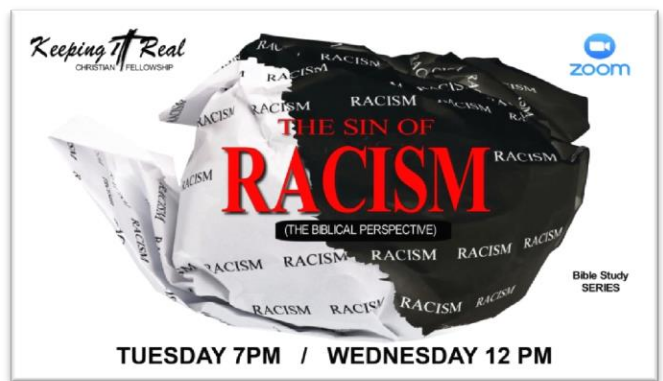


“THE SIN OF RACISM” Pt. 3

“Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” -- Matthew 22:37-39



Biblically, sin is anything that falls short of God’s will and glory, that violates his law and His character (1 John 3:4; Romans 3:23). There are at least four (4) ways in which what we will be calling “racism” is a violation of God’s glory and therefore sin. IT IS SIN!

3. Because of the New Creation.

The new creation is described in (2 Corinthians 5:17): “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” The word “therefore” refers us back to verses 14-16 where Paul tells us that all believers have died with Christ and no longer live for themselves. Our lives are no longer worldly, and fleshly; they are now spiritual.

Our “death” is that of the old sin nature which was nailed to the cross with Christ. It was buried with Him, and just as He was raised up by the Father, so are we raised up to “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). That new person that was raised up is what Paul refers to in 2 Corinthians 5:17 as the “new creation.”

However, there are also challenges to becoming a new creation. The flesh, or the physical body and mind, is influenced by Satan, and by the world, and by its own habits built over a lifetime.

4 BASIC REASONS WHY RACISM IS SIN

1. Because of the image of God.
2. Because of the commandment to love your neighbor.
- 3. Because of the new creation.**
4. Because of the gospel of justification by grace through faith alone.

Being united in Christ through faith does not mean that ethnic and cultural differences will be erased. Rather, ethnic and other categories (economic, gender, and so forth) are no longer definitive of our identities. Galatians 3:28 — **“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”** (NIV)—is not a call to erase ethnic, class, and gender diversity in an ontological or absolute sense. Rather, it is a call to break down any existing barriers and inequalities between them. Bible scholars have shown that Galatians is not primarily about soteriology—how we are saved—but about ecclesiology—how we are to be church.

Paul said, **“From now on, we regard no one according to the flesh.”** He saw other people as present or potential members of the **“new creation”**: “The old has passed away and the new has come” (2 Cor. 5:16–17).

To understand the new creation, first we must grasp that it is in fact a creation, something created by God. **John 1:13** tells us that this new birth was brought about by the will of God. We did not inherit the new nature or decide to re-create ourselves anew. Neither did God simply clean up our old nature; He created something entirely fresh and unique. The new creation is completely new, brought about from nothing, just as the whole universe was created by God *ex nihilo*, from nothing. Only the Creator could accomplish such a feat.

Second, **“old things have passed away.”** The “old” refers to everything that is part of our old nature—natural pride, love of sin, reliance on works, and our former opinions, habits and passions. Most significantly, what we loved has passed away, especially the supreme love of self and with it self-righteousness, self-promotion, and self-justification. The new creature looks outwardly toward Christ instead of inwardly toward self. The old things died, nailed to the cross with our sin nature.

The new creation, John wrote, is made up of people **“from every nation (ethnos), tribe, people, and language”** (**Rev. 7:9**). Nations in the New Testament world were often multi-racial, like the United States, but typically united by a common culture. The early church recognized that culture was rooted not in skin color but in religious culture.

For the apostles, the only two “races” were those of the old creation and the new creation. This explains the King James translation of **Acts 17:26**, in which Paul describes the unity of the human race in creation: God **“hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.”** All men share the same blood. (**Also cp. Ephesians 2:13-14**)

At the end of Galatians, Paul says: **“Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation”** (**Galatians 6:15**). **“Circumcision and uncircumcision”** is used metaphorically for racial and ethnic differences, and when Paul says such distinctions mean nothing, he is not speaking absolutely. **What he means is that such racial and cultural distinctions are nothing in comparison to the new creation.**

OUR RESPONSIBILITY

Although we all have *“normals”* in our lives, especially when it comes to ethnicity ... it is every Christian’s responsibility to grow in awareness and then do something about it. A Christian cannot just read (**Revelation 7:9-10**) and sit still. Especially when other passages, like (**John 17:21-23**) are clearly outlined in the Scriptures.

Jesus is addressing all believers here. He is saying that Christians need to cast aside all ethnic divides and be in unity with one another, in order for the world to truly know Him. Unity is a critical part of our witness to this unbelieving world. (**cp. 1 Corinthians 12:13**)