

NAME

Redeemer hosts Dr. Esau McCaulley (10.20.20)

DATE

October 22, 2020

DURATION

1h 18m 34s

6 SPEAKERS

Amanda Rosengren

Jay Greener

Esau McCaulley

Audience Member 1

Audience Member 2

Prayer

START OF TRANSCRIPT**[00:00:01] Amanda Rosengren**

All right, I believe we are recording; this is great. Welcome everybody. What I'm going to do quickly is I'm going to mute everybody except the people that need to talk.

[00:00:13] Amanda Rosengren

Hopefully you're in the right space here, this is our discussion, our conversation with Esau McCaulley tonight. We're going to turn it over in a second to our senior pastor of Church of the Redeemer, Jay Greener. But I just wanted to give you a sense of what the evening will be like in terms of format. So we're going to take an hour to have some Q&A with Esau. I'm going to moderate that time in part because otherwise we would just all bombard him because we want to hear what he has to say and have so many questions. But I want to invite you again to put questions in the chat as they come up. And I'll do my best to kind of incorporate those as we have a chance. We get Esau, I believe, for an hour and then we'll let him go crash or take care of his kids or whatever he needs to do. And for those of us who would like to, we'll stay around another half hour to debrief, talk about takeaways and try to get straight in our heads, what is it that the Spirit is doing in us through this time? Great. I'm going to turn it over -- I'm going to mute everybody and then unmute. Hold on... OK.

[00:01:24] Amanda Rosengren

Great. I encourage everybody to now on your Zoom thing to turn it on to the speaker view so you can be up close and personal with the right folks here. And I'm going to turn it over to Father Jay Greener, who is our senior pastor, our rector, at Church of the Redeemer.

[00:01:40] Jay Greener

Everybody, welcome. It's really good to be able to be with you and welcome you here to this important time, and I just want to kick this off as we introduce Dr. Esau McCaulley who is our special guest tonight. Esau is a canon in the diocese that we are joining, Churches for the Sake of Others.

[00:01:58] Esau McCaulley

Are you joining our diocese?

[00:01:59] Jay Greener

We are. In fact, you guys are going to vote for us on November 14th. Hopefully you can approve us.

[00:02:06] Esau McCaulley

I mean, now I didn't realize I have the power now. Yeah.

[00:02:09] Jay Greener

So. Well, yeah, some of the power. Right. So and you know what? This is really great. Esau is a professor at Wheaton. He's a canon in the C4SO Diocese. He is a writer. He contributes to many publications, including the New York Times. I think some of us have seen this book that he has done, which I think is magnificent. And I had the privilege of getting some of it in person this summer at the course that he offered in Nashotah House. So I just want to welcome him and welcome you all to this time. And I want to remind us, why are we doing this? Why are we having these conversations? It's because we are charged to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and spirit and love our neighbor as ourselves. Right. That's really what it's about. And these are opportunities to learn

how to love God more fully and love our neighbor more fully. So I want to invite just into a moment of prayer as we begin. Again, Esau, thank you for being with us. I know you're very busy. I think your wife's probably off in Atlanta right now. Is she serving? That's got to be an additional challenge for you for everything that's going on right now.

[00:03:20] Jay Greener

So thank you, brother, for being with us. The Lord be with you. (Everyone: And also with you.) Lord God, we thank you for this day. It's a gift of your hand. I thank you for what you're doing in the world. I think we've been, I'VE been so negative on the COVID thing and all that's going on. And yet you have gifts in it for us. I know you do. And you have gifts in it for us to as we learn to live together as your people in the world, you're going to grow us. You're going to lead us into new territories. You're going to redeem us. You're going to help to reconcile us. So, Lord, please be a part of this time. We thank you for Esau, for his family. I pray your blessing upon them and his voice in the world right now, the platform that he has. I pray that you would give him your peace and also your presence. Lord, speak through him tonight. And, Lord, give us the gift of your unity. We pray in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thank you, Amanda. Over to you.

[00:04:26] Amanda Rosengren

Thank you, Jay. Welcome again, Esau. I'm really excited to have this conversation with you tonight. I want to also welcome again those who are joining us from all sorts of different places tonight and people I know, people I don't know. Jay, would you mute yourself? Because right now you're the only thing I see on my screen. I would rather see Esau, no offense. There. Easier to talk to you when I can see you! That's great. I also I don't know how, but I managed to get connected on the launch team for your book, so I got to see it early, which was really exciting, which is I feel like part of how you ended up here with us, so to speak. So anyway, welcome and thanks for making the time for us tonight and a busy day. I wonder if you'd start by just telling us a little bit about your faith journey, your church journey, and how that has kind of led you to this place where you wrote a book about reading while Black?

[00:05:20] Esau McCaulley

Yeah, I would say I grew up in the historic Black church, the Black Baptist tradition in Huntsville, Alabama. You were either Baptist or Pentecostal. And so I was Baptist and not Pentecostal. And so those that I knew about, like the AME, the black Methodist tradition. So I grew up there, all Black neighborhood, all Black high school, all Black football team, all Black, everything, basically. And that was just normal for me. I went from there to college at an all white college known as Sewanee University of the South. And for most of my life, I planned on being a Baptist pastor. And towards the end of my senior year, basically in college, I had this question that came to my mind, Why are you Baptist? I wasn't disgruntled. That was I was happy being a Black Baptist. He was a wonderful experience. I'm still like whenever I want to do stuff, I still bring out the Baptist. But I said, well, let me go and start looking at, like, you know, the different denominations. I didn't think that could be that many because there were Baptists and Pentecostals in my tradition in Alabama. So then I start reading about church history and all of those things, you know, introduced to Anglicanism. And I had in my mind, well, I like the liturgy. So if you put some Kirk Franklin with the Anglican liturgy and you'd have the perfect church, I didn't realize it would be way more complicated than that. But I was like twenty, twenty one and idealistic.

[00:06:44] Esau McCaulley

So I would then say that I wanted to go to seminary and this kind of gets to Reading While, what eventually became Reading While Black because I saw the money and kind of the resources and the structure that existed kind of in white Christianity, that's what I need to go and learn how they do that stuff and then take some of that stuff back to my community.

[00:07:06] Esau McCaulley

But then as soon as I got to seminary, I started realizing, man, they need to know what was going on in the Black church. And so I went to seminary to learn Greek and Hebrew, which I did, and learn the original languages so I can read the Bible, which I did. But I spent so much of my time arguing with people in seminary about stuff, it was mostly stuff that I learned in my Black church and it just it just seemed natural to me. And so even when I came into the Anglican tradition, I never felt like I needed to kind of put my experiences that I had as an African-American Christian to the side.

[00:07:43] Esau McCaulley

But I would say that when you're in the academy, it's very easy to get caught up in the questions the academy wants you to answer. And so part of what happened when I went to do graduate work is I said, OK, I need to get a Ph.D. So I need to write something. And so I just, I found the nerdiest, most obscure topic nobody cares about. And so I wrote a dissertation on it so I can get a degree. And so I made sure, this story is taking too long... But I'll talk about two, kind of a trimmer and then like what really happened. So 2013, I'm getting ready to go to do my PhD. And it was around the time of the Trayvon Martin case. Up until then, it had been like I had assumed, like everybody just knew that the Bible talks about justice. I just thought that was pretty straightforward. It just hadn't come up for whatever reason. And some in these evangelical spaces and Trayvon Martin happens and everybody siding with Zimmerman, I was like, wow, this is really weird. And so it really was the first time that I really kind of began to experience, like, wow, we have some real differences here. But then I kind of put that to the side and I went to the UK and up towards the back, that's where I met Madison.

