



June 23, 2020

It has become apparent that the discussion about changing the state flag of Mississippi is not merely a political issue. While some may see the current flag as a celebration of heritage, a significant portion of our state sees it as a relic of racism and a symbol of hatred. The racial overtones of the flag's appearance make this discussion a moral issue. Since the principal teachings of Scripture are opposed to racism, a stand against such is a matter of biblical morality.

Jesus' ethical teaching calls us to rise above the precepts of this world to demonstrate a higher treatment of others. In Matthew 7.12, He taught us to do unto others as we would have them do unto us. In Matthew 22.39, He identified the second greatest commandment as loving your neighbor as yourself. It is therefore apparent that the need to change the flag is a matter of discipleship for every follower of Jesus Christ. Currently, 38% of Mississippi is black and many of those Mississippians are hurt and shamed by the historical symbolism of the current flag. For those who follow Christ to stand by indifferently and allow this to exist is inconsistent with both of these clear teachings of Christ. This reality calls those of us who follow the Lord to stand up to help our hurting neighbor. The application of this stance calls for a change to the current flag in order to mitigate the hurt its symbolism entails.

Given the moral and spiritual nature of this issue, Mississippi Baptist leaders offer prayers for our state officials to have wisdom, courage, and compassion to move forward. We encourage our governor and state legislature to take the necessary steps to adopt a new flag for the state of Mississippi that represents the dignity of every Mississippian and promotes unity rather than division. We further encourage all Mississippi Baptists to make this a matter of prayer and to seek the Lord's guidance in standing for love instead of oppression, unity instead of division, and the gospel of Christ instead of the power of this world.

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