

UNIQUELY UNITED

OCTOBER 11, 2020

"Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world!" Did you ever sing that song in church? If you did, and if the church you grew up in was like most churches in America, you probably didn't see as diverse a group of people in your church as was described in that song. It has been said that the most segregated hour in America is on Sunday morning. But how can that be? If God's love crosses racial, ethnic, and cultural barriers, why is His church still so divided by race? Join us for the final message in **Tightrope** where we will explore the importance of diversity and unity, and learn how the church must begin to pursue greater diversity if we are going to fulfill Jesus' mission.

PASSAGE: Luke 4:16-22

CORE VALUE:

We are _____ but _____ .

Diversity
— Unity

Unity
— Diversity

Diversity
+ Unity

BALANCE CHECK:

Secular Tribalism (Diversity) ----- Religious Tribalism (Unity)

Questions:

- Has your commitment to diversity led you away from a commitment to the essential Gospel message?
- Are you more interested in making people like you than you are in sharing the universal Gospel message?



DAILY READINGS:

Day 1: Luke 4 Day 5: Acts 15
Day 2: Ephesians 2 Day 6: Galatians 2
Day 3: Acts 10 Day 7: Galatians 3
Day 4: Acts 11

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

Books:

Bloodlines, by John Piper

Other sermons at ssbc.org/sermon-archive:

Jumping Fences (July 1, 2018)

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

This week we are wrapping up the *Tightrope* series. In our worship gatherings we are focused on our church's core values and how those values provide clarity in times of uncertainty. For a complete list and description of our core values, mission, and vision, please check out a document called *Pathways* available online or on campus.

HANGOUT [WARMING UP TO THE TOPIC]:

1. Pastor Gary said that this week's value, "We are diverse but united," is our most "aspirational." What do you think he means by that? Do you agree? Why or why not?

2. When it comes to the issue of race in America, is the church a thermometer or a thermostat?

HEAR [LISTENING TO GOD THROUGH SCRIPTURE]:

3. Read Acts 11:1-18.

- Who was criticizing Peter and why?
- What do you think is significant about this passage?

4. Read Acts 15:1-21.

- What is the conflict and question being brought before the Apostles?
- What decision is made?
- How does James come to that decision?
- Verse 14 mentions "Simon" also known as Peter. Do you think this is a reference to Peter's experience described in Acts 11? Why or why not?

5. Read Galatians 2:11-16.

- What stand out most to you about this passage?
- What might have motivated Peter to act differently when James and the other apostles showed up?
- Have you ever been in a situation like this? What happened? How did you feel?
- How did Paul respond to Peter's hypocrisy?
- What takeaways can we draw from this discussion as it relates to our church becoming more diverse even as we seek to be united?

HUDDLE [MAKING IT PERSONAL AND PRAYING TOGETHER - IN HUDDLES]:

6. Do you have any **close** friends of a different race or ethnicity? If not, why not? If so, what challenges had to be overcome? Why is this important for the mission of our church? Talk about it, invite accountability, and take time to pray.