

Summary: People often remark that we talk about difficult topics at our church: racism, the refugee crisis, gun violence, and sexual abuse. We do so not to be controversial or to be political, but because many of these issues directly affect people in our congregation, and they are addressed directly in Scripture as well.

But there is another reason why we address these kinds of issues: because we believe God can transform and redeem them. As an example of this, we looked at John 21, how Jesus seems to bring up Peter's greatest failure by asking Peter three times if he loves Jesus, a mirror for the three times that Peter denies Jesus. But Jesus' motivation is not to shame or disgrace his disciple, but to reinstate, recommission, and restore him.

And that is another important reason that we bring up hard topics - not just because they are biblical topics, but because we truly believe that when we bring them before God, He is more than able to transform and redeem them fully, as so well exemplified by the transformation that our courageous sisters in our sexual abuse support group are experiencing.

Reflection Questions:

- Do you agree with the perspective that RAC regularly talks about difficult topics? How do you feel about that? What conversation or sermon stands out to you in that vein? Why did it stand out to you?

- While we do not try to be trendy, we do want to equip our congregation to think through and address real issues that we face in a way that is biblical and glorifying to God, instead of hiding them away. Has the church helped you to do this? How? And how could we do that better?

- The issues that we address are not just ideas, but realities that some in our congregation face daily. Do you know people in our congregation who are directly affected by some of the topics that we have addressed? How does this change your understanding or approach to these controversial issues?

- Over all else, we talk about these kinds of issues because we believe that Scripture talks about them, and we want to be faithful to the Word and what it says. Do you feel like you have a deeper Biblical understanding of these issues? How does this Biblical framework change your understanding or approach to these issues, or differentiate your point of view from others?

- Lastly, we address these things not just because they are addressed in Scripture, but because we believe that God can redeem them. Have you ever experienced this, whether in your life or in the life of someone you know, where God transformed or healed what seemed like an unredeemable moment or experience? How did that happen? What did that teach you?