[00:08:48] Esau McCaulley

Hello, Madison! So towards the back end of my time in the UK is, it's the end of the Obama presidency that summer and fall leading into what we didn't know at the time that would become the Trump presidency. And [Zoom freezes] ... the people in the U.K. really couldn't understand, it's like, "why their military troops?" They didn't understand America. And I remember running around during my Ph.D., at the end of my Ph.D. saying to all of these students who are doing doctoral work, we need to start talking about this stuff. This is like, in America all these things are happening. And I remember so many people in graduate school looking at me like I had lost my mind, like I was a crazy person. And I was just, I'm just sitting down and saying issues of racism and injustice and systemic oppression and misogyny are major problems. And so when I graduated and I got my first book published, I really said, you know, I need to write something that I actually care about. And this sounds way too shady to my dissertation topic, but it's fine.

[00:09:57] Esau McCaulley

I need to write something I really, really care about. And I need to write something that actually gives answers to questions that black people were asking. And so one day I just sat down in an afternoon and said, what are the five to seven questions that I've always had about being black and being a Christian, and each one of those became a chapter in what became "Reading While Black." I'll tell you one last funny story about that part of how the book came to be. A friend of mine named Tish Harrison connected me with Intervarsity and she said, you know, my friend Esau, he's a writer. And the president of Intervarsity said, well, do you have a book proposal? I said, sure, because I have those little sentences in a paragraph that I've written. And he said, Do you have a sample chapter yet? I go, "No, it's not done. I can have it done to you by Christmas." It wasn't done because it wasn't started. [Laughs] And so I finished teaching and I wrote a draft chapter over Christmas Break -- what became the policing chapter. And So the policing chapter, in case you all care about this, the policing chapter is the first chapter that was written in Reading While Black and the first idea that I had related to the policing chapter was the opening with Outkast.

[00:11:08] Esau McCaulley

I said, I know how I'm going to open this book, you know, the book's about, but I know that chapter one is going to start like this. So that's how the book came about. That's how it relates to my academic and ecclesial journey.

[00:11:18] Amanda Rosengren

Thank you. I appreciate that. So there were things you weren't hearing brought into the conversation in the Academy that were important to you?

[00:11:27] Esau McCaulley

I couldn't find anybody talking about policing.

[00:11:30] Amanda Rosengren

That was the chapter that to me -- I had never thought about policing in the New Testament. I recommend it to everybody. I'm not going to give away what it said because I want you to buy the book, but if we have time, we'll talk about it. But that chapter especially was where I was, what I was hit by, "Oh, yeah... There's something really significant going on here in terms of the questions that you're bringing." So thank you for sharing about that.

[00:11:55] Amanda Rosengren

I also I had a sense and I appreciated about the book that it wasn't specifically written for me. I think I can benefit from it, but it wasn't written for me. I had a sense of I'm, I'm stepping into some conversations here and I loved that. I wonder if you'd share with us a little bit, give us a sense of some of those ongoing conversations or who the book was written for.

[00:12:16] Esau McCaulley

This is actually an important distinction, and I don't think it's without consequence. There are and I read a lot of books that explain Black people to a white audience, and I felt like it was so rare for me when I read a book to feel like I was the person for whom the book was written. And so I said to myself, I want to write a book to Black people, not about Black people. Now, that may seem like that will make the book inaccessible, but 90 percent of people of color who go to seminary and they read books, they engage in the process of translation as we take something that was kind of deceptively written for the suburbs and we reapply it for our context. And so I knew I would have white readers, I'm not a crazy person. But I said I want them to feel the same sense of disorientation that I feel when I read their books. I mean, I remember, for example, like this may sound strange, but I never watched Seinfeld. I don't I didn't get these, like it was the other guy's name, Monty Python, like all of these things, but just a part of the cultural encyclopedia. And I said everything I think I said when they asked me what you want the book to feel like, I want it to feel black. And so when I talk about the opening with Outkast at the beginning of the book, it's like I want people who open the book to realize they're in a different space. And so what I wanted to be able to do was write something that would make the African-American reader felt heard. The only thing that I didn't do that I wish I had done that I'd have the courage to do... Because it's a male book, right, because I'm you know, I'm a dude, and so I wanted to write, I wanted to have a chapter on black women, but I just didn't feel like I could accomplish that part of the book. And so I try to make up for it by having women in central places and the stories and the analogies and in the music.

[00:14:07] Esau McCaulley

But what I really want is I wanted people to feel just seen, heard and represented. But I think that that's also instructive because if this is ultimately Christianity. That even if it's not for you, you can find something instructive. I talk about how, recently, this has been floating around my brain, it's OK for people to be Anglophiles, right, people who just love British culture and they watch British films and they love everything British. And you can kind of have a love letter to Britain, even though you're not British. So it's OK to just say, like this is a love letter to the Black community and that you don't have to be a part of the Black community to appreciate it, but it's understanding that you're kind of like listening in. There's nothing wrong with that. What I really wanted to do is center... like a audience, that it just really center... It's just I read and I get it and I understand why I've read so many books about how evangelicalism has ruined everything or, you know, this -- I mean, like somebody else can write that book. And I said, you know, I'm really focused on, like, a laser on what comes next? And people can do the autopsy, other people could do that much better than I can, but I just wanted to say, yeah, it's mess, things are jacked up, but like, here's where we can go in the future.

[00:15:38] Amanda Rosengren

Thank you. Would you give us a sense of some of the ongoing conversations in Black communities that those of us who aren't part of that community might not know about, like some of the stuff that where you start the book and you're like, well, you feel torn between this kind of approach and this kind of approach and you're trying to find this other path.

[00:16:00] Esau McCaulley

I think that the Internet is like [a place] in which everyone knows (and this relates to the question), is an exercise in people jumping into conversations of which they don't even know what they're talking about. And so when I talk about, when I say that, I mean, when you think of kind of the white Christian story -- it's kind of the battle between conservatives and liberals right now, so that's the narrative. And so when you hear a black voice and they say certain things, you put them in this bucket or that bucket. But for the African-American, if I'm at all accurate in how I perceive it, it has a conservative like element and a progressive element. That's true. But that's not the main fault lines in at least my experience of black Christianity. It's basically ranging from some form of black nationalism or pessimism towards some form of Christianity and hope. Right. And so, like, there's a wide variety that are mostly related to how we deal with blackness. How we integrate that blackness, I think whether or not it's compatible with the Christian faith and how that Christian faith does and doesn't inform social action. And so what that means is that like when you try to enter into, like, one of these communities, there's a place in which you often feel isolated.

[00:17:26] Esau McCaulley

And so I go to evangelical spaces and there is an emphasis on Scripture and its authority that seems pretty close to what I experienced growing up but the moment that I start talking about things that are just clearly in the Bible, not Greek, not Hebrew, not German, not Latin, just like literally in the Psalms or Isaiah or Luke. People go well you're this radical. What are you talking about? This is just the Bible, 101, and it's not controversial. But then on the other side, people love me when I'm talking about injustice and, you know, systemic racism. But then when I say something like, well, you need to repent of your sins and be saved, then I become a fundamentalist. And so in an African-American Christian context, I'm very normal, like very normal, actually, kind of a mid range moderate. I'm just like right down the middle. And sometimes in other spaces I sound in different ways, like a crazy person. And I think that most people of color who come into white evangelical spaces feel that sense of disorientation. Well, hold on. How did I become something different just by going from one community to the next. So I try to articulate that and argue. I'll say this last thing, and this probably gets me in trouble, but, you know, what do I care? It's 7:50 and my wife's gone. [laughs]

[00:18:51] Esau McCaulley

One of the strange things about the academy is the inverse relationship between Black spirituality in the academy versus Black spirituality on the ground, so the Black church -- this is just demographically true -- it's overwhelmingly traditional in its theology and its piety in general has an emphasis on social action. The Academy, it's overwhelmingly progressive. And so as an African-American who just does Black church stuff coming to the academy and even amongst other Black scholars, now, I feel like I'm a strange person, but once again, it's like, well, no, like if you go to the Black Baptist Church down the road, there's a thousand versions of me and I'm nothing unique.

