

Q & A with Jon. 9.5.2020
Together #forSalem Episode 25

What does Crosscreek believe...?

Application: Dig into what you believe and WHY! Disagree? Great... dig and really see why you disagree.

What does Crosscreek believe... about GOD?

(John 3:16-17)

God is not mad at you or disinterested in you. He is on the edge of his seat fully active in your life.

He loves you so much that he sent Jesus so that you can be restored to him.

What does Crosscreek believe... about the CHURCH?

(2 Corinthians 5:19-21)

Church is not meant to be a club for religious people.

The Church was created FOR the world.

We are trying to undo a lot of what people assume about the Church.

Crosscreek's mission is to lead people into a transforming relationship with Jesus Christ.

Decisions are made from the filter of what is the best way to accomplish our mission, not what do *WE* want or prefer.

We are trying to create a community that is safe, accepting, leaves room for doubt/questions, and works with God as he works at his own speed.

We desire to equip Jesus Followers to lead others to Jesus by loving like Jesus and sharing about his life, death, and resurrection.

What does Crosscreek Believe... about the LGBTQI Community?

(2 Corinthians 5:15 and 17) (John 1:14)

This is a very personal question... not just a theological question. Therefore, we can't and won't just give a quick, blanket statement as many wish we would. We choose to take each person one at a time

Sexual orientation is not the make or break issue it's been made into. If it was, there would be a lot more in the New Testament writings about it. The biblical writers are much more concerned with the significance of Jesus' life/death/resurrection, unity of the Church, and personal and communal faith exercising itself through love. We choose to start there and then move to other aspects of life.

The real issue is identity. We can choose many facets of life to define us. A Jesus-Follower finds their identity in Jesus. Sexuality doesn't define who we are.

It breaks my heart that people in the name of the "church" have poured hate on the LGBTQI community. And it makes our mission even more difficult than it needs to be. It's one of my passions to let people (created in the image of God) who have been mistreated by others, who falsely claim to be speaking for Jesus, know that Jesus loves them and is FOR them.

Based on our research and study of the specific phrasing in the original Greek used in the New Testament writings, Crosscreek believes that homosexual actions are not what God intends for us. Physical sexual expression is reserved only for people within a man/woman marriage. There are scholars that disagree with this... though most agree. However, we do not make it a deal-breaker.

The LGBTQI community deserves the same amount of respect, love, and care that all humans do. Everyone is fully welcome to come to Crosscreek and participate in our process. Orientation does not keep people from being loved by God and experiencing his forgiveness and new life. **Sexual preference/orientation does not send someone to hell.**

We do not believe sexual preference/orientation is a choice. The choice, and sin, comes in when the choice is made to act on that preference. But again, we don't make this a deal breaker.

What I've told those in our church is, "We could be wrong. There are scholars who do disagree with us. **We can disagree and still be in the same family.** All I ask is that if God does put it on your heart to reconsider your choice that you would be willing to listen to that and I promise to do the same." We have chosen to walk through this together in love and patience and it's been one of the most exciting/encouraging times I've had in ministry. B/c the point is following Jesus... not making sure we check all the right boxes of behavior and beliefs.

What does Crosscreek believe... about Racism? **(Galatians 3:26-29) (Revelation 7:9-10)**

Racism is from the pit of hell. It is absolutely the opposite of everything Jesus showed us and what the biblical writings teach us.

For me personally, it's a thread that I am still unraveling. How BEST do I, and Crosscreek, approach this? My goal has never been to reshape the political landscape but to bring individuals into a relationship with Jesus that will completely transform their hearts. If people are transformed to love like Jesus then there would be no room for racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.

This is going to be a process for me. I've realized I have A LOT of learning to do still. The questions I'm asking right now are... What personal prejudices have I been blind to? What can I

do as an individual Jesus Follower to show Jesus' love to all around me? How can we approach the subject of racism through the filter of Jesus and not politics?

As we move forward, one conviction I have is the need to point out more clearly the gravity and beauty of the Gospel and its blatant ramifications on the idea of race and prejudice.

What does Crosscreek believe... about POLITICS?

(Philippians 3:20)

If the God you worship agrees with everything your political party says you probably need to reexamine the god you worship.

One of the worst things to happen to the American Church is its emphasis and reliance on politics and politicians to fix the community/country. Jesus Followers do not find their identity in their political leanings.

The Church is called to live for a different kingdom.

God's kingdom is so different from anything we see here on earth. "My side has to win so that we can have the power to fix things"... is found nowhere in Jesus' teachings. The Church has a responsibility to call out injustice and evil wherever it is found no matter what political party is involved.

Another sad thing is the division being created because of politics. A Jesus Follower has more in common with another Jesus Follower from an opposing political party than they do with someone who is not a Jesus Follower from the same political party. But we cancel, fight, belittle our family members b/c they disagree about aspects of an earthly/temporary kingdom.

We have a responsibility to be informed and vote and discuss. But our **allegiance** is to Jesus and his kingdom.

Our **identity** is Jesus and his kingdom. We can't let our earthly politics distract us from our true purpose.

What does Crosscreek believe... about women in leadership?

This is still a work in progress. Therefore we have no official stance. The biblical writings are not as clear as many might think. The New Testament shows many women in leadership positions. A big question is... Are Paul's comments about women not teaching specific to that particular people and culture or is it meant to be binding for all churches for all of time? We are still discussing and exploring this topic.

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Study / Small Group Questions

1. Jon encouraged us, whether we agree or disagree, to go further and ask ourselves WHY. Of the topics covered (God, Church, LGBTQ+, Politics, Race & Women), which would you want to dig deeper into in your own learning and journey? What are some specific questions you have?
2. “Identity” also came out as a major theme of the Q & A. Read Colossians 3:1-17. What is God saying to you about who you are?
3. What are your next steps in response to this weekend’s episode? How can your group pray for you and support you in this?