

# A Look at Black Lives Matter

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Well, the title of tonight's message is "A Look at Black Lives Matter." There are compelling reasons not to speak on this topic tonight, there are compelling reasons to avoid it and to delay the topic. Emotions are raw after the death of Mr. George Floyd in Minneapolis and I believe his funeral even was today. That argues against speaking on the topic now. Legal process needs time for those that are charged in his death to take place and unfold over time, that's a reason to delay the discussion. My words here tonight will likely be misunderstood both within and beyond the walls of Truth Community Church and yet I believe that there are things that need to be said that are urgent and cannot wait.

Now there are voices in our society even on social media today that would forbid me from speaking on this matter. There are those that think that there should not be anything said while the protests are going on and certainly nothing from a biblical perspective, this coming from a Christian spokesman. Furthermore, an older, white, heterosexual man is the problem to many who observe the scene but, my friends, Christians must reject those inner sectional categories of thought and our right to speak is not derived from our culture at all. We do not need the permission of our audience to speak. We speak at the command of a much much higher authority. Jesus Christ commands us to speak and that is all the authority that we need. He is, after all, the one who said, "Go and make disciples of all the nations, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you." In Acts 1:8 he spoke to the disciples and he said, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the remotest part of the earth." After a command like that from the eternal Son of God who could not but speak if he had opportunity to do so, I'm not going to stay silent simply because some people on earth tell me to do so. That would be a betrayal of my position.

Now with those little preliminaries stated, I want to start with an illustration which is contrary to my normal pattern, but I want to start with a very critical illustration that will help you process everything that I have to say this evening. The upstream waters of Niagara River are beautiful. If you didn't know better on a hot day, you would jump in and take a swim if you're a good swimmer, which I am not, but if you jump in, there are powerful currents below the surface that will most certainly take you to a terrifying death over the roaring Niagara Falls. This is unavoidable. This is the way that it works and, friends both here in the room and over the live stream and those that will watch this later,

you must keep that illustration in mind as you hear me speak on this topic about Black Lives Matter.

Black Lives Matter is a powerful voice in public dialog today, in fact, one commentator said it is now the most powerful political party in the United States, and at one level the slogan, and you must follow me carefully here and I repeat for the sake of emphasis, the slogan "Black Lives Matter" gives voice to a deep cry of distress from our friends of color. They feel a great present and historical weight of sorrow at the hands of law enforcement. Now you and I may not fully understand that but, my friends, if Mr. Floyd had been our father or our son or our brother, you and I would definitely feel a helpless sense of outrage watching the video of his final eight minutes and 46 seconds. The point of the slogan on the lips of some anyway is this, is that black lives are human lives. Treat us like you believe that. That's not an unreasonable statement for people to make. We're humans. Please treat us that way. The things that I have to say tonight do not diminish that just plea but I'm here tonight to talk about something else and it is very critical for you as a people, it is very important for us as Christian people to make a very clear distinction in our minds between the slogan "Black Lives Matter" and something else, the organization, that is, the movement known as Black Lives Matter. Those two things are separate. They are distinct although they are closely related. There is the slogan which represents a cry of distress with which we sympathize, there is the organization with an agenda that is the matter of our consideration here this evening.

Friends, especially in times of upheaval like what we are seeing in the world around us today and over these past several days, you and I must, we must heed Scripture. We must obey it. We must understand it. We must apply it to the world that we see around us and come to discerning conclusions about what we are finding and seeing in the things that are happening around us. The scriptural command for this could not be any more clear. In 1 John 4:1 which actually gave rise to the original impetus to this message, it says, "Test the spirits to see whether they are from God." That is a divine mandate. In 1 Thessalonians 5:22 it says, "Examine everything carefully." And so, my friends, you and I and to the Christian church at large, I speak as broadly as the Lord would take my feeble words. We simply cannot just go with the emotional flow of what is happening in the world around us. We cannot simply adopt the mindset of every news report that we see or every march that goes through our cities, we have to understand what is being said and what is at stake because, my friends, in this time of great vulnerability as you're going to see without question here this evening, we must not in the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 2, we must not be ignorant of Satan's schemes. The unseen battle that we have with heavenly powers has not been suspended while men seek justice. Let me remind you of what Ephesians 6:12 says, "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." That's Ephesians 6:12, you know it well. Our enemy is the devil and, my friends, he is a ruthless foe, he is a ruthless enemy who shows no mercy in times of vulnerability, quite to the contrary he exploits it in order to accomplish his purposes. The Apostle Peter said in 1 Peter 5:8 that, "Your adversary, the devil, prowls about, goes around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."