[00:19:31] Esau McCaulley

And so part of what I'm talking about is both the disorientation of being Black in the academy and then being Black and somewhat traditional in the Black academic spaces is also kind of a complicated reality.

[00:19:46] Amanda Rosengren

Thanks for sharing that. I can understand, it sounds like a lot of disorientation in a lot of different spaces when there's this huge stream of faith that for you is normal, that I'm hoping to listen to it, that we're listening to tonight, that you're giving voice to. I appreciate you sharing that. I had a sense that one of your overarching questions in the book to answer is "Is the Bible good news for Black folks."

[00:20:11] Esau McCaulley

Yeah.

[00:20:11] Amanda Rosengren

I felt like you were addressing that at a number of different points. I wonder if you could speak to that as well as the significance of your subtitle, which is important: "African-American biblical interpretation as an exercise in hope."

[00:20:27] Esau McCaulley

Yeah. So this is me entering into a conversation where there, I remember watching some Black Lives Matter protest and like -- I'm here for protest in the streets, so I don't mishear me. But I heard people saying "this is not your parents' civil rights movement." And the idea was like, we're not doing it that way. And I, hold on. Like I was, I mean, I wasn't there, obviously, but I read about the civil rights movement and the importance of Christian faith and piety and inspiring the movement to justice and how during the civil rights movement, the Christians saw in the Bible the testimony to a God who fought for them and against the people who oppressed them.

[00:21:11] Esau McCaulley

And so I wanted to make this case that it's OK to be a Christian, it's OK to believe the Bible and contend for justice, which is on the face of it seems to be not controversial, but I just couldn't find a book where people were saying it's OK to be black, Christian and believe that this stuff is true. So, like, on the face of it, it's kind of a declaration of war.

[00:21:34] Esau McCaulley

It's like I mean, it sounds way too dramatic, but I was just like I'm just tired of everybody being skeptical. So what if I wrote a book? It's about saying, here's a way of reading the Bible. That is, that shows not by reading against the text, but reading with the text, CAN speak a relevant word. And here's the thing. I don't want to do that by saying that the problems aren't there or the difficulties aren't that difficult.

[00:21:59] Esau McCaulley

So I said, well, no, no, no, let's look at the passages that are oftentimes the most difficult to interpret. Let's just like -- we have this saying, like, "say it with the chest," if you're going to say it, say it. And so I felt like if I wanted to write the book that I wanted to write, I needed to address the issues and put it out there on the table as clearly as I can. And so I talked about an exercise in hope, what I mean is a practice, and I'm thinking about this a lot, as I've been trying to figure out, how do you articulate one's posture towards the Bible? And in some sense, trusting in the Bible is a decision. And what I mean, it's like, you know, very few people get from one end of the text to the other without having some things to give them real pause and cause them real moments of discomfort. And the question is, what do you do with that discomfort and how do you weigh the discomforting passages with the message that I think emerges from the whole canon? And what I wanted to say is that an exercise is something that you don't always want to do, so sometimes I just, like it gets cold outside here. So getting up to run in, it's dark. And as you know, like, I would just rather sleep and be warm... But I know if I keep sleeping and be warm. I'm going to die of heart disease at 55. So even when I don't feel like it I have got to go outside and exercise. And so when you talk about Bible reading as an exercise in hope, I'm saying even when we even when I don't feel like there is going to be a hope there, I go to the Bible expecting to find a guy who's a friend, not an enemy. And what I wanted to argue is that historically, when African-Americans have engaged in that process asking, is this God for me or against me, historically, we've concluded that God is for us.

[00:23:48] Esau McCaulley

And so I talk about an exercise that I mean, if you would just buy the book without it having to have a fancy title, it would have been called "African-American Biblical interpretation as an exercise in hope," that's the theme. "Reading while Black" is just like, it's just, it's part of it. Right. But it's the catchy part to get you to talk about hope.

[00:24:10] Amanda Rosengren

It is catchy. I was pulling out my book because I don't think I'm able to find it. I love the part where you talk, You use Jacob wrestling with the angel. I'm terrible at quoting things. Can you try to, I don't know, give that nugget.

[00:24:30] Esau McCaulley

That's what I was talking about. So I use that. I use the image of Jacob who wrestles with an angel and says, let me go and say I will not let you go until you bless me. And so when I'm talking about is the struggle with the Bible to find in it like things that are hopeful. And so when you have a Bible that has slavery in it, the initial response is just reject the text. But you have to sit with it and find in that... I think the person, I think the Christian who continues to trust in the Bible is not the person who simply ignore the difficulties. I think it's the person who found faith on the other side of those difficulties or even in some place to say I know enough about who God is. To suspend judgment. Until he can give a full accounting, because I got some questions, I probably won't ask those questions at the Eschaton, I probably will not see Jesus coming in glory and go "never mind." But as of right now, I'm I'm not Job, right, claiming innocence, but I'm like Job. But it's just like natural stuff that we need to talk about. And so, but the fact that we have some stuff that we need to talk about doesn't mean that I don't trust this text. So I really wanted to, I really wanted to write a book that would inspire people to like this hope. That sounds like very superficial, but that's what I was attempting to do. And I'm really shocked that people read it. I can't believe that we're here at eight o'clock on a Tuesday on a church meeting talking about a hermeneutics book. I don't know what's going on.

[00:26:09] Amanda Rosengren

[Laughs] Well, again, that that sense of wrestling with a text like Jacob, wrestling with the angel, not letting go until it blesses, until it blesses you, until there is a blessing, there's something so powerful in that. I appreciate that a lot.

[00:26:24] Esau McCaulley

And that's the reason I talk about the canonical instinct in me, and this isn't unique to the black Christian tradition, the canonical instinct that is so important. And when I talk about, like wrestling with the text, it doesn't mean that, like the individual verse itself, it's going to like, say what you want to say. What I'm saying is that I believe that somewhere in that text is a sufficient answer to allow us to continue to believe and trust it. And that's what I mean. I mean, it's not that I'm just going to keep reading 1 Timothy Chapter six until it no longer bothers me. I just learned to put Timothy in the conversation with enough people to say, OK, we can make this work.

[00:27:06] Amanda Rosengren

I Appreciate that. I wonder if you'd be willing to share a little bit -- I got the sense that there were some misconceptions about Scripture and interpretation of Scripture that you hoped to correct in your book. I don't know if this question makes sense to you, I did send it to you, I think...

[00:27:21] Esau McCaulley

I think that sometimes people get in their feelings, especially in this kind of current mode of... "everything is critical race theory." And at least that's how I'm going to choose to answer the question is like how does social location influence interpretation, and what I mean by African-American interpretation and what I want people to understand is that there is no other way in which I read the Bible other than as an African-American male. Like I'm bringing these things with me to the text. I can't put them aside. I'm not, I'm incapable of doing so. And so the way that I use the analogy that I use is to think about communities. If you're thinking I'm going to speak to a youth group, I'm going to speak to a college ministry. I'm going to speak to a group of single men, a group of single women, and you have the text in front of you the moment that you begin to imagine a different community, "Oh, I see how this text speaks in a particular way to this community." But it's not just the fact that you see how it applies. Sometimes thinking about that community allows you to see things in the text that you missed. Now, this is always there. But until I started asking these questions, I didn't notice it. So then what happens then when you say the object of my, kind of the place where I lay in hermeneutically, are African-American Christians who are experiencing things that allows you to see things that you might miss, but not only that, but because I come to this text with a certain set of questions and what I call a motivated reader. Now, of course, it is the case. Let me give you an example. Of course, it is the case that anybody can read the the kind of female ordination passages. Well, but a woman who experiences a call to ministry is going to be motivated. Let me let me give you an example. We have the students who choose every year. I have a class you can choose whatever you want to do for your kind of Bible project for the semester. Seventy five percent of the women in my class every year choose a women's ordination passage, like none of the guys do because they know it. And so I'm talking about motivated readings.

