



ROCK CHURCH

At the Movies
July 23, 2017

E

Encouragement:

This week Pastor Miles uses the film *Remember the Titans* to show us God's plan for unity.

Remember the Titans is a film based on the true story of Coach Herman Boone, who tries to integrate a racially divided team. In 1970, the Supreme Court ruling in *Swann v Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* permits busing students to achieve racial integration.

Pastor Miles believes that football is greatest sport. He loves that this film uses his favorite sport, football, to overcome racial hatred. He points out that this movie is still relevant today as we continue to encounter division and racial conflicts. This movie inspires us to fight for unity as we see two groups fighting against one another end up as one group fighting together.

Pastor Miles explains how conflict causes us to choose a side. However, Pastor Miles challenges our thinking here. He says that it's not about choosing a side; it's about choosing to serve God. He cites Joshua chapter 5:13-14. The battle of racial unity is God's idea. We need God's help.

How we see one another and further deepen our commitment to love one another just as God loves you is Pastor Miles encouragement for us this week.

Icebreaker: What were the conversations around race and ethnicity like in your family growing up? When were you first made aware of your racial and ethnic identity? Tell us something you love about your own culture and something you wish were different.

Leader's note: Create a safe space to be honest here. It's okay, and actually preferred, for people to come to terms with acknowledging their discomfort with the topic, their fear of saying the wrong thing, and their worry about being judged or called a racist. This dialogue will go nowhere if folks aren't willing to move past their fear and engage. Consider going first for this week's icebreaker.

S

Scripture:

Read Ephesians 4:1-6. Paul is discussing the standards for God's community. He explains what we must be and do in everyday living. In these verses he emphasizes the standard of unity.

How do you think unity is different from uniformity? What examples from *Remember the Titans* can you use to illustrate unity? And uniformity?

Look at verses 1-6, what does Paul beg the Ephesians to do?

Define each of the characteristics to which Paul calls us to in verse 2.
How are these same characteristics needed on a football team?
How did you see these characters illustrated by the coaches and players in the movie?
In what ways does Ephesians 4:1-6 help us in the conversation about race?
Why is the topic of race and unity so important for Christians to discuss together?

Pastor Miles points out the players in the movie saw one another as enemies even though they had a common cause, a shared goal. It wasn't until they players were forced to get to know one another that they discovered they had more similarities than differences.

Pastor Miles reminds us that racial differences become a thing of the past when we focus on the common goal. The team then began to work together as one not two; focusing on fighting the other team; forging unity through diversity.

When we have a task at hand, and we were all working toward it we become unified and the differences between us seem less important. In the movie, a strong bond of unity was formed because of manmade tasks.

Take a moment to discuss the strength of the bond that is available to us when we connect around God's values and mission. Use Ephesians 4:1-6 to guide the discussion.

What role does pride play in creating unity? What is the real enemy to unity?

As shown in the film, Yoast's coaching style was laid back and quiet. In that way was it different than Boone's boot camp/drill sergeant approach. What did these two men have in common? What were their differences? How did they overcome their differences to win? What change their perspective toward on one another? How do looking at these two men help us with our own perspectives on other ethnicities?

If our common goal is loving relationships no matter what they cost us personally. How was this love illustrated in the movie? What does this kind of love do to pride and selfishness? How would this change your relationships? Change our culture?



Prayer:

Divide into groups of two or three. Discuss two things you want to see the Lord do in your heart concerning your thoughts on race.

Come back as a group and spend some time praying that God does his work to shape the hearts of your group members. Ask him to transform your attitudes and create opportunities to bring about his glory in this specific way.

Pray for the unity of the church. As you pray for the unity of the church you will find yourself shifting the focus from how we differ in ideas or practices, and onto the One who holds us all together.

Pray for pastors and leaders. If the church is to unite in new ways, it will likely come from the leaders. Pray for Pastor Miles and other church leaders to catch the same vision that upholds unity.



Next Steps:

As shown in the last clip, we see two young men that started as enemies but ended up as brothers. Galatians 6:2 tells us to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. "Burdens" are extra heavy loads, which here represents difficulties or problems people have trouble dealing with. "Bear" means carrying something with endurance.

Consider the arenas of your life where you have unity with people very different than you.

- Do you work in an office of people in different life stages?
- Are you involved in your community?
- Where do you serve, and who are the people you interact with?
- Think about the ways you have found meaningful connections with people different than you.

How can you and perhaps your group be more intentional in serving and showing love to people who are different than us this week?

How can you carry one another's burdens? What are some practical things you can do individually or as a group?

- This week invite someone different from you to be a guest in your home or to coffee or to group next week.
- Discuss the personal shifts in your own heart with a friend.
- Make a point to discuss race from a biblical perspective with someone close to you.

Bonus: In camp, Coach Boone brought the team to Gettysburg. Here is a clip from the movie Gettysburg - it is a speech given by Col Chamberlain to a group of 120 fellow Maine soldiers who were declared 'deserters' because their enlistment contracts expired and the men experienced poor leadership. This speech has been called the turning point of the Civil War because it happened the day before the biggest battle. Col Chamberlain needed every possible man to fight in his regiment.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2d2_zeJTJcw

Following the speech, 118 men joined the 20th Maine group and were instrumental in winning the battle at Little Round Top.