Now we're faced with a question as professing Christian people at this point, the question is this: do we believe that testimony of the word of God about the nature of spiritual reality or not? Do we actually believe the word of God when it says that there is an evil being named Satan who has a vast army of demonic hosts under his power who is actively working to cause harm to the souls of men? Do we believe that or not? Well, if you start to cut that out of the Bible, you start to leave great big holes in the testimony of Scripture, don't you? Scripture speaks to this again and again and so that brings us to what I have to say here this evening. It is my sacred duty and responsibility to warn the people of God of spiritual threats when I see them, and let there be no doubt that the movement, Black Lives Matter, is a great spiritual threat that whose consequences could not be underestimated.

My friends, there are spiritual currents far beyond racial justice that are at work in Black Lives Matter as I will establish without question here this evening. You must understand that Black Lives Matter is more than a slogan, it is an organization and with the simplest of clicks on your computer, you can find what they stand for at the website [blacklivesmatter.com](http://blacklivesmatter.com). It is a global organization by its own profession, and on its website it has a section in which that is title "What we believe." What we believe and the section is far too lengthy to quote in full, in part in what you would expect when you go to the website if you go without any prior knowledge or expectation, in part they claim to "work vigorously for freedom and justice for black people and by extension all people." Well, you might ask, "Who can be against that? You know, we're good Americans. We're in favor of freedom and justice, right? What could be wrong with that?" Well, we have to keep reading and we have to see what else they say, and as you keep reading, what happens when you read about this with any sense or paying attention to the importance of biblical discernment?

Well, number 1, I think there's three points tonight and then some subpoints of application at the end. Number 1 is that they deny any validity to spiritual truth claims. They deny any validity to spiritual truth claims and I quote directly from their website with what I have to say here this evening. I quote, "We are guided by the fact that all black lives matter regardless of actual or perceived sexual identity, gender identity, gender expression, economic status, ability, disability," here's the money quote for our purposes, "religious beliefs or disbeliefs, immigration status or location." And so what they've said here is that all black lives matter without regard, without consideration to matters of sexual identity or transgenderism, as we'll see later, religious beliefs or disbeliefs. They totally discount the importance of spiritual truth claims with what they say there. Apparently black lives may matter to them but spiritual truth does not. Compare that with what Scripture says when Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." In Acts 4:12 it says, "there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Now listen, when they discount the importance of spiritual truth and elevate something else above that, you have to understand that there's a spiritual dynamic that is in play.

Black Lives Matter leads people astray at the fundamental point of human existence. It communicates that biblical truth does not matter, that what you believe about God or about Christ or about biblical authority does not matter, none of those things matter just black lives somehow matter. Well, you know what? That's not any comfort to a lost black soul when he comes to read John 3:36 where it says, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." Well, my friends, spiritual truth matters to God, it matters to Christ, it's the reason that he came, it's the reason that he died, it's the reason that he rose again. What one believes about Christ will determine their eternal destiny and yet you have an organization known as Black Lives Matter that diminishes the importance of that and elevates something else over it. Someone might well say, "But I'm only using the slogan. I didn't even know they had a website." To which I respond, "Yes, and the Niagara River will take you over Niagara Falls. There are currents that you cannot avoid and cannot deny."

Secondly, what else can we say about Black Lives Matter here this evening? Nothing less than this, they seek the destruction of biblical ethics. They seek the destruction of biblical ethics. This is a destructive movement, make no doubt about it. Black Lives Matter has an agenda that goes far beyond matters of law enforcement, and when it comes to law enforcement clearly stated on their website, they are calling for the national defunding of police throughout America. That's a whole other matter that I won't even get into. But listen to some of these things that Black Lives Matter says on their website and understand that the perception is this is about law enforcement and justice for people of color. That's the perception but, and I will give them credit for this, they are more candid on their website about what they believe and what their goals are than the vast majority of seeker-sensitive churches in the United States are. At least they're being upfront about it, which I have a measure of respect and appreciation for even though I think it's a deadly movement. Listen to what they say and ask yourself what does this possibly have to do with law enforcement and so-called racial justice. I quote. I'll quote from four paragraphs here. "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

A second paragraph says this and we're going to use a word that refers to heterosexual normative behavior and normative expectations. Secondly, quote, "We do the work required to dismantle cisgender privilege and uplift black trans folk, especially black trans women who continue to be disproportionately impacted by trans-santagonistic violence." What they're saying is, and we'll see this again in the subsequent two paragraphs, they want to dismantle the prevailing assumption that heterosexual relations are what's normal and to be expected. They want to dismantle that.