[00:29:35] Esau McCaulley

It is the fact that we give our emotion and our attention to things, and because it's impossible for everyone to be equally emotionally engaged about everything and there's nothing wrong with an emotionally engaged reading, it causes me to tend to the nuances of the text. So then I'm talking about African-American interpretation. The collective experiences of being Black in America shapes the kinds of questions that I bring to the text. And because I have in my mind that community where this text is going to land, it also influences the things that I see. But in the same way that it isn't a hindrance, it could also be drawback because it doesn't mean that, like, I will have certain insights that people might miss, but I might miss things myself, which is why we did need the entirety of the body of Christ to read them as well. And so the idea that that account of biblical interpretation is at all like anything other than like, understanding how life works is just a crazy, it's a crazy idea, like when I say that, it's some people think that, oh, this means that standpoint epistemology that you can only understand things through the oppressed. That's not what I'm saying.

[00:30:45] Esau McCaulley

We understand instinctively, at least in biblical studies, there's a German tradition of interpretation. What the Germans do things a certain way. The British do things a certain way. In America, there's a certain strand of interpretation, all of which are influenced by our social occasions. And so when I talk about emphasizing African-American interpretation, it's not that we're magic. I just was unique, and one of the things that I learned related to that, this isn't what you asked me, but here's some free stuff. It's like when I started talking about this, I became and this is where "New Testament in Color" came out and the "Bible and Theology in Color"... I spent a lot of time trying to get like white Christians to attend to black interpretation. And I didn't actually look at my Latina or Latino brothers and sisters and what they were saying. And so I found out there's often this, like everybody trying to get white Christians to listen. And we're actually not listening to each other cross ethnically. It's what I tried to do with my other scholarship is find ways to incorporate Asian-American perspectives and first nation perspectives. So that is actually a mutual enrichment instead of every kind of marginalized person talking to the majority culture that it's only by us reading the Bible together. Maybe God decided this way. He wanted us to read the Bible together so we might properly discern the mind of Christ.

[00:32:15] Amanda Rosengren

Amen to that.

[00:32:16] Esau McCaulley

And I want to say one thing to the people in your congregation. Don't let people tell you that that stuff is bad. Because what it is, it's fear. There's kind of a politics of fear where the idea is that if you begin to somehow take the perspectives of African-Americans seriously or Latina scholars seriously, that somehow you're going to lose the Bible when there's literally... And so this sounds arrogant, but let me... These are the receipts. You go back to the eighteen hundreds, nineteen hundreds, and the 1950s and you look on both sides of the theological debate, slavery, civil rights. And in both cases, everybody now agrees with the Black people. So if you actually want to say who has the longer record of being right on the pressing exegetical and theological concerns, the Black church dunks all over evangelicalism and this is just a fact. And if that gets you in your feelings, you got to say, "why is that offensive to me."

[00:33:20] Esau McCaulley

We gave the theological case against segregation. We did. And so at a certain point I have to be allowed to say that if you can write a book, this is how the Irish saved civilization, I need to be able to say how the Black church saved American anthropology. I just have to be able to say it.

[00:33:41] Amanda Rosengren

Mmm-hmm, preach it, brother. I appreciated, actually, a lot your end note or your... Esau uses kind of music analogies throughout here, which I like. So it's the "bonus track." And there's also a Spotify playlist for this book if you're a musical type. But I appreciated, it was almost a throwaway along the lines of people accuse Black folks of reading things into the text. But slaveholders were not disinterested interpreters. And to me that was such a powerful -- it gets to what you're saying here. We tend to think of the majority folks as if they were the neutral ones and these other people have something to gain. But that's not the case.

[00:34:22] Esau McCaulley

Do you think, you think it was random? They just happened upon an anthropological account of black persons that justified oppression, slavery, assault and dehumanization, that then they happen to be the people who lived at leisure. So one of the things, one of the things that I think that is really difficult for readers who aren't kind of a part of our community is when you hear these things, it can sometimes feel like an attack or crisis, because when you've had, like, a certain account of the church or a certain account of even the kind of American history, when you challenge that account of American history, people think that you're also challenging that account of Christianity itself. And what I wanted to say in that book is that, like, there is a hope for orthodoxy on the other side of that deep critique.

[00:35:14] Esau McCaulley

And when you are honest, you can say that these, the social location of the slave masters distorted their reading of the Bible. It did. In the social location of African-American slaves, precisely because their asking, "Is what they're saying to me in the Bible true, as someone who experiences the negative repercussions of their interpretation." Is it true? And when they said no, they actually, when they said no, we're reading the Bible better and it wasn't like, it's just like, this is just the way that history played itself out. And we're still struggling in the present day to fully come to grips with that and begin... And this is the hard part when you're this used to being the hero of the story it's hard to find out in certain parts of the story you're also the villain. There's this complicated thing. And before that make it seem like this is a one sided story. If we're in an African-American context, we would talk about the civil rights movement and say, well, the heroes of that story had some deep seated misogyny.

[00:36:25] Amanda Rosengren

So if you look at the civil rights movement, it's not that the Black people there, there's no fall. When you look at what's going on in the civil rights movement, you can read in the stories the ways in which the Black women who were involved in the civil rights movement were also abused, mistreated and pushed aside, and how the desire for power and prestige and in that form also corrupted that part. So it's not the fact that, like the the Black people are the heroes in that there's no sin in this community. It's just that everybody's story is complicated. And understanding that our stories are complicated is a part of what it means to kind of have Christian maturity. And so and I know this is just like me thinking about like where your congregation might be. You just have to understand what it means to be a Christian with a complicated story in a country that has a complicated story and a Christianity that has a complicated story and find a way to believe anyway. And that's why I kept talking about exercise and hope that you have to kind of find your way to faith on the other side of the complicated story.

[00:37:29] Amanda Rosengren

It's so funny, isn't it, because the Bible is so full of people with complicated stories. You'd think it would just come naturally to us, and yet it's hard.

[00:37:36] Esau McCaulley

The Old Testament is a tragedy, a tragedy with divine interventions that are saving us from utter doom at every moment. The new testament, I tell my students all the time, like read Corinthians and ask yourself, does it look like this thing is going to work out right? I mean, it doesn't -- read Galatians, like there are times if you just read the

New Testament with "this could go either way."

[00:38:03] Esau McCaulley

[Laughs] I mean, just read it! Wow. I mean, I don't know how this is going to turn out. I mean, imagine like in the Book of Acts where Paul is the hero of the story. He gives such a brief, we say, you know what, me and John Mark, we can't kick anymore, but let's imagine that, like how I imagine Twitter, imagine Twitter when like Paul and Barnabas and John Mark split up and all of the blogs and think pieces about who was right. And, you know, Paul was responding to Barnabus. You know, Paul is going to write letters, you know, Paul, like Paul's gonna send those hot tweets a'flyin'. Right?

