



June 8, 2020

Greetings Parklawn Family,

I pray that this letter finds you in faith and wellness. Our nation is in a very critical state as I write. We've always needed the Lord, but we are in a time of great desperation for a move of God.

The murders of Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor as well as the actions of Amy Cooper were enough to set many of our emotions on edge. The heinous murder of George Floyd was a tipping point after years and years of frustration and anger due to racism and systematic oppression.

As many of you have witnessed, there has been a groundswell of outrage across the world. Millions have lifted their voices vociferously to decry racism and to denounce systemic oppression that leads to the atrocities that many of us are tired of seeing and hearing about. The outpouring of support for the family of George Floyd has included men and women from all classes, ethnicities, and faiths. Efforts have been poignantly rooted in esteem for humanity and justice. In Milwaukee, hundreds have rallied, seeking justice for Joel Acevedo and supporting his family in similar fashion.

While the police departments in Minneapolis and Louisville are under intense scrutiny and have been publicly reviled; and while the privileged actions of Amy Cooper and the depraved actions of the McMichaels have both been vilified, I assure you that in all this, we don't wrestle against flesh and blood (Eph. 6:12). I believe that the guilty should be held accountable. I believe that police reform is necessary. I condemn racism and systemic oppression. I believe both are inherently evil. I also believe that it's all rooted in sin. And, ultimately Jesus Christ, the Righteous (1 John 2:1-2), is the only One who can transform the hearts of men who devise social, political, and economic structures and arrangements that deny people the right to live and become all that God intended.

God loves justice (Ps. 99:4). In fact, His throne has a foundation of righteousness and justice (Ps. 89:14). The standard of morality and rightness that people want is really based on His nature. God is light, holy, and righteous. Thus, we cannot expect righteousness unless God is in it. Not in name. Not vain piety. No, things are completely set right when the nature of God influences the vision, values, behaviors, and essentially the ethos of organizations, cities, and nations. When men have a new nature, they will behave differently (2 Cor. 5:17).

**What does all this mean for PAOG?** We have a role in creating lasting change. It means that the people who know their God must do exploits (Dan. 11:32). It means that our voice matters. It means that we cannot sit on the sidelines. We have unique access to the One who has *the* wisdom, *the* strategies, *the* language, *the* love, and above all *the* power. Love does not rejoice in injustice but rejoices when the truth wins out (1 Cor. 13:6). His love should compel us to advocate for justice and truth in all spaces.

**What should we do?** Marching peacefully. Spreading awareness about the issue of police brutality. Write letters to local officials to express our concerns. Vote. Complete the census. When given the opportunity,

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# Parklawn

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give feedback concerning public servants and politicians. Affirm, equip, and raise strong children who understand the traps of inequitable systems. Have critical conversations with people in your sphere of influence, explaining the history of race in the United States and pointing out how subtly prejudice and bigotry work is good. All of these and more are important natural actions. Yes, get involved! But, there's even more.

As ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20) our primary responsibility is to **pray** (2 Chron. 7:14). Why? It's part of our foundation. We represent God's kingdom. We are a holy nation of kings and priests (Rev. 5:10; 1 Peter 2:9). We convey God's heart to earth, and we communicate earth's concerns to God. At its core this is a supernatural fight. Racism is a stubborn demon. Earthly weapons alone aren't enough (2 Cor. 10:3-5). The Church holds the keys, (Matthew 16:19). and we must use them. God gave us authority to set the precedent and patterns for what happens in the Earth (Ps. 8:4-6). Hence, what wicked people have set up, righteous people have to dismantle. **Prayer plus action equals results!**

Finally family, all people are image-bearers of God (Gen. 1:26,27). PAOG honors all men and women regardless of ethnicity or background. We also recognize and highly regard the beauty and dignity of Blacks in the United States and across the world. God is grieved when humanity suffers. Even now, God does not ignore the cries of those suffering. Be encouraged beloved. God hears you. He hears us. And, similar to the case with the Israelites, God will send deliverance (Exodus). Seek His face. Ask the Lord what your role is. I guarantee that God will answer and lead and guide you into all truth (John 14:16-17).

If you are an individual who is uniquely connected to the community and you have insight into ways that Parklawn can share light, life, and love with our neighbors, please contact our church office (414-442-7411). I/we want to hear from you.

Grace and peace,

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