Third paragraph, I quote, "We disrupt the Western prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and villages that collectively care for one another, especially our children to the degree that mothers, parents, and children are comfortable." They want to disrupt the idea of a mother and father with their children building a home together.

Fourthly they say and I quote, "We foster a queer affirming network. When we gather, we do so with the intention of freeing ourselves from the belief that all in the world are heterosexual unless they disclose otherwise." So they want to dismantle everything about a biblical sexual ethic whatsoever, elevate the broadest possible spectrum of LGBTQIAA+ approaches to life. I'm trying to speak without being overly pejorative. But brothers and sisters, what you need to see is this, is that Black Lives Matter has an agenda to reject God's created order and to affirm every possible variation and perversion of sexual sin.

What are we to think about that in light of Scripture? Well, if you want to turn in your Bibles to Romans 1 you'll see that this is nothing less than a manifestation of the wrath of God against society. In Romans 1:24 it says, "Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." Verse 26, "For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error." All of this being in the context, the greater context of what Paul said in verse 18, "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." Verse 28, "And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer," look, this is nothing less than what they are saying. "We do not care about religious beliefs or disbeliefs," they say on their website. Verse 28, "just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents," we're trying to disrupt the nuclear family, "without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them." Look, this is serious. This is not the time for humor from the pulpit.

You could also consider what it says, what the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 where it says, "do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God." Now in response to that someone might well say, "But I'm only using the slogan, Black Lives Matter." To which I respond, "Yes, and the Niagara River takes you to Niagara Falls."

Now to be very very clear here, I have no personal animosity toward the movement or the organization Black Lives Matter. I have no personal animosity here whatsoever. I have no hostile feelings toward the co-founders of this movement who are listed on the website as Patrisse Khan-Cullors, Alicia Garza and Opal Tometi. My prayers are with them in these things that I say. This is not personal at all but, my friends, the organizational

influence of Black Lives Matter, the movement of Black Lives Matter, the organization, this influence and this agenda is lethal. This is utterly lethal. They reject biblical authority openly. They reject the exclusive claims of Christ. They reject biblical righteousness without shame. They openly promote this in the name of Black Lives Matter.

Now let me ask you a question: where does a philosophy like that come from? Where do you get ideas like that? What's the ultimate source of that kind of philosophy that rejects biblical authority, that rejects the exclusive claims of Christ, that diminishes the importance of sin and salvation, and that utterly seeks to destroy biblical righteousness, what's the source of that ultimately? John 8:44, "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies." Friends, we're looking at nothing less than a satanic movement based on the things that they are promoting and affirming at their own website. Who could see this as a pastor and remain silent?

Now to clarify, to qualify, I suppose, I do not believe that the organization speaks for everyone who uses the slogan. I understand that many, if not most, who use the slogan in these days of mass mob thinking intends everything that the organization Black Lives Matter intends when they use the slogan, but this is precisely why we must be discerning and understand what is at stake here. The slogan takes you places that you never intended to go and in the current climate, you cannot separate the slogan from the movement that is behind it.

We are not ignorant of Satan and his schemes and one of the things that you find as you watch the news reports of these matters, as you see different kinds of people from different walks of life kneeling down before BLM protesters, you find this, you find that Satan is perfectly happy and capable and intending to use Black Lives Matter to manipulate people to give submission to people and agendas that is reserved for Christ alone. There are a few people who have said it right, "I kneel for Christ. I don't kneel for anyone else." But once you kneel in submission to something like this, it owns you and that's why we can't go along with it.

Let's assume, let's assume that you could actually fix society and all of the injustices and every aspect of law enforcement failures, let's assume you could fix all of that within the paradigm of Black Lives Matter. You and I have to think this way, my friends, let's assume you could fix all of society according to what they wanted, well, if you do that, you fix society and you still go to hell? You really haven't accomplished much, have you? "For what does it profit a man," Jesus said, "to gain the whole world and to forfeit his soul?" Mark 8:36.

