

Sermon Title: **“Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Appointment”**

Bible: **Galatians 3:25-28 & Romans 13:8-10**

Where & When: at Gilroy UMC on Sunday, January 31, 2021

Audience: about 30 YouTube Viewers

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, please open our ears. We are here and now to listen to your calling and voice. As God used the Apostle Paul and the early churches, please use us for your kingdom. In Jesus' name. Amen.

1. Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Appointment

Have you heard of the “Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Appointment?” Someone might call this a CRCC appointment. Anyone? I believe that this is a very unique and special type of appointment in the United Methodist Church. This kind of appointment has existed in the United Methodist Church, before this terminology was even created. Actually, this appointment describes who we are and what we do. Does this surprise you? It is okay to not have heard before of Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Appointments. We cannot hear our heartbeats, but our hearts still beat, right?

First of all, I will explain what an “appointment” looks like. In the United Methodist Church, pastors are “appointed” to the local churches. In many other denominations, the churches choose their pastors. It is not a matter of right and wrong. It could be a matter of preference, or of different theological understandings. I believe that you have your own thoughts (good and bad) and experiences of our appointment system. I like our appointment system. In my

understanding, according to the bishop, God sends pastors to where pastors are needed. As a pastor, my sincere answer to God's calling is "Send me! Here I am, Lord! I will go!" I am proud of my active answer. I am thankful for God's calling and our appointment system. All of these things guided me to meet this awesome church and serve all of you as a pastor.

Then, what is a "Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Appointment?" It has been in the Book of Discipline, I believe, since 2012; "Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Appointments are appointments of clergy persons to congregations in which the majority of their constituencies are different from the clergy person's own racial/ethnic and cultural background." Yes, my appointment to the Gilroy congregation is an example of a Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural appointment. Rather than "Why us?" questions, you welcome me as your pastor with openness and boldness. It is a blessing to serve this awesome church.

2. Thanks to Martin Luther King Jr.

Many of us did not know the term "Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Appointment." But we are an example; let me restate this, we are one of the great examples of this unique appointment. How can we be this, and how can we do this? One of my answers is that thanks to the dream of Martin Luther King Jr., we trust each other and learn from each other beyond color, race, culture, and language. I owe a lot to Martin Luther King Jr. Without him, we might not be able to be as aware of racism, and we might not be able to dream this. As we read Paul's letter to Galatians, in the time of the Apostle Paul, about 2000 years ago, even in the church, there were discriminations between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female. Paul declared that there is no longer Jew nor Greek, no longer slave nor free, no longer male and female. That's

because we are one in Jesus Christ, and we are all children of God. How about now? Do we see or hear any discriminations? In the 20th century, and even in the 21st century, I believe that the “I have a dream” speech still inspires us and leads us to this journey of Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Appointment. Thankfully, our church remembers February as Black History Month. Even as a Korean, I also celebrate Black History Month. This is one of the ways for me to pay back a debt of love and vision to Martin Luther King Jr.

3. Eleven o’clock on Sunday Morning?

I would like to close my message with a quote from Martin Luther King Jr. This quote really bothers me. When I read it, my heart is broken. “It is appalling that the most segregated hour of Christian America is eleven o’clock on Sunday morning.” Do you agree with what he said? Why eleven o’clock on Sunday Morning? What happens at eleven o’clock? I cannot dare to say “O, Martin Luther King Jr., that is incorrect.” But I have a dream. Because of our journey of cross-racial and cross-cultural appointment, the day is coming. The day when we can say “That is not correct any more” is coming. With our openness and our boldness, the day is coming when we are one in Jesus Christ! Shall we dream that this day is coming to us?

Closing Prayer

O Lord, thank you so much for this unique cross-racial and cross-cultural appointment. Please guide us to be bold and to be open-minded more and more. Please lead us to be aware of racism and to dismantle it with your love and grace. We are all your children. Please make us one in Jesus Christ. In Jesus’ name. Amen.