Dad had worked in the Justice Department of a prominent Democrat, prosecuting organized crime. The vision of his boss spoke from that poster, in words I've always remembered: "One person can make a difference and every one should try" (President John F. Kennedy).

There is a big temptation in this present moment to doubt the truth of that sentiment. When we consider our current social upheaval, a lot of us naturally feel like just pushing it all away. We don't feel "personally responsible" for all the acts of racism or justice that have been part of the American story or our recent headlines. There are so many complex and competing storylines about what is truly going on. It is tempting to just shrug, harden our hearts, or wait for the media to move to the next crisis. So why TRY?

Because we are followers of Jesus. If we are familiar with the Bible's teaching about God's heart for all people... if we mean that prayer about seeing God's will done on earth as it is in heaven... then we are going to use what power we have to TRY to make a difference. In fact, one of the greatest ministries any of us have as Christian fathers or grandfathers or any other kind of mentor is to model a passion to TRY to advance the life of flourishing for all people that Jesus called the Kingdom of God.

Long ago, the prophet Micah boiled down that teaching into a simple catechism – a question and answer. **"What does the Lord require of YOU?"** What, my children, does God want you to TRY to do? The answer was: **"To love mercy, act justly, and walk humbly" (Micah 6:8)**. How can we live into that calling in the midst of our present upheavals?

Two weeks ago, I suggested four **REDEMPTIVE ACTIONS** worth TRYING right now. First, we can fervently **Pray** for God to move in human hearts, including our own. Secondly, we can seek to humbly **Learn** more about the history and issues behind our racial justice struggles than we may yet have understood. Thirdly, we can personally **Engage** others who have a different experience of life than we have. And, finally, we can **Acknowledge** what we discover and how we sense God calling us to act.

This morning, I want to offer all of us a practical opportunity to TRY this by inviting you to humbly LISTEN to two black Christian pastors as they talk with one another about the quest for Equal Justice Under Law. In a moment, I'm going to introduce you to a lively conversation between Bishop T.D. Jakes, senior pastor of the 30,000 member Potter's House Church in Dallas, and Charles Jenkins, pastor of the 3,000 member Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church right here in Chicago. T.D. Jakes is one of our planet's most renowned preachers and pastors of any color and Charles Jenkins is an enormously talented young musician, entrepreneur, and pastoral leader.

I imagine this conversation as a bit like the sort that the Apostle Paul probably had with his exuberant protégé, Timothy, as they wrestled over the aching questions of church and culture in their time. Regardless, we're given the chance here to listen in on a wise mentor as he counsels a passionate mentee – and that very kind of honest interaction can be a great model for all of us seeking to be good parents and mentors of others.

Let me warn you that you are going to hear mention of public figures or phrases or political actions that – depending whether you tilt progressive or conservative -- are going to excite you or upset you. I pray that all of us can push beyond that and pick the wheat from what you may consider chaff. If we are going to walk humbly or love mercy, or discern what it means to act justly, then it seems critical as Christians that we LISTEN deeply right now. So, I invite you to join me in that. Let's simply try to LEARN what some members of the broader Christian family think and feel about our times and what they believe could help us all. Following this interview, I'll return to offer a closing thought and send us on our way.

[VIDEO INTERVIEW]

Thank you for opening your heart and mind to these voices from the broader Christian family today. If you'd like to watch the full [58-minute interview](#), we're posting it on our church website. You can find it by going to our homepage and clicking on the ACT REDEMPTIVELY button or going directly to the page noted on your screen. We're also providing on our website a [Study Guide](#) which you can use to reflect further on God's Word and our times with your family or small group or one of the new Connection Groups you can join up with via Zoom at 7:00 p.m. this Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday.

Let me close by saying something that is probably already obvious to you. You and I can leave a world to our children and grandchildren where more people love mercy, act justly, and walk humbly with their God. It will require the American Church to lead that revival – one that commits itself even more boldly to Christ's vision by the way it prays, learns, engages, and acknowledges its part in today's problems and tomorrow's possibilities. That's where we are going as we start next week a new series of messages entitled, LIFE TOGETHER. I hope you'll join us, because one life, one church, can make a difference in our times, and all of us should TRY.