

## "A HOUSE OF CONVERSATION"

Date: June 7, 2020

Speaker: Danny Clinton



### **\*\*IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT\*\***

**"Please be aware that this weekend's message will involve difficult topics that may require additional conversations and processing."**

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**So, today we launch perhaps the most complex teaching series we have ever stepped into at our Church entitled 'Kaleidoscope'...**

- I chose the imagery of a Kaleidoscope for two primary reasons...
  1. Because of how a Kaleidoscope works internally.  
**Def:** "A kaleidoscope is an optical instrument which has two or more reflecting surfaces **skewed to each** other in an angle."
  2. Because of the beauty these opposing views bring forth when brought together.
- The name is derived from the Greek words kalos ("beautiful"), eidos ("form") = **Beautiful Form**

**Now up to this point Kessid has had a strong track record of walking through many "Kaleidoscopic conversations" ...**

- We did it when talking about how trauma affects us all differently in our 'Dragons and Dragonflies' Series on Emotional Health.
- We did it when in our Series 'Tradition, Legend and Lore.' When we walked with each other through what it means to worship and serve in the Church, even though we all come from different Spiritual or even Non-Churched backgrounds.
- And of course, we had an entire series about being willing to step into your own skin and evaluate why you believe the things you do, in our "Untethered" series.

**And through these rather uncomfortable series God has built something beautiful!**

- Perhaps the most commented on thing about Kessid is the variety of people that attend.
- Specifically, how rare it is to find so many people of all ages and spiritual backgrounds in one place...

- Now, this is not because we have somehow magically cracked the code of Church community building, but instead:

**“Kessid Church has been taught by the Holy Spirit that we all bring a unique and valuable piece to the community that God is actively building.”**

- The goal of our Kaleidoscope Series is to build upon this important foundation even further.
- As we attempt to dive into the always controversial topic of injustice, racial injustice specifically.
- Something the Bible talks about in great detail.

**Now, today’s message is an introduction... It’s a ‘tone’ setting talk.**

- The space is good, God is present, and now I’m going to ask your permission to speak freely... Some as your Pastor, but today also as just Danny.
- (Vs) John 3:1-5; Nicodemus recognized that there was a problem, but he didn’t know how the realization of that problem would affect his day to day life, so he showed up, in the dark, but he still showed up...
- Jesus responded by telling him to do the impossible and ‘be born again.’
- But this man’s whole life has been built from one perspective, one specific side of the mirror.
- Jesus said this, in essence, ‘Is the problem.’

**Now, I mentioned earlier that over the years Kessid has had a slew of ‘Kaleidoscopic’ conversations which have resulted in a wonderfully varied group of Church members...**

- But this varied group of members, as diverse as it is in spiritual background and age is still one that is... 90% White.
- This means that the majority of our understandings and viewpoints will be filtered from this world view.

**So, like with past discussions we are going to sit and try to see from another perspective; another side of the mirror.**

- ... A side that may even feel in opposition to our own views, but that when seen from another’s perspective COULD together with our own create an image beautiful beyond what any one side could create by itself...

**I spent the last two weeks living in this Uncomfortable Place...**

- Having uncomfortable conversations and praying uncomfortable prayers...

- If I was being dangerously transparent... this resulted in me having a lot of “Nicodemus style” conversations in the dark with Jesus. And sadly, like Nicodemus I’ve heard from Christ, “There is a problem.”

**I’m hoping of course that no one watching right now would argue that racism doesn’t exist and isn’t evil...**

- But beyond that I’ve come to the place, personally to confess that I believe I’m part of this problem...

**Now, I do not believe that I’m Racist...**

- I grew up with black friends, and quite often found myself as the only white kid at many a family dinner table or outing.
- As a matter of fact, the only thing I didn’t like about my friend T.J. was that he always had more Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles than I did!

**And I hear these sorts of comments from other white people as well...**

- That they truly love and respect their fellow brothers and sister of color, and that they wish they could do more to help...But they don’t know how!

**So, allow me to share a bit of what I’m learning and why I’ve come to this place...**

1. **I’m learning that I need to do less talking and more listening.** In each of my uncomfortable conversations this week, at one point or another I’d want to clarify or defend a position or perspective. This is not helpful when trying to hear from another person’s viewpoint.

**“Normally my aim is to give a voice to the voiceless, but I think our work is to show up, be brave, and give ears to the earless.” – Brene Brown**

2. **I’m learning that people of color respect the effort, even if it’s messy.** This to me is exactly what Jesus was doing with Nicodemus... He was glad that he showed up, even if it was in the dark at first.
3. **Lastly, I’m learning that oftentimes it’s more important to fully hurt with hurting people than it is to even fully understand their pain.** I can tell you right now, as Danny Clinton, a 42-year-old white man living in Washington State, I have never experienced personal racism. It’s just not part of my daily life...

**Now you can “Yeah, but have you considered...” me all day long...**

- And you'd be right. There are many angles and points to consider, argue and discuss.
- But, I'm not asking you to argue or discuss, I'm just asking you to listen.
- And, even in complete disagreement, to hurt with hurting people.

**“The very core, Discipleship is about decentralizing ourselves.”**

**My hope for this series is that that's exactly what happens...**

- That we all, even coming from different perspectives, can join together to create a “Beautiful Form.”
- To accomplish this...
  - ▶ We will be hearing from some other voices and perspectives.
  - ▶ We will be leaning heavily on the Holy Spirit to guide diverse conversations.
  - ▶ We will be doing the work of the gospel as we step into the shoes of others, and so create a community for all and for God.