Small Group Discussion Guide

January 15, 2023

Sermon Title: A Better Country

Speaker: Reverend Raphael Warnock

Occasion: Dr. Martin L. King Jr. Sunday

***Hebrews 11:13-16*** *(NRSV)*

***13****All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth,****14****for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.****15****If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return.****16****But as it is, they desire a better homeland, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.*

**Sermon Summary:**

The sermon presents Hebrews chapter 11 as a “Hall of Fame” for the heroes and heroines of faith. Reverend Warnock’s sermon advocated, the impressive list of curricula vitae including the likes of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses must be updated to include the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Warnock noted King’s life’s work is consistent with the other Hall of Famers because like them he ministered and lead the Civil Rights movement “by faith”. The sermon points include:

1. King’s Faith is demonstrated in his courage to face physical dangers as a prophet of justice. By Faith he stood when Rosa Parks sat down; by Faith he taught us to meet brute force with soul force and protest with the creative weapon of love.
2. King’s Faith allowed him to envision a Better Country. By Faith he left the comfort of a pulpit and made the world his parish; by Faith he dreamed a dream for America and fought for a better country.
3. King’s Faith led him like his predecessors to die in faith without receiving the promises but seeing them from afar. King spoke prophetically when he said, “I’ve been to the mountain top and seen the promised land…I might not get there with…”.

The sermon concludes with Reverend Warnock’s exhortation to congregants and listeners to strive toward a Beloved Community inclusive and respectful of all people, religions and cultures.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What resemblances do you see with Dr. King and a specific hero of faith?
2. How has your understanding grown about the text, *“And these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them*.” (Hebrews 11:13 NRSV)?
3. Does living by faith mean you will experience suffering? Explain
4. Describe how one of the Hall of Famer’s faith most resembles yours?
5. Why did the King and the Heros of Faith seek a “Better Country”?
6. What practical lessons about faith have you gained from the sermon?