Well, third and final point for this evening and we'll spend some time here: how do we act on this discernment and what is the way forward for the church of Christ, not speaking just of Truth Community Church but what is the way forward for the people of God in light of what is happening in the world around us and in light of the accelerating influence that Black Lives Matter has on our society? Well, let me give you three things

to contemplate here. First of all, we must stand apart from this movement. We cannot join forces with it in any way, shape or form.

Look at 2 Corinthians 6 with me. These people as mislead and misguided as they are, they are not believers and they have a spiritual agenda that they are seeking to promote that is diametrically opposed with the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and is diametrically opposed with biblical righteousness. Scripture speaks plainly to the church of Christ in such times as these when it says in verse 14, 2 Corinthians 6:14, it says, "Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,' says the Lord, "and do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,' Says the Lord Almighty." We cannot have a spiritual partnership with Black Lives Matter no matter how strongly we feel about the issue of those who would use the slogan to express their concern over possible abuses of law enforcement authority. We can't join together for a political aim with those who are promoting spiritual principles such as this. These are unbelieving people with a spiritual agenda and Christians cannot join forces with them no matter what. We do not have a spiritual partnership with this. Part of what we see is the promise in this passage in verses 17 and 18, is that for those who would be faithful to Christ in the midst of these things, there is a promise from God to those who would maintain biblical separation at times like this. He says at the end of verse 17, look at it there with me, "I will welcome you. I will be a father to you. You shall be sons and daughters to Me," says the Lord Almighty. We desire the blessing of God, we desire to be faithful to our Christ, we desire to honor the one who saved our souls. We cannot join together with those who are opposed to everything that Christ stands for.

Secondly, how shall we act on this discernment? Well, we're trying to do this tonight, what I'm about to say. We must speak into their movement. We stand outside and we speak into it rather than joining forces with it. And I say this, I say this gently, I say this knowing that there are many people that are suffering greatly under the weight of these social matters that have come to the forefront but, my friends, at the end of the day we are people about the Gospel of Jesus Christ and that is supreme to us. That is what the church not simply Truth Community, that's why the church exists is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and we proclaim it because we understand that it is the answer to every need of the human heart, and that without the Gospel you're building a foundation on sand that is doomed to collapse in the end. And so I say this gently as we speak into that movement and speak to those who are distraught over the things that have happened in their lives at the hands of authority, we say it gently but political and social change will not heal broken lives. Political and social change externally imposed will not bring unity to anyone. The best that we could hope for if Black Lives Matter is successful in their agenda is simply a reversal of the oppression that they claim to be opposing. That's the best that's going to happen.

No, my friends, horizontal unity will come only as men find vertical unity with Christ and throughout what we've been saying here this evening, I've been accepting the phrase "Black Lives Matter," I've been using it as, you know, as those who use it as a slogan would use it, but there is a misleading element that is embedded into the very slogan itself. I understand that to those who use it, they're saying black lives are human lives, please treat us as though we were human. I get that and I can accept that interpretation of the slogan as it is used, but there's more to the matter than this, and without going into all of the scriptural support for what I have to say here, the truth of the matter is that we are all children of Adam, male or female, black or white, young or old. In this sense, in the senses that I'm describing here, we're all the same. We're all in the same position. We are all children of Adam. We all bear the image of God. We all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We all are appointed to die once and after this comes judgment. We all deserve eternal punishment for our sins in a real hell that is really painful and that is really eternal as taught by our Lord Jesus. This is what we all deserve. This is what we will all receive if we come to the end of our lives apart from Jesus Christ and the consequences of that, my friends, are eternal. Yes, there are earthly difficulties and earthly matters that other people in other realms are going to try to address. What the church must understand is that our call and our commission is to proclaim and to urge people to contemplate these eternal realities that will endure for eons upon eons of eons, long after the matters of earthly injustice have been forgotten when we're all dead and buried one day, and we must, we must, we must preach and speak within our spheres of influence in a way that never lets those eternal realities be eclipsed by matters of earthly concern no matter how urgent they may be within the earthly sphere.

