

RACE, RACISM, SLAVERY, & INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE

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ARE YOU UNCOMFORTABLE RIGHT NOW?

- This isn't a political message; it's a Bible message.
- Since subjects such as this one can make people uncomfortable, I want to provide a good reminder that a wise man once said:
 - *“There are no sensitive Bible subjects, only sensitive people” (CRS).*
- We are going to have to give an answer on the last day for how we handled and applied God's word (**JOHN 12:48**), so if we aren't comfortable talking about Bible subjects, we need to start getting more comfortable.

WHY PREACH ON THESE SUBJECTS?

- Race/Racism is a Bible subject (**ACTS 10:34-35; ROM. 10:12**).
- Racism is a matter of eternal life and eternal death (**JAMES 2:1, 8-9; ROM. 13:8-10; MATT. 7:12; 1 JOHN 3:4**).
- Slavery is a Bible subject (**EXOD. 21; LEV. 25; EPH. 6:5-9; ETC.**).
- People wish to marry (**GEN. 2:