

*Racism?*

Some of the most ugly, horrible events in history, like massacres, wars, kidnapping, and cruel slavery, are the large-scale results of hatred towards others. As sinners, we know this hatred all too well, and as Americans, we know how this hatred has been manifested in many ways through our own history. Even currently, our nation is in turmoil over issues regarding racism and anti-racism, and truly, racism will never be eradicated until our Lord returns. In order to be shining lights in this dark world, we must treat others, no matter who they are, how God desires us to treat them, which we can know through the Bible.

What even is ‘race’? A race is the descendants of a common ancestor. Since we have been studying the early chapters of Genesis, you should be familiar with origins of humanity, that God made man in his own image, both male and female, and every person is traced back to the first couple, Adam and Eve. Therefore, there is one race, the race of man, who are descendants of the common ancestors of Adam and Eve. Yet, at the same time, there are still different kinds of people within the human race that can trace their lineage to certain people and places. Mankind is made up of many different ethnicities, or people groups, with each nationality having their own appearance, custom, and history. Genesis 10 tells us that the different people groups originated from those who descended from Noah and his three sons, who were the only survivors of the flood with their wives. These different descendants, including Egypt and Canaan, spread through the world with their own language, customs, and appearances. We see in Genesis that there is a unity and diversity within mankind, which is delightful to God.

Read Genesis 1:27 again, which says, **“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”** God does not say that he made only a certain kind of man in the image of God, nor does he say that he made some people more in his image than others. All of mankind—no matter what ethnicity or gender—is in the image of God. We are equal with others in being in the image of God, in being fully human. You are not better than others; you are just as equally human as anybody else no matter their family, neighborhood, physical abilities, language, age, gender, or color of skin.

Just as we are equal as image-bearers of God, we are also equal in being sinful before God. Please read Romans 3:9-20; I will include verses 9-11: **“What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written, “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God.”** In this passage, Paul shows us that all of mankind is under sin, even the Jews who

were chosen by God, given the covenant, the laws, the tabernacle, and the prophets. Although some people may commit different and more heinous sins than us, we are all equally sinners. The worst kind of evil lies within our hearts; and the sins we do commit are far worse than we think. You are not better off than others as it relates to your sinfulness. Those who think they are better than others are caught in the trap of pride laid by the devil himself.

Thankfully, every ethnicity has equal standing before God for salvation. God has saved people from every single ethnicity of mankind, as Revelation 5:9-10 says, **“And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”** The universal church of God, which stretches through all places and ages, is comprised of people of every background, not just people like you and me. God does not show favoritism to one race or another, but he has shed his very blood for Africans, Europeans, Asians, Australians, Americans, and so forth. The children’s song is right that says, “Jesus loves the little children; all of the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight; Jesus loves the little children of the world.” So, since we have equal standing with other believers of different backgrounds, we must love them as Christ loved them.

While we are equal, we still have some differences. How we value and react to those differences shapes our treatment of others. We must avoid prejudice. Prejudice is judging someone before you gather all the facts about the person. It is making a decision about what you think and how you feel about a person before you really get to know them. Often we think we have figured somebody out just by the way they look: their skin color, their dress, their posture. While these things do tell us about a person’s identity, they are not all there is that defines that person. We are more than our appearances. Do not disdain, dislike, or look down on someone by the way that they look—that is the complete opposite of the spiritual fruit of love. We should not let a bad experience, interaction, or misunderstanding of one person of a different skin color affect the way we see all people of that skin color. We must put ourselves in other people’s shoes because we do not know everything about other people’s experience—we do not know everything, anyway. Also, do not tell jokes or use words that you would feel uncomfortable telling before the face of God. It is perilous to make light of sin by laughing at it. **“Man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart”** (1 Samuel 16:7).