

V Easter 4-29-18

We were headed south this past week on a rainy Monday. We realized we weren't going to golf when we reached our destination, so we decided to visit the Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee. It is located where Dr. King was murdered fifty years ago. In fact, they have preserved and used the Lorraine Hotel, one of the few hotels where Blacks – African Americans were welcomed to stay. You can see the balcony where he died. You can go across the street and see where the shooter stood when he shot and killed Dr. King on April 4, 1968, 50 years ago.

We had been there before. But, because a number of NBA players had visited the site since Memphis has an NBA team, they sponsored a renovation of the museum with the help of other corporations. If you're headed south, I recommend it. It tells the sad story of slavery – which kidnapped folks from their family and home – and treated them worse than their animals in many cases. The story continues with the Civil War, the carpetbaggers, and the Jim Crow laws that flourished in the south. It tells the story of the civil rights movement, led by Dr. King, to give all blacks the promise that America promises to all its people. The story ends with today...most recently the Black Lives Matter movement. We still have a ways to go before we're **connected**.

So I say to you, my friends, that even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow. I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed – we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men (and women) are created equal. MLK – 28 August, 1963

More than an American dream, that is Jesus' dream. We are all connected. We are all God's children. We all have dignity. We are called to deepen our connection to God and each other by imitating the Risen Christ who is in our midst, challenging us to live the dream where we remember who connects us and challenges us to live as brother and sister ALWAYS.

Paul or Saul tells his readers in Galatians 3, that the risen Christ is different from the historical Jesus. In Christ there is no Jew or Gentile, slave or free, or man or woman. More than just Jewish men could become other Christs." Acceptance of Paul as a converted apostle, was not easy for those he had persecuted. In fact, they thought of killing him. There was some need for pruning on the part of Paul and the early Church. In the end, the author of I John says this: Jesus' commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us.

Despite disagreement and dissension, the community of believers is strongest when we are in Christ. The story is told among the people of South India about a wealthy landowner who had four quarrelsome sons. When he sensed that death was near, the father called his sons and divided his property. Then he called for some sticks to be brought, tied tightly into a bundle, and he told each son to try to break the bundle. Not one could do it. Then he asked for the sticks to be taken out of the bundle. "Try now," he said. With little effort they could break each single stick. The father told them that strength comes from unity. United, they'd stand; divided they'd fall.

There's an old poster popular in my college days which read: God made me, God doesn't make junk. Let us love each other...born in the image of God. God is good, all the time. Let's be the same.