

Racial Prejudice: Out of Step with the Gospel

Racial Harmony | Galatians 2:11-14

Southern Hills Baptist Church

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Introduction: My goal for our time together tonight is to increase our commitment to racial diversity and harmony. I want us to see that it is good, beautiful, right, and most importantly, God-glorifying when Christians of different skin colors, ethnicities, and races live life together, work together, relax together, laugh together, worship together, eat together in a spirit of love and unity. This focus is necessary as our country continues to struggle with real racial animosity. There is hope, and His name is Jesus.

Racial Prejudice: Out of Step with the Gospel (Gal 2:11-14)

- **Peter's Pressure:** Peter was in Antioch spending time with Gentile believers. He was sharing meals and life with them, investing into them. Some brothers from Jerusalem came up who struggled to let go of the law and continued to trust in it for favor with God. They pressured Peter to separate himself from the Gentiles.
- **Courageous Confrontation:** Paul heard of how the Gentiles were being treated. The racial prejudice being shown was "out of step with the truth of the Gospel." Paul courageously confronted Peter.
 - **Gospel Issue:** Paul's confrontation went deeper than hurt feelings. He confronted Peter over how his actions departed from the Gospel. Racism is a Gospel issue through and through.
 - **How?** How is racism a gospel issue? That is what we will explore.

1. Racism is Out of Step with God's Gospel Design (Gen 1:26-27)

- **Image of God:** God created every man and woman in His image. This means that we have inherent value and worth (cf Gen 9:6; Psa 8).
- **Dismissing God's Glorious Design:** If we demean, devalue, or belittle another person created in the image of God, and all people are created in the image of God, then we dismiss God's incredible creative work, robbing Him of His rightful glory.
- **Seeing Image-Bearers:** We need to learn to see people through the lens of God's creative design, we need to see all people as image-bearers to the King. There are no ordinary people, only those gloriously created in the image of God!

2. Racism is Out of Step with Jesus' Gospel Mission (Rev 5:1-10)

- **A Diverse Purchase:** By His blood, Jesus purchased people from every

race and ethnicity. The diversity in the Body of Christ is no accident, it central to Jesus' redemptive mission.

- **An Infinitely High Price:** The purchase of a diverse body didn't come cheap. It came at the cost of the greatest value in the world, the life of the only Son of God.
- **Jesus Heart/Your Heart:** Jesus' heart for people of every ethnicity is revealed in His sacrifice. What is revealed about your heart when you think about someone for better or worse because of the color of their skin? Your heart is at odds with Jesus' heart.

3. Racism is Out of Step with Our Gospel Identity (Eph 2:11-22)

- **Shift In identity:** Ephesians 2 describes the shift in our identity in the Gospel. Verses 1-10 speak to our individual spiritual identities. Verses 11-22 speak to the racial reconciliation the Gospel purchased.
- **More Than Diversity, Harmony:** Jesus wanted more than diversity in the Body of Christ, He wanted harmony. This is achieved with Jesus becoming our primary identity and goal in life.
- **Jesus is Our Identity:** Jesus defines us more than our skin color, more than the nation we were born in, more than the culture that drives our traditions, more than the families we come from, more than anything. Jesus is our all in all and when you have that in common with someone else there isn't anything you can't overcome in the pursuit of unity.
- **Not Just an Implication:** Ephesians 2 is teaching us that that racial diversity and harmony is not merely an implication of the Gospel, it was one of the primary objectives of the Gospel. It is not a nice side effect or a bonus; it was something that was essential to the mission of Jesus.

What Next? How do we become a church that more actively pursues racial diversity and harmony?

- **Be Aware:** We can't bury our heads in the sand when it comes to issue of race. There are real issues and we are all vulnerable. If Peter and Barnabas could fall into their snail how could we be so naïve to think that this sin does not continue to attack?
- **Pursue Diversity:** We need to be interested in people who are different than us. What does your current circle of friends look like? Are you pursuing diversity like Jesus did?
- **Pursue Harmony:** Do you look to invest into the lives of those who look different than you or do you stay in your comfort zone? It isn't enough to come to church on Sundays and sit in the same room as someone who looks different than you, you need to go and be a real friend to them, take a real interest in them.