**Detroit a Special Place because of its Diversity.** In God's providence he has allowed **RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY** to arise as one of the most dominant issue facing the church in this hour history. **BUT ITS ALSO ONE OF THE CENTRAL DYNAMICS OF THE N.T.**

Every where we turn in today's culture we are **bombarded with lighting rods racial conflicts,** which only prove to show how hyper polarized we have become. **This disunity is only exasperated by the extreme influence partisan politics have played in the church.** Sadly, many CHRISTIANS have BAPTIZED the gospel so deeply into the political commentaries of our time. **WHEN JESUS ENCOUNTERS THE NATIONS!**

**BLACK AND WHITE, LATINO AND ASIAN, ARAB AND JEWISH Christians are now rubbing up against each other like TECTONIC PLATES** and I fear that we are standing on the verge of A MASSIVE EARTHQUAKE. WE SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED!

**MATTHEW 24:7(ESV) "FOR NATION (Ethnos) SHALL RISE AGAINST NATION (Ethnos) and KINGDOM (worldview) SHALL RISE AGAINST KINGDOM (worldview)!**

**\*\*\*\*SO HOW DO WE AVOID IT?\*\*\*\*. GOD IS MOST GLORIFIED WHEN WE ARE MOST UNIFIED!**

**First lets talk about why our unity is so important --- JOHN 17:20-23(ESV).**

**20 "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.**

**Twice Jesus clearly explains why unity is important.** IT IS BECAUSE OUR UNITY AUTHENTICATES THE GOSPEL THAT WE PREACH. Put another way OUR UNITY PROVIDES CREDIBILITY TO THE GOSPEL (CROSS).

**When we lack racial unity we lose our credibility within the culture that Christ has called us to evangelize for his glory.**

***\*\*\*\*SO HOW DO WE ACHIEVE RACIAL/ETHNIC UNITY\*\*\*\****

**ACTS 6:1-7(ESV)** 1 Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. 2 And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. 3 Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." 5 And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. 6 These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

*I AM SO GRATEFUL FOR THE WISDOM OF GOD TO INCLUDE THIS MOMENT OF ETHNIC TENSION IN SCRIPTURE*. **THIS WAS AN ENOROMOUSLY COMPLEX ISSUE**. You have **Privilege and Power, Abuse, Anger and Ethnic Discord** all at work this one passage. ***So important to remember that*** ***The church was very young and very fragile.*** This type of dispute had the **potential of, not only dividing the church, but totally destroying our global witness.** Instead of being known as a church of **love, Justice and Truth. We would have been known as the group that MARGINALIZES MINORITIES AND MINIMIZED THE CONCERNS OF THE WEAK.**

HOWEVER, THEIR RESPONSE produces a model of what racial unity looks like and preserves the testimony of the church.

There are **3 Basic Principles for Preserving Racial Unity**:

1. **Sympathy**: they didn't dismiss the issue. **They took their concern seriously** enough to call together a general assembly. **Nothing hurt more than having your pain dismissed, minimized or explained away as irrational.** A lack of sympathy will always produces disunity. **SYMPATHY IS NOT RUBBER-STAMPING**. IF AN ENTIRE SEGMENT OF OUR FAMILY IS SAYING THEY ARE HURTING WE HAVE TO TAKE THAT AS SERIOUSLY AS THE APOSTLES DID!
2. **Solidarity**: they dealt with the concerns as a community, again they brought everyone together and listen to their concerns. **They didn't treat the offended paternally. NOR DID THEY RUN TO THEIR OWN SYLOS.** They were committed to doing life together and to loving one another, even through offense. **We need to be committed to SOLIDARITY! No separatist organizations were start (Grecian Lives Matter)**
3. **Shared Leadership**: everyone of the leaders mentioned here have Hellenistic names. The group with the greatest amount of social capital in the community shared it with those who were a part of the minority group.

**THERE IS A FAMOUS AFRICAN PROVERB, "IF YOU WANT TO GO FAST GO ALONE. IF YOU WANT TO GO FAR GO TOGETHER!"**

I believe the **GOSPEL HAS GONE FAR BECAUSE WE'VE GONE TOGETHER**!

**This was radical and Christ like and THE RESULTS are seen in verse** *7. And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.*

**The WORD SPREAD, MANY WERE SAVED, AND A LIVED THEOLOGY SOFTENED EVEN, THE HARD HEARTS, OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF THEIR DAY.**

Can we live out our convictions and be committed to SYMPATHY, SOLIDARITY AND SHARED LEADERSHIP!