Sermon: “It’s Not Race, But Faith that Matters Most”
Matthew 8:5-13

When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, 6 “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.” 7 And he said to him, “I will come and heal him.” 8 But the centurion replied, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” 10 When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, “Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. 11 I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, 12 while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” 13 And to the centurion Jesus said, “Go; let it be done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed at that very moment

I. THE BLESSINGS JESUS BRINGS ARE FOR ALL WHO BELIEVE, RACE AND ETHNICITY DOESN’T ENTER INTO IT.

A. Grace has nothing to do with race.

Four incidents that teach us about race and grace.

1. The first incident is when Jesus says, what you need to enter the kingdom of God is not a particular racial pedigree but a spiritual experience of rebirth.
John 3:3, Matthew 3:9, 1 Peter 2:9

2. In the second incident that addresses race and grace Jesus teaches us that the outsider, those looked down on by the proud are desired by God and offered his greatest gifts of grace. John 4, the Samaritan woman.

3. The third incident took place when Jesus told his hometown crowd that no matter how proud they were of their racial heritage they needed to beware of presumption and prejudice. Luke 4:27-30

4. In the fourth incident Jesus dramatically drives home the truth that when it comes to God’s blessing what matters is not race but faith in Jesus. Matthew 8:5-13

B. If God’s grace overflows every racial boundary, our love should look like that.

1. A foundational biblical truth. Christ Community Church is a community of people who believe God created all human beings in his own image. God has revealed himself in Scripture and in Jesus, as loving toward all he has made (Psalm 145:9, John 3:16).

2. An encouraging hope in the gospel. The gracious work of the gospel includes the promise that in Jesus, all of redeemed humanity will one day be reconciled to God and each other. A great multitude that no one can number, from every nation, tribe, language, and people will one day worship Jesus in oneness and praise his glorious work of redemption and reconciliation. (Revelation 7:9-12).
3. Some practical implications for our lives. Until that day comes, we believe we must live and speak in a manner that reflects the heart of our God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, to a broken and hurting world (Matthew 5:16). Therefore we grieve the hurtful impact of racism under which so many have suffered throughout human history and denounce racism as an evil affront to our Creator and Savior. We aspire to treat all people with dignity and respect (Romans 13:8-10). We are committed to standing for truth and justice (Psalm 82:3,4); and we are committed to love and to forgive (Ephesians 4:32-5:2).

4. A concluding conviction about the gospel. We believe the gospel to be the only true and sufficient hope for reconciliation with God and with all peoples (2 Corinthians 5:18-21, Ephesians 2:14-16)

II. THE BLESSINGS HE BRINGS ARE FOR ALL WHO BELIEVE. FAITH IN JESUS IS WHAT MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

Matthew 8:10

A. Race isn’t what matters with God but there is something that matters with God. Faith matters with God and Jesus.

Mark 9:2, Hebrews 11:6

B. Faith matters and the kind of faith we have in Jesus matters also.

1. The faith we need is humble.

2. The faith we need is confident.

Prayer of Response

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Savior of the world. We do believe in you and yet we ask you to please help us overcome the persistent unbelief that so easily rises up within us in the midst of the problems of life. Give us the grace to recognize where we are worrying without praying, and striving but not trusting. Help us to let go of the stressed out and demanding spirit that tries to control what cannot be controlled, so that we can live and work in faith, and not in fear. Enable us, Lord, to put faith to work in all the issues of life. We ask in your powerful name, Amen.