[00:38:47] Esau McCaulley

And so we have this idealistic picture of the church that doesn't match the actual account of the Bible itself, which then makes it feel like we have to have this idealistic picture of the church in our day, which also doesn't match reality. Maybe instead we might just lean robustly upon the grace of God. That hope, despite our flaws, the whole thing doesn't like burn to the ground.

[00:39:09] Amanda Rosengren

Yeah, there, but for the grace of God, isn't that the truth. A question came to mind that I didn't give you in advance. So I thought that, just to wake you up, right? Yes. And it might ask you to be a little vulnerable. What scriptures are on your heart for your kids? You have four kids, right? Yeah, I know you posted a picture of one of your sons holding your book.

[00:39:35] Esau McCaulley

Yeah, I think I talk about hope. I really, I wrote the book in part that hopefully one day my kids will read it, so I keep telling people for me what I try to do, that I try to encourage my children in like these core things that are immovable. So I try to have my children take seriously the resurrection, because for me, when everything else kind of is going sideways, I have to ask myself over and over again, is the tomb empty? And so I hope that, like, when my children inevitably write, I feel like when you have black skin in America, you're like carrying around a... I know time bomb is the right word, but you just never know when the world's going to realize that you're black and that's a problem and I can't prepare for it because it's unexpected. It will happen when I won't be there. And I just hope that when that wound occurs, they remember who they are. And so maybe -- I would say that I tried to instill in my kids they're image bearers. They're made in God's image and that God has looked upon them and called them beautiful, and that in a world that, like, tempts them to despair, that Christ has risen. So this is, and I think this is the black Christian tradition as well, the imago dei in the face of anti Black sentiment, and the resurrection as the ability, the source of hope that allows us to face the seemingly unfixable. And so those were the two things that I would say I want my kids to understand. And it's weird because you come home and you just don't you never know when that day is going to be, like, crazy. Is it tomorrow or is it next week? And so those are the kinds of things that I'm thinking about.

[00:41:33] Esau McCaulley

And and I don't want, and I don't want them to tell, I don't want my kids to say, you didn't tell me or you didn't prepare me or you didn't give me what I needed. So I try to balance between giving them a realistic understanding of America without allowing that that sentiment to kind of cloud their joy.

[00:41:58] Amanda Rosengren

That's a hard balance as a dad. Thanks for sharing. It relates to another question. I want to ask about a specific chapter in your book, and that's in part because I know we have a few folks joining us tonight who are Black who haven't been part of this conversation before, and I'd appreciate you maybe summarizing your chapter on Black rage and pain, the question of what does the Bible have to say about Black anger and pain?

[00:42:27] Esau McCaulley

Yeah, I think, I talk about... And this is where I think that I'll say something to the white audience so they understand. I don't think and I think that what people think, that Black people, at least Black Christians contending for justice in the public square, are unnecessarily provocative and they misunderstand us. Like in the African-American community if you don't, if you can't articulate it the way that it happened, people aren't going to take you seriously. And so when I talk about, like, black pain, I can't I can't sugarcoat it so, like, certain people aren't offended by the way that articulate, because in so much as I'm focusing first on how this is heard outside of our community, now, I'm no longer ministering to that community.

[00:43:13] Esau McCaulley

When I wrote that chapter, the first part of it called A Litany of Suffering, where I talk about like the things that have happened to African-Americans and the way that we tell that story, the purpose of me writing that is so that the Black people who read it knew that I knew what I was talking about when I talked about Black pain and Black anger. And there is just a portion where I'm writing it and I remember it when, like it's funny when you're writing things like I don't how you describe it like an idea, come to your typing and you don't even know what's happening.

[00:43:53] Esau McCaulley

But I would say, like, there's there's a few out of body experiences when I was writing this book if that makes any

sense. Or like I felt like that was it was when I weaved into this -- Madison there -- the Hebrews 11 kind of account of black suffering, whereas the time would fail to tell me of Emmett Till, Medgar Evers, the lynching tree, and I went through it in my brain, I saw like all of the things that had happened to us in that moment.

[00:44:22] Esau McCaulley

And I'm thinking also the story in Hebrews. We talked about the testimony of faith, and then Hebrews ends with people of whom the world was not worthy, because I was thinking to myself, how can I tell this story? And I remember thinking this how the author of Hebrews must have felt. How can I tell the story of, like, the faithful Saints? Because, like, there aren't enough pages in the Bible to tell the whole story and there aren't enough words to articulate all that happen to black people. And it was only into that context where you kind of raised the stakes as high as you possibly can, that you even have the right to begin to answer the question. And so it's similar when I talk about slavery.

[00:45:01] Esau McCaulley

Like, it's only asking the question in the way that I do when I open the chapter, that you can even have the right to begin to address it. And so I can't go into how I begin to address the chapter, the issue of black anger. But I wanted to talk about how the structure works because one of the things that makes it very, very hard to be in relationships is if you say I'm sorry that you feel that way. I don't know, I don't need your sympathy for how I feel, I need your sympathy for what happened to me, it is too often that the sentiment is I'm sorry that African-Americans have this false perception. They've experienced these things in America, even though America isn't that bad. If that's the posture, that can never be true relationship, because I don't believe that you feel it the way I feel it. And I wanted to write at least the beginning of that chapter to the people who read it, say, when I talk about hope on the other side of pain, I know exactly what I'm talking about. And so I think it's from that place of putting your cards on the table, like I did begin to articulate what I think is a theology of hope. And so I wanted to take seriously the fact that there was real beef, but at the same time, say, what the Christian gospel does, and this is like the part of that chapter that I thought was like, and I'm surprised that it's been one of the more well-received chapters of the book, because at the end, I knew when I started the chapter that we're going to end up with the cross. This is like every Black sermon. You can start anywhere. We're going to end up at the cross.

[00:46:36] Esau McCaulley

I said I'm I'm just killing time until I get, OK, I said, this is funny too. You get some inside scoops. So I was I haven't even seen, like, all of the, what you call it, that show that Lord of the Rings. Just the crazy one. The worst one. The one is on HBO. What's it called you don't talk about?

[00:46:56] Amanda Rosengren

Oh, Game of Thrones. Game of Thrones.

[00:46:58] Esau McCaulley

I remember seeing -- this is true. This is how this, this there's a line called The Cross Breaks the Wheel. And I remember hearing about Khaleesi somewhere. She's called the breaker. She breaks the wheel.

[00:47:12] Amanda Rosengren

[Laughs] That's funny. I know we have some Game of Thrones fans on, so they'll appreciate that.

[00:47:16] Esau McCaulley

You wonder where the line, the cross break comes from. It's because when I was, I had seen the commercial.

[00:47:25] Amanda Rosengren

Yeah, I wouldn't have caught that. That's hilarious.

[00:47:27] Esau McCaulley

Yes, there is a shout out to the Game of Thrones and that's probably the only white space in the book. It's the Khaleesi called like she breaks the wheel. Is that not in there somewhere? I know some of y'all have seen it... .

[00:47:46] Esau McCaulley

Anyway, what I want to get there. I want to get to the cross. And so it's just a way of me wrestling with it and then kind of resolving it with Jesus. And then the other thing that I want to say about that. Jesus and eschatology. There, it isn't the fact that, you know, we have the cross and therefore none of this stuff matters, but there's a cross and there's an eschatological writing of wrongs. Which is itself kind of terrifying to imagine. And so even Christian eschatology I talked about breeds compassion. I don't actually want people to come before the living God with those kinds of sins, weighing upon them and having to account for what they've done to to black people. I want them to be saved.

[00:48:38] Amanda Rosengren

Sobering, a sobering thought. I want to come, I want to end kind of with ACNA, but I want to ask you, what did you learn about Jesus through writing this book?