So all lives are children of Adam. All lives bear the image of God. All lives have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. All lives are appointed to die once and then face judgment. All lives will face eternal punishment apart from Christ. And biblically speaking, that's the surpassing priority and what you find as you consider the whole matter of the slogan or the organization or the movement, friends, none of that will help you in your hour of greatest need. None of that, none of that solves the real human dilemma. The real human dilemma of being a spiritually lost soul separated from a holy God with the weight and guilt of sin on your account coming toward, hastening toward a day of accountability in which the Lord will judge men according to their deeds, and no amount of social reform no matter how you constitute that can deal with the primary problem of sin in the life of every man, woman and child. And for the church to get swallowed up what are earthly matters is to lose sight of its great commission from Christ, and not simply betraying our vertical loyalty to Christ but betraying our horizontal obligation and opportunity and privilege and prerogative with men to proclaim the good news of Christ to lost sinners; to tell men and women, black and white, that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son so that whoever believes in him would not perish but have eternal life; to tell men and women, black and white, old and young, rich and poor, "the Gospel which has been preached to us which we have received and in which also we stand, by which also you are saved," 1 Corinthians 15, "if you hold fast the word which I preach to you, for I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture and that He was buried



and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas and then to the twelve." The Gospel. The Gospel. The Gospel. We cannot lose sight of the Gospel or if we do, we have forfeited our reason to exist as the church of Christ. If the church is simply going to become another agent of social reform, there is no purpose for us any longer because there are political parties to hash these things out, there are social agencies and organizations to work on these things, there are commissions to study law enforcement reform and all of that. I want to tell you the church has nothing to contribute to that, to the working out of these things compared to the glorious Gospel which we are called to proclaim. That is our purpose. That is why we exist and we cannot set matters of eternal significance aside for the sake of earthly matters like this.

You say, "Well, what would you say, then, for lack of a better term, what would I say to the so-called Black community in their sorrow, in their grief, in their anger over the accumulation of the things that have weighed on their minds for generations?" At a preliminary level, I guess I would say that the fact that I stand apart from Black Lives Matter is not an indication of indifference toward your concerns. I have a higher prior vertical loyalty that I have to honor that keeps me from joining forces with an earthly organization that promotes these things which so clearly contradict God's word. I can't do that. I can't offer you that but what I can offer you is of such greater value than that. What I can offer you is Christ himself. What can I offer you is a Savior who knows all about suffering and injustice having suffered it himself at the cross of Calvary; he who knew no sin was made sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in him; that I serve a Savior, I serve a Christ who voluntarily endured the greatest of injustice on behalf of everyone who would ever believe in him for eternal salvation; and that this Christ who endured this injustice did so not in anger, not seeking retaliation, not seeking vengeance but he did it in love, he did it voluntarily, he did it to redeem a people for himself. And my friend, rich or poor, male or female, white or black, this Christ is the Savior of the world and this Christ is the Savior that is presented to you in the pages of Scripture, and this Christ who knew injustice, this Christ who knows by personal experience the unjust execution of authority against his human body, who suffered blows from Roman soldiers that he did not deserve, who was mocked by the people in authority, spat upon by them, crowned with thorns by them, struck in the face by them, rejected by them, this bloodied bruised Savior who bore the sins of mankind in his body on the cross, died, buried and rose again, this conquering Christ now comes and offers himself to you as the one who alone can deliver you from the guilt of all of your sins. Yes, police officers sin but you know what, my friend? So have you. So have I. There's plenty of guilt to go around here and we all need this Savior who is the only Savior. As I said earlier, no one comes to the Father except through him.

This is the Christ that I proclaim to you and what I love about Christ and what I love about him in the midst of such times as this is the manner in which he present himself to those who have broken and heavy hearts. In Matthew 11:28 he said this, he said, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." My friend, my friend, my friend, whatever else we want to say about the pursuit of justice here on earth, it's a quest

that's going to leave your soul empty and forsaken in the end apart from Christ. There is no satisfaction in it. There is no redemption in it. It doesn't solve and undo the wrongs of the past and it doesn't heal the sorrow in your soul, and it certainly doesn't do anything to redeem you from the guilt of your own sins.

