

Group Agenda – January 19, 2008

Lesson: "The Dream"

Passage: Dr. King's "The Dream," Various Scriptures

Background

This week we are looking at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech, in recognition of his birthday and the great service he performed in our nation's development. Below are a number of the statements he made, and a chance to discuss them and decide how much progress our country has made, where we stand in regard to loving all people equally before the Lord, and what we might do to be part of the solution to injustice in our nation and community.

IceBreaker

Has anyone ever discriminated against you for some reason, robbed you of an opportunity due to birthplace, religion, economic status, race, spiritual beliefs, educational level, etc.? What happened, why, and how did you feel?

Read & Discuss

- King stated in his 1963 speech that **"One hundred years later (after Lincoln freed the slaves with the Emancipation Proclamation), we must face the tragic fact that the Negro is still not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and chains of discrimination."** What has changed in the last 45 years in regard to racial segregation and discrimination in the United States?
- King goes on to say that, **"One hundred years later, the Negro lives on an lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity..."** Is there still this same sense of economic disparity between white Americans and black Americans? What are the causes, in your opinion?
- Another statement King makes is, **"There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, 'When will you be satisfied?' we can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one."** Do we still have laws that allow this kind of action? Does it happen anyway at times? What can we do when our laws are fair, but people's hearts don't always want to apply them fairly?

- King also said, **"In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred."** How well has this value of King's turned out? Do you think there is a problem of some people being blinded by bitterness and hatred, and stereotyping all those they blame for the injustice they have suffered? What responsibility do they have to resolve and repair their attitudes? Or do they justifiably deserve to be bitter and hateful?
- Probably the most famous quote from this speech, and most often repeated, is, **"I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."** Did King achieve a "color-blind" society? Our laws make it illegal to discriminate based on skin color, but are people's hearts as easily changed? What percentage of whites act in bigoted ways towards blacks today, compared to then? How about blacks toward whites? How many people want to be free of this protracted conflict, and just see one another based on character, not appearance?
- Look at the following scriptures, and discuss how they might speak to the subject of racial bigotry and discrimination:
 1. Genesis 12:1-3
 2. Mark 10:42-45
 3. Matthew 28:18-20
 4. Acts 17:22-28
 5. James 2:1-10
 6. 1 Peter 2:9-17
 7. 2 Peter 3:8-9
 8. Revelation 7:9-12

Apply

- Have you ever had an experience with someone of another race or culture that prompted you to be suspicious of all those from that group? Explain.
- How is your heart towards those who differ from you in appearance, culture, and language? Do you share God's concern for all people of all nations?
- How can your group be part of the solution toward breaking down people's attitudinal problems with other based on race/ethnicity? How about Amarillo South as a whole?

Pray

- Pray for God's heart for all the nations and people of the earth to be shared by his Church in Amarillo and around the world.
- Pray for you, your group, and Amarillo South to find ways to be part of the solution and promote fairness and protection of the weak.