

“GRACE UPON RACE”

Ephesians 2:1-19

“Is GRACE bigger than our current social problem?” YES!!!!

RACE: “a category of humankind that shares certain distinctive physical traits.”

ETHNICITIES: “large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background.”

“Race is a social construct not genetic or biological”

TWO PARTS OF THE PASSAGE

- Ephesians 2:1-10: The vertical plank of reconciliation of our relationship with God.
- Ephesians 2:11-19: The horizontal plank of reconciliation of our relationship with one another.

“The break in relationship with God led to break in relationship with others; and our reconciliation must first begin with God before we can be reconciled with others.”

ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER DOES NOT WORK:

- Reconciliation with God alone is dry theology
- Reconciliation with man alone is dead

VERTICAL: GRACE TO THE HUMAN RACE

Eph. 2:1-4. All that was wrong with us

“But God...” The intervention of grace. Eph. 2:8-9.

HORIZONTAL: GRACE TO THE HUMAN RACE (VV. 11-19)

V.11. God’s covenant excluded us and man’s slur branded us

V.12. Continues where vv. 1-4 left off

v.13. “But now”. These two reconciliations are “...brought near by the blood of Christ.” (V.13).

V.14. “PEACE” Reference to the promised Messiah in Isaiah (9:6; 52:7; 59:19)

V.15. “one new man in place of the two, so making peace”. This is unity in diversity...

- This is not elimination of distinction, but removal of barriers of access.

v.16. Reconciliation has been accomplished. We do not strive for it. We have been given it in Christ – at a tremendous cost.

V.17. The inclusiveness of the gospel. Both the Jew and the gentile needed the gospel.

Cross is the great leveler

v.18. We see that the triune God is involved in this reconciliation

v.19. The good news of the “no longer...”

- All those 12 things that separated us have been cancelled.

We are now:

- Fellow citizens with the saints and
- Members of the household of God.

We have been moved:

- from Adam’s race;
- To His chosen race.

This celebration of diversity continues in the ages to come

(Rev. 5:9; 21:24, 26)

WHERE DO WE START TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

1. Watch your heart both for pride and prejudice

- It is blasphemy since they are ALL made the image of God

The antidote is “grace”

Phil 2:3. Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others.

Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. [NLT]

2. Watch your tongue both for its silence and speech

- Brash: Proverbs 18:21. “Death and life are in the power of the tongue...”
- Safe Silence: Prov. 31:8. “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,...”

3. Watch your step both against “side-stepping” and “social justice”

- We side-step or avoid taking action because we don’t want to be involved
- “social justice” in its present form is the false gospel for it is devoid of the gospel

THE WORLD IS WATCHING HOW THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED GRACE WILL RESPOND:

- They need to know that reconciliation has been achieved; and
- That it must begin with God.

Please send your questions to nlbchapel@gmail.com for Friday's meeting