[00:48:51] Esau McCaulley

I mean, there is this passage in Ephesians is saying, glory to God, he could do anything more than you can. So this

is the, this is the prayer book appropriation. I don't even know what it actually translates. I only know the one from the prayer book, but glory to God, who can do infinitely more we can ask or imagine, Glory to Him from generation to generation to the church in Christ Jesus or whatever it is. Is I just never, ever, ever expected the book, I didn't expect anybody to read it.

[00:49:17] Esau McCaulley

I need a second book for tenure. So I remember during, like, ah, during the summer this summer when all of this stuff was happening with George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and the article that I wrote on what the Bible has to say up like rage is effectively a portion from the chapter, my book. And there's another part in the book, but there's another, there's different parts of it that were just super relevant during the summer. And I had this book that was on, there's a chapter on policing. There's a chapter on protest. There's a chapter on justice. There's a chapter on Black identity. So all of these questions that were like raging right in the middle of the summer leading up to the book launch were things that I had been spending the last three years writing about and thinking about. And so I said I didn't know why I've written the book, but as a Christian, I can say, oh, God must have wanted this book to come out now so it can be useful to the church.

[00:50:27] Esau McCaulley

And so for me, it's much more of. I mean, I don't know why you are here, but I'm glad that y'all are, I mean, like here, listening to me, but I'm glad that the book has been useful and it shows me that I, that God had a plan for more than I did. I was just trying to write something in it, so. There's so many things that I could tell you about, like you just not supposed to write books like this when you're an academic. I'm going to be honest about I believe the Bible is true, and therefore there are so many ways to which I just did stuff that you weren't supposed to do. It's not because I was brave, but just because it just felt like the right thing at the time -- to see it be rewarded and not just rewarded in the sense of like people paying attention to it. Because I don't really care. I mean I mean, this extra honesty, I'm married to a doctor, so this book money means nothing to me. [laughs]

[00:51:27] Esau McCaulley

I mean, every one of these books that I have sold over the last six weeks, my wife could work a weekend and like, that's not... so I'm not, like, eating off of this, after this book, but it's the fact that it's been useful to people. And so that's been like really, really, really gracious to say. Like, I'm glad that I was able to write something that God could use to serve people. And believe it or not, it may not seem like it, but I don't, I don't actually like... I present as an extrovert, what in reality, I'm very private and I am shocked that people keep showing up and I'm shocked that, like, people are paying attention to it. I'm shocked. People are still buying it. I'm shocked that people like it. And so that's been more than anything. And we like it just way more talented people than me who should probably be doing a better job. Y'all should propably go and read Lisa Bowen's book, African-American. What's it called? Readings of Paul -- go read that, I mean, I don't know what to to tell you. So, like, I don't know what to say. Like, what have I learned about God other than God can use where He wants to to accomplish his purposes.

[00:52:39] Amanda Rosengren

I appreciate that and appreciate you sharing your heart with us, too, as someone who is a private person, I get that. What reading your book -- every time I opened it, I felt joy, and it gave me a sense of how the Bible is good news through and through. So I thank you for that. We just have a few minutes left and I want to ask you...

[00:53:04] Esau McCaulley

I will allow them... I mean, I'll give y'all 15 minutes. Y'all are like, Anglicans... do ya'll have any questions? I'll give the ACNA people 15 extra minutes. Any questions? I know you've got other stuff, but I'll listen in any questions you have.

[00:53:17] Amanda Rosengren

Ok, yeah. Let's open it up a little bit for questions. Wade do you want to ask your question that you sent? He has a baby, so I don't know if he's listening or...

[00:53:29] Audience Member 1

Yeah, yeah. I appreciate the book, Fr. McCaulley and I know the Anglican Church has a complicated story, just like Scripture itself. Right. And so I'm wondering what's, you know, as someone who came into the Anglican Church from outside, what, how have you, I don't know, struggled with that story. And what's your hope for the ACNA and C4SO moving forward?

[00:53:51] Esau McCaulley

I mean, you're going to get me in trouble, the ACNA. This is I want to say... The ACNA has to decide, and I think it's in the process of deciding what kind of denomination it wants to... Well, what kind of Province it wants to be. And what I mean is a lot of people who come into our tradition come out of evangelical denominations and a lot of times we're burned out on kind of the culture wars or kind of these narrow accounts of kind of the Christian tradition. Next to the recovery of the ancient faith it needs to kind of include within it the recovery of the broadness of the ancient concern. And so issues of concern for the poor and the disinherited is just indigenous to early Christianity and it's also indigenous to the Anglican tradition. You look at global Anglicanism. One of the examples that I use is you could just throw a rock and hit an African bishop who's talking about election corruption in Uganda or Rwanda or Nigeria.

[00:54:57] Esau McCaulley

And nobody thinks of their being political. They would talk about environmental devastation. No one thinks that they're being political. It's only when you talk about those things in an American context, it becomes political. Well, that's kind of a sub Anglican idea. We have bishops in the House of Lords in the UK. There is no separation of church and state and Anglicanism. We're literally a state church. Right. And so, like, that's just our tradition. We were behind the, like John Stott kind of pushed for global Anglicanism to include issues of social concern, pushed back upon Billy Graham's narrower account of evangelicalism. And that broader issue of social concern is represented in the Lausanne Covenant in what becomes global evangelicalism. So this is literally our heritage. We, the Anglicans, this is true. We have receipts, we have our flaws. We're part of the, we have colonialism. I'm not putting that to the side. I'm saying it's also a part within our tradition, within the evangelical stream of our tradition, of pressing issues of social concern. And the Catholic tradition does the same thing with the slum priest. So there is either the opportunity to embrace all of Anglicanism or, and this is going to sound like way too much shade, but try to make us liturgical Southern Baptist. We don't really want to be, and so sometimes there is this desire to be kind of acceptable or the safe denomination, people who are, who are theologically conservative and who like liturgy, instead of embracing the fullness of our tradition. I mean, can you imagine just like for a second? Having someone ask you, what's the definition of social justice? There's a prayer for social justice in the prayer book.

[00:56:38] Esau McCaulley

We say, I don't think social justice is good for Christians, like it's literally there. It's like, what's the definition, the definition is that for which you pray in your prayer book. Right. So you see the problem. And when you talk about something as simple as the baptismal covenant. Will you reject the world, the flesh and the devil, when you're baptized, that means sin as individual, your flesh, the sin as a manifestation of what the world does to you, systems of oppression that draw you away from God and the devil, spiritual powers that exist in the world that draw us away from God. Anglicanism has a broad, like, we have... [Zoom freezes] ... [we have to decide if we're only going to be a form of] liturgical American evangelicalism or if we're going to embrace the fullness of our tradition.

[00:57:27] Esau McCaulley

I think, I think that I'm like 90 percent confident that we're just going to be Anglicans because it would take a wholesale revision of our entire history and the destruction of 400 -- like, you'd have to burn all the prayer books and pretend that John Stott didn't exist and N.T. Wright doesn't exist and C.S. Lewis, and I mean, it's pretty hard to do, so... I'm actually happy that in so much as we are Anglican and we will be Anglican and we can't even claim connection to global Anglicanism. I went to Singapore, so I've, I've been to global Anglican. I went to Singapore. And it's a rule in Singapore that you can't, you can't plan a church in Singapore -- I was there. I talked to the bishop. Every church that was planted in Singapore has to have as a part of their ministry, a social outreach to the community, that was a rule.

