

UNITY OF DIVERSITY: THE GOSPEL AND ETHNICITY

HOT TOPIC: RACISM

April 6, 2025

LESSON ONE: HUMAN RACE and A GOSPEL-LESS STARTING POINT

(Gen. 1:26-27; Gen. 5:1-2; Gen. 10:31)

INTRODUCTION: On September 15, 1963, in Birmingham, Alabama, four girls lost their lives because of a bombing, that occurred in a Black church by white supremacists. *Why was this church bombed?* The answer had nothing to do with the kind of persecution that people face around the world for their Faith in Christ. The church was bombed because they were Black.

Men, women, and children live in communities representing various ethnicities, speaking different languages, and coming from different cultural backgrounds. The Church has taken small steps in reaching out to them in specific ministries, but we need to desperately consider how we can – we must – avoid sins of those who went before us in the Civil Rights Era. Majority oppression of migrant people is certainly no better than white segregation of black people.

We live in a culture where we are constantly submerged in discussions about race and racism. No human being is more or less human than the other. All are made in God's Image. All human ancestry traces back to one family – Noah and his sons – who trace their Ancestry back to one couple, *Adam and Eve*. As discussed in our lesson on same-sex marriage, God designed a human family that would originate from one father and one mother.

- **Gen. 1 & Gen. 2 – Lays out the foundation and beginning of the human race. All people are descended from Adam and Eve.**
- **Gen. 10 – Expands in it; telling us that after the Fall of Man, and The Flood of the world, people were divided according to their languages, their land, and their nations.**
- **Acts 17:26 – Paul discussed the origin of the human race. All nations came from the common ancestor, *Adam*.**

Most discussions in our culture about race and racism begin from a “gospel-less” starting point. This can happen when people coddle sin. Gospel-less means lacking the full display and culture of the gospel, which is the Good News of Christ's life, death, resurrection.

The process of discussing our diversity, in terms of different “races,” we are undercutting our unity in the human race.

The Bible teaches and emphasizes that all people are created equal in the *image of God*, and that there is no superiority among races. Every single one of us has roots back to Adam.

April 13, 2025

LESSON 2: ETHNICITY AND WHAT THE GOSPEL MAKES POSSIBLE

(Gen. 6:5; Gen. 11; Gen. 12-3)

INTRODUCTION: The Bible grounds our understanding of human diversity; in human ethnicity. The language of **Gen. 10**, we compromise “clan” in separate “nations” that speak different “languages” in diverse lands. And with the globalization of the world and the migration of men and women across continents and into cities, these clans from separate nations and with different languages now live in the same land. The concept of *Ethnicity* is helpful, to include all these considerations and more.

These “groups” possess a common self-identity with common history, customs, and practices based on two primary characteristics: **Ethnicity and Language**. However, these categories are not narrowly limited, because some groups may speak multiple languages, yet consider themselves one ethnic group.

WHAT THE GOSPEL MAKES POSSIBLE, as soon as God’s Word introduces diverse clans, languages, lands, and nations – God’s Word indicts people a tendency to behave in a certain way.

Racism is an ugly reality of American society. You may debate if things are getting better or worse. No one can honestly deny the reality of Racism in society. It is simple and sadly the way the world is.

Racism also rears its ugly head in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ - This should not be so. Yet, unfortunately, it is true. There is no longer the open racism of slavery and segregation. Yet the spirit of Racism is evident in our inability to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. **(Romans 12:15)**

The good news is that ethnic harmony is possible! For this to happen, the church must be the church. The church can only live out its Christ-given nature, calling, and mission by confidence in and submission to Biblical Truth. *The Word of God is the answer.*

- **Luke 24:47-** “Repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in the Name of Jesus to all Nations....”
- **Ephesians 2:18-19** – “All believers have access to God through Jesus Christ, and that they are members of God’s family.”

All people are equal in value and worth, regardless of their ethnicity. **God cares about people regardless of their ethnicity, nationality, and social status.** We are called to treat each other as such.

April 20, 2025

LESSON 3:

ONE IN CHRIST

(Acts 10:34; Ro 2:11)

INTRODUCTION: Racism is a sin against God. God calls for people to love one another as God loves us, regardless of race. God does not show partiality or favoritism. The

James 2:14 – Describes those who discriminate as “judges with evil thought.”

Gal. 3:28-29 says, “You are one in Christ Jesus,” which means Christians are equal and unified in Christ Jesus. This clearly explains that God looks at everyone as an equal, or everyone as One. This scripture also calls for the unity and harmony among everyone in the Body of Christ.

The Gospel doesn’t deny the obvious ethnic, cultural, and historical differences that distinguish us from one another. Nor does the Gospel suppose that these differences are merely superficial. Instead, the Gospel begins with a God who creates all men and women in His Image, and then diversifies humanity according to clan and lands as a creative reflection of His Grace and Glory in distinct groups of people.

In highlighting the beauty of such diversity, the Gospel thus counters the mistaken cultural illusion that the path to Unity is paved by minimizing what makes us unique. The Gospel compels us to celebrate our ethnic distinctions, value our cultural differences, and acknowledge our historical diversity; even forgiving the ways such history may have been dreadfully harmful.

We must remember that Christ holds the most honored position in the family of God. **Gal. 3** reveals that through Christ, we are able to experience the full beauty of God’s design for mankind’s diversity.

- **Rom. 13:1-7** – These verses describe the responsibility for Christians to live in submission to the human authorities in government. The Bible clearly teaches that government exists under God, as citizens under a government to work together, to establish and enforce just laws that address immigration.
- **Eph. 4:1-6** – That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you.”
- **Col. 3:11** -Here there is no Gentile and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free, but Christ is all, and in all.
- **Acts 10:34** – So, Peter opened his mouth and said; Truly I understand that God shows no partiality.

April 27, 2025

LESSON 4: THE SOJOURNER IN OUR MIDST (IMMIGRATION)

(Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:39; Rom.13:10; Prov. 27:10)

INTRODUCTION: Amid political discussions and personal disagreements, the Gospel reminds us that when we are talking about immigration, (legal or illegal), we are talking about men and women made in God's image and pursued by His Grace.

Consequently, followers of Christ must see immigrants, not as a problem to be solved, but as people to be loved. In addition to practical ignorance on this issue, in the political sphere, our personal lives often reflect little concern for The Sojourner in our midst.

- **Deut. 10: 19- Love the sojourner, therefore for you were sojourner in the land Egypt.**

The Bible commands God's people to love foreigners, and to treat them with compassion and sympathy. God's love extends to all people. God's people should imitate God's love for strangers. In this verse, the Israelites are commanded to show love and kindness to strangers, reflecting their own history as formerly oppressed strangers in Egypt.

The Gospel also reflects the way followers of Christ view migrant men and women who are living right around us in our country. The Bible compels us in our culture to denounce any and all forms of oppression, exploitation, bigotry, or harassment of immigrants, regardless of legal status. **These are men and women for whom Christ died, and their dignity is no greater or lesser than our own.**

The Bible teaches the Government exists under God – to establish and enforce laws for the good of people **Rom. 13:1-7**. We have a responsibility before God, as citizens under a government, to work together to establish and enforce just laws that address immigration.

Regardless of personal or political views, none of us can escape the reality that we're talking about our neighbors, and Jesus' Command regarding our neighbors is clear.

In the end, we are all immigrants – referring to our Ancestors who may have migrated to America. In other words, Christians are migrants on this earth, and the more we get involved in the lives of immigrants, the better we will understand the Gospel.

Other References:

I Peter 2:11; Hebrews 11:13-14, 16; Rev. 7:9; Acts 17:26