



## Session 1: Race Injustice & Learning to Grieve

Video Presentation by Dr. Catherine Meeks  
(See webpage for biography)

### Opening Prayer

Father, Bless us as we strive to find our way to true racial healing. Open our eyes to all that goes on around us that contributes to racial injustice. Grant us the knowledge to understand all that we do, both personally and as a society, which prevents us from recognizing and defending the dignity of all our brothers and sisters, and especially at this time, our brothers and sisters of color who are now feeling so much pain. Grant us the grace to reflect on our own actions and inactions that contribute to this pain. And grant us the strength to take action to alleviate this pain and to end racial injustice in all its forms.

~ *Phil Chick*

### Bible Verses Referenced in Dr. Meeks' Video

#### **John 5:1-9**

After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay any invalids—blind, lame, and paralysed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, 'Do you want to be made well?' The sick man answered him, 'Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.' Jesus said to him, 'Stand up, take your mat and walk.' At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

#### **1 Corinthians 13**

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

## Questions for Reflection & Discussion

*There are more than you will have time for, so select those you feel most meaningful for your group at this time.*

1. What was hard for you to hear in this video?
2. Do you grieve when you experience race injustice in your community or from afar? If so, what do you grieve? What does your grief feel like?
3. Do you believe that there is one God who has put a bit of God's self within you and within others? Why or why not?
4. How easy or hard is it for you to see the image of God in other people, especially people who do not look like you or live the way you live?
5. Does the church love people with the love of 1 Corinthians 13? Which part of this passage is most difficult for the church? What about you personally?
6. Do you agree with Dr. Meeks that a better word than "race reconciliation" is "racial healing"?
7. What will it take for us to become well? Do we really want to be well, knowing that it might change our lives?

## Sending Prayer

O Christ our champion, who endured insults, threats, and hatred from one-time and repeat offenders alike, dismantle the structures and principalities of bullying in our culture. Give victims a safe way to tell peers and authorities what's going on, and may the latter be quick to provide support and justice. Through friends, mentors, and thy Spirit, speak words of affirmation which resound so loudly and clearly in their soul so as to expunge all destructive messages, and give them an unshakable assurance that they are invaluable and loved by our Father, who reigns with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, mighty fortress. *Amen.*

*~ Terry Stokes*