[00:58:18] Esau McCaulley

So you can't just go and say we're going to plant a church, either plant a church, and this is true, a hospital... [Zoom freezes] a concrete means of serving your local context, that's Anglicanism. And so what I hope that we do in America is simply be Anglican, and I think that a significant portion of the ACNA simply wants to be Anglican. And there's a portion, there's you know, there is another portion of the ACNA that doesn't actually want us to be Anglican. And we sorry, this is, let me give you like another example of this.

[00:58:58] Esau McCaulley

You can't have a Catholic stream of Anglicanism without Catholic social teaching. So that means when I talk about Catholic social teaching, I talk about the Catholics, the Catholic tradition, the ability to, yes, talk about the sanctity of life, but yes, talk about the importance of justice for the foreigner. You can't say I'm a Catholic because I like the liturgy of Catholicism and reject all of the stuff that Catholicism actually says.

[00:59:28] Esau McCaulley

So you have within global Anglicanism, a Catholic stream that carries with it the potential appropriation of elements of Catholic social teaching. We have an evangelical stream that includes within it historic political, social, cultural, environmental action. So don't talk about Anglicanism simply to be Anglican. It's so funny that like people, people saying, like he hasn't been Anglican enough, No, I've BEEN Anglican for too long. I know the story. I say to people, don't come for me me about Anglicanism if I didn't send for you, because I actually know what I'm talking about. And you'll get embarrassed. And that's not arrogance. It's just like, this is what Anglicanism is. And so what I would hope for you all to do is to not get caught up in Internet fights but to drink deeply from our tradition, and this may seem crazy, read your prayer book, read the Great Litany and ask yourself, what am I confessing in the great litany?

[01:00:23] Esau McCaulley

So I would say, there's the denomination that exists in our documents, And there's the denomination that's on the ground, and the truth is the denomination on the ground is populated by humans and any tradition populated by humans is a tradition that is able to deeply disappoint you. And part of what it means to be, maybe you can ask any pastor, you're a pastor, right? The point of telling the church is they never arrive at the vision. I've never had a

moment when I was a pastor or I said, you know what, the church is fully embodying its mission. I could take a nap. To be a pastor is to have a vision for the future that you know, that you would never arrive at and that you pursue endlessly anyway to the glory of God.

[01:01:11] Esau McCaulley

So if you want to be an Anglican it's because you believe that this is true and that you believe this is possible, and then you pursue it even if you never reach it. Sorry, passengers you just never arrived. I'm sorry... [laughs]

[01:01:25] Jay Greener

That's absolutely right.

[01:01:27] Esau McCaulley

Everybody's tithe and everybody's marriage is great, everybody's kids is great. The entire community is evangelizing, you just pray for the rapture. You just zoom in to heaven.

[01:01:35] Jay Greener

I can retire, then!

[01:01:36] Esau McCaulley

Yeah you can retire. Like, what's that happened? [Laughs] Sorry. I should, I should go on. I need to answer some more questions. But like that's, that's what I would say about Anglicanism.

[01:01:45] Jay Greener

Can I ask you a question? Can I ask a question, Amanda? Esau, you know, here's here's something that really gets to some of the tension is that we hear voices within the struggles we have around race right now in our country.

[01:02:05] Esau McCaulley

Yes.

[01:02:06] Jay Greener

And we hear voices that are not particularly honoring to the Imago dei or the Christian tradition. And that makes certain white Christians very nervous about that. Right. And so how do we how do we really enter into this well? To say no, we want to do this as Christians, but also we there are some things that really make us concerned about this.

[01:02:27] Esau McCaulley

Yes, so the strange thing that people don't realize -- and I'm glad that you asked this -- is Reading While Black is actually not -- it's first and foremost entering into that conversation. And that there's other ways of getting at these same issues that aren't rooted in the biblical text. This is what, this is the conversation I'm attempting to enter. And one of the things it is like, at least it's very confusing to like certain segments of the white church. Are there Black people who have unbiblical and ungodly accounts of justice and solutions to racism that are ultimately nihilistic and not good for society? Yes, there are. But let me tell you something, those people aren't in your churches. They're already gone. What happens, though, is that when African-American -- so, for example, I can say that systems of oppression exist because I believe in the fall and the reality of evil powers and the ability for people who have sinful desires to get into power and then create systems of injustice. Or I could say, "this systemic racism exists because I have some kind of Marxist accounting of human history." Just because we say similar things, it doesn't necessarily mean that we mean the same thing by what we say.

[01:03:47] Esau McCaulley

So, for example, you can say, Jesus -- you get, like, a Mormon can say Jesus is God. And what do they mean by that? So you can't simply go well, because the person says that Jesus is God and a Mormon says that, therefore, whenever someone says Jesus is God, they mean Mormonism! Ideas have meaning in context, in the context of someone's wider thought, and so what is, what is necessary for people who are entering into this conversation to understand? It's the best analogy I've used for the Reformation. At the Reformation, we say, OK, here's an insight, justification by faith. From the insight, thousands of denominations kind of come in to being, some of which are helpful, some of which are unhelpful, you can say the Shakers didn't get it, right, even though they might have gotten this part of the Reformation correct. So in this moment right now, there are people who are saying injustice is bad. This is like, they are right about this. The church has historically not done a good job. The white church has historically not done a good job in dealing with injustice. That's correct. What people say from that singular insight goes in ten thousand different directions. And you can't simply say because there are some people who make unhealthy applications of that idea that the fundamental idea is incorrect.

[01:05:06] Esau McCaulley

So the best thing that you can do is to discern, well, is the basic claim actually true? I think the basic claim is true. They didn't say, well, who are the people who are discussing this in a helpful manner and who are the people who are discussing in an unhelpful manner. What I tend to see is that people focus on the worst and most extreme articulation of something to say, This is what black people or people talking about injustice believe. We say, no, that's not what we believe at all. He says, yes, you are, because Ibram Kendi said it, so one black person said it, all

black people believe it. And so what you have to actually do is say, rather than here's a trigger word that I know symbolizes a whole worldview that I could put within a narrative that I could dismiss, is to say, well, what is actually going on?

[01:05:58] Esau McCaulley

With the various people, one of the things that I've seen that has been really interesting is how this conversation has allowed people to redefine orthodoxy in a narrower and narrower and narrower extreme. I remember like I saw on the Internet people yelling at Tim Keller, now, I feel like when you're when you're sitting to the right of Tim Keller, you're like... [Zoom freezes] [People are criticizing Beth Moore too] That's Beth Moore! I'm like, these are just Christians, right? And so if you're consistently finding yet another Christian that's kind of gone off the deep end, maybe they're trying to give a biblical account of a basic insight that is correct and have been taken in unhelpful ways. That's what I really want people to understand. This is, this is crucial. Not everybody talking about -- like I do it -- but here, this is the last thing. Sorry, you guys got to go. If you have been largely absent from this conversation, and this is a conversation about injustice that has been going on for hundreds of years, in your first entry into the conversation is "here are the ways in which the most extreme group is doing things..." [Zoom freezes] But maybe you get into the conversation and say, you know what, maybe I should be humble. Maybe I should be a learner. Maybe I should listen to people.

[01:07:27] Esau McCaulley

Let me just be completely honest. I don't think there's a more... like look, I'm in the ACNA and I'm at Wheaton. Is there a more... I've signed more confessional statements than anybody but the pope. All right. So maybe, let me make it perfectly clear, maybe you should say, given that we know that he claims that he believes these things as an ordained Anglican priest and believes things as a Wheaton professor -- I'm going to interpret what he says in light of all of these things being true, and that his bishop and his college president aren't stupid, that they can understand what he really means, and that he somehow in this, instead of saying everything that he said is actually code or something that's antithetical to the gospel. You see, you see how crazy that starts to sound.

[01:08:19] Esau McCaulley

And what I want you to understand is every single African-American Christian who's proximate to evangelicalism has been accused of denying the faith, every single one of us who talked about justice. So maybe, maybe we haven't, and maybe that's something that you should consider. I think maybe we're here because we love y'all, despite your brokenness.

[01:08:49] Esau McCaulley

We want the church to be biblical despite its flaws, and that's what the gospel calls us to, neighborly love. And sometimes neighborly love requires telling your neighbor the truth. Sorry that I've rambled too long. I will answer one more question from the people so I can, let's then go to bed.

[01:09:08] Amanda Rosengren

One more question, folks. Thanks.

[01:09:12] Esau McCaulley

My kids are liking this because they like they've gotten 15 more minutes of the cartoon that they're watching.

[01:09:18] Audience Member 2

I had a question is, is it OK if I ask?

[01:09:22] Amanda Rosengren

Go ahead, welcome.

[01:09:22] Esau McCaulley

I was waiting for a black person to ask a question, I wasn't going to leave until a black person spoke. Thank you, I can go to bed now.

[01:09:31] Audience Member 2

So I noticed in the book that, like, that you wrote it not centering white people or trying to convince white people of something.

[01:09:41] Esau McCaulley

Yeah.

[01:09:41] Audience Member 2

Even, I think there's a part of the book where you're talking about like African-Americans and like systemic racism and the systems and like, oh, you don't even really need the stats for that, like, we already know what's happening.

[01:09:58] Esau McCaulley

[Laughs] Yeah.

[01:09:58] Audience Member 2

I think I appreciate that because like, a lot of times I do read books even by African-Americans, and they are trying to convince white people of something, And I feel like a lot more book recently have been trying to center that, center the voices. And and I think the scholarship needs to be directly read to African-Americans. And so I really appreciated that. And I wondered, I guess I wanted to ask, how do we balance that, speaking directly and centering our own selves and actually reaching ourselves? Because a lot of African-Americans are, especially millennials and the people of my sister's generation or early twenties that are like doubting Christianity because they see it as a tool of oppression.

[01:10:43] Esau McCaulley

Yeah.

[01:10:43] Audience Member 2

So how do we balance trying to reach them while also trying to help white evangelical brothers and sisters that also alienate us? Because a lot of people of color and I know Julianny's on this call, but we always talk about how we feel alienated in both circles.

[01:10:59] Esau McCaulley

Yeah, I guess I guess what I would say -- I'm glad ,it's so funny when people pick up on parts of the book so I can tell you what I was doing. So I was typing a section about racism, then I was about, I was sitting at my desk and I looked up and I said, this is my bookshelf. I need to put three or four, like, studies out so I can put this in there. And I said, you know what, black people know, I thought, I don't need to put this in there, we know. And then I just moved on. And that was actually a turning point in the book. I said, you know, there are these places where there's an aside where I would say, OK, skeptic here, I'm going to convince you, just like, I'm not going to do that. Now, that just means, that was for this book.

[01:11:36] Esau McCaulley

I guess what I would say is that there has to be a balance. The next book that you will see, if the Lord tarries and things go well is I'm writing a book called The New Testament in Color. And so I'm the general editor. Actually, Madison is going to be, produced a portion of it. So if Reading While Black is, it is directly to the African-American context, the New Testament in Color brings together Asian-American, African-Americans, white scholars, Latina scholars, Latino scholars, brought together all of them so that we can together testify about something. And so I think there needs to be a balance and it also has to go to like one's temperament. I'm just from the African-American context and so I felt comfortable speaking directly to it. I'm also in an evangelical context, and if I'm in the mood, I'll explain it to evangelicals, like I did a lot more explaining in this conversation than I do in the book.

[01:12:32] Esau McCaulley

It was just when I wrote the book, I wasn't in the mood. I think you have to be free as a scholar. And this is for Julianny, too, who's sitting on this call, you have to be free as a scholar to do what you want to do. So if you feel like writing a book, where you highlight who you are as a black person, then write that book. You want to write a book that just like this nerdy treatment on a topic that has nothing to do with you being black, you're free to do that. You're free in Christ to write different kinds of books in different areas of your life, and you're free in Christ to never write a book about race or ethnicity at all, but if you don't do it, don't do it because you, don't let it be because you're afraid, let it be because you're, that's your gift. And so I think it involves, is this part of your gifting and your calling at the present moment and attempting to do the best that you can to be faithful to it? You are free. Now, I would tell you, sidebar, you got to find a way to eat, so you got to find a way to make money. So I came free in this book where I was like, they fire me, I just go and plant a church. So, like, that was like, that was likem you got to get to the place where regardless of what occurs, you're good, but find a way to get yourself free enough to do the work that God has called you to do.

[01:13:46] Esau McCaulley

So there we go. I've answered all the questions.

[01:13:49] Amanda Rosengren

[Laughs] Thank you, Esau, I appreciate that. I think what we're going to do, we're going to take a minute to pray and then Redeemer folks, if you want to stick around afterwards to debrief a little bit we'll do that. But after we pray, anyone who wants to leave and go to bed and check on their kids who are watching TV can go. I'm going to try to share my screen here real quick because Esau mentioned this, that we have a prayer for social justice in our prayer book. That just happens to be what part of it we're going to pray together tonight. So I want to open it up for anyone to pray in response to what we've heard. Just make sure to unmute yourself so we can all say amen. And then when I feel like there's been enough time for that, we'll pray this prayer for social justice together. So let's pray. I invite you to lift up your prayers to the Lord.

[01:15:00] Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for speaking through our brother. We are so thankful. Thank you.

[01:15:09] Prayer

Lord, we thank you for this time tonight, we do ask your blessing on Esau and for all those who are walking in ways to to help lead us, lead your church. And Lord it must grieve you when we don't see the gifts that you've given us in

our brothers and sisters. And we pray that you would enlarge our vision for that.

[01:15:50] Prayer

Lord, I thank you for Esau -- for his work, for how you're using him in your church. Thank you for his family and I pray you would bless him. I pray as well for the many men and women who will take up this book. And be inspired to learn your word, yes, and to write and to preach to your people, Lord, raise them up, Lord, and may we have ears to hear. Do your work.

[01:16:23] Prayer

Thank you. Lord

[01:16:26] Amanda Rosengren

Let's pray this prayer together, Almighty God, you created us in your own image: grant us Grace to contend fearlessly against evil and to make no peace with oppression; and help us to use our freedom rightly in the establishment of justice in our communities and among the nations, to the glory of your holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

[01:16:59] Amanda Rosengren

We will close with the Lord's Prayer.

[01:17:06] Prayer

Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your Name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on Earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our sin as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen

[01:17:34] Amanda Rosengren

I just want to announce our next conversation point, which will be on November 17th, reading the Bible Latinamente with Pastor Oscar DuPuy, who is a friend of ours at Redeemer, so Save the Date. All right. I'm going to try to stop sharing here.

[01:17:49] Amanda Rosengren

Thank you again, everybody. Esau, thank you so much for joining us and for taking the extra time. It was, it was a really a true privilege. Thank you as well to everyone who joined from Trinity, from connection, there are people on this call I don't know, and I'm really glad that you joined and I hope that you enjoyed it. So, Esau, take care. See you at some C4SO hings we hope you all.

[01:18:15] Esau McCaulley

I think we have like a diocesan thing in a couple of weeks. I'll see you all then.

[01:18:20] Amanda Rosengren

Ok, sounds good. Have a good night. And Redeemer folks if you'd like to stick around 10 15 more minutes feel free, otherwise. Have a good evening.

[01:18:28] Jay Greener

Amen.

END OF TRANSCRIPT



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