That's why, it's out of concern for your soul, that's why I can't join together with Black Lives Matter, the movement and the organization, because to do so would eclipse what Christ himself would present to you and offer to you, the forgiveness of all of your sins, the restoration of your broken heart in this world, and the promise of eternal life in heaven with him forever and ever, but to enter into and to receive the gift of that salvation, you have to turn away from this world, you have to repent of your own sin, and come to him humbly not as a victim but as a guilty one yourself, calling out for forgiveness of your sins, calling out for mercy on your soul from the one whom you have offended with your rebellion in this life. And the significance of that passage from Matthew 11 that I read is that Christ says that everyone who comes to him like that, he will receive. In the Gospel of John 6 he says, "The one who comes to Me, I certainly will not cast out."

So my friend, in the midst of this national worldwide upheaval, Christ is laying a call on your heart and he's speaking through all of the chaos, all of the hurt, all of the disgruntled feelings, all of the conflicting voices, and by the power of his great Holy Spirit he is speaking to you now, calling you to come to faith in Christ that you might be saved, that you might be delivered from this judgment that we all one day will face. And in this sense, my friends, I want to say to you this, that nowhere will you find a message like that that truly eternally from the perspective of God greatly says that black lives matter because this Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, is extended to black and white, Jew and Gentile on equal terms and Christ died for all manner, all category of people, and the greatness of the value of any human life, applying it particularly to a black life here tonight, is the fact that Christ died to redeem men and women just like you and now offers himself in the fullness of unrestricted grace and mercy to deliver you from your sins, and in the name of Christ that message attaches more significance to a black life than anything earthly could ever do because that is eternal, that is rooted in truth, and that is the purpose for which Jesus Christ left heaven, came to earth, died on a cross, rose again, and ascended back into heaven where as Lord over all he presents himself to you and calls you in this grace, this mercy, to receive him for eternal life.

So in standing apart from the organization Black Lives Matter, by the grace of God and by the power of the Holy Spirit I hope you'll see that Christ supremely and superlatively says your life matters. He gave himself for sinners just like you. That doesn't diminish your trials, it elevates them to another realm and sanctifies them to an eternal purpose that Christ would bless you with. I invite you to him with all of my heart.

Well, just a final word to the church of Christ once more. What do we say to each other? What is the word of God to us in the midst of this chaos in which we find ourselves living and the uncertainty of what will unfold in the earthly realm? Well, we live in chaotic times and what will become of it and what will become of us is uncertain. This is the kind

of message that our building could get firebombed over and I don't really care, but for us the message is fear not. For us we remember the message that we proclaim and we remember the words that were found in the passage that we studied last week in 1 John 4:4, "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." "The work that God has begun in us, He will certainly complete until the day of Christ Jesus," Philippians 1:6. Under no circumstances, there is no earthly contingency by which we would be separated from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, not all the schemes of Satan himself and all of the sophisticated supernatural power that he has, none of that can alter the purposes of God for our souls. We are safe in Christ even as we see these things unfold and so be strong and be very courageous as we go forward in this uncertain world.

Let's pray together.

*Father, what a messed up world we live in. There's no calculating the insanity that is in men's hearts, insanity in rich and poor, black and white, male and female. We can't calculate the evil and the depravity of the human heart, Father. We see it in display on every side of this equation. Father, we can't solve that on our own power. We can't fix it. Instead, Father, we ask You to have mercy on us all. Have mercy on our friends of color, Father. Have mercy on the many police officers who seek to do their job, the vast majority of them who seek to do it uprightly and with honor and who protect us and who now find themselves on the receiving end of rejection by the world. Father, have mercy on the renegade officers who have abused their authority. Father, their guilt is ultimately before You and You alone. In all of the broad sweep of this chaos, Father, we ask for the mercy of God to be displayed through the power of the Holy Spirit to impart new life in Christ in many many hearts and that somehow, Father, in a way that goes far beyond our ability to predict, comprehend or suggest, that You would use this time in the life of our country, that You would use the witness of Your people to advance the Gospel that many men would be born again through this, seeing the emptiness of the world and the threat of the devil and the precious promises of Christ. Father, may there be a flood of people fleeing to Christ, calling for mercy and embracing this promise of eternal life from such a wonderful, gracious Savior who suffered on the behalf of many. Father, redemption is accomplished in Christ. Freedom from slavery to sin and Satan is done in Christ and now, Father, we ask by Your Holy Spirit to apply it to the hearts of many and to use the outcome of these feeble words in this past hour greatly to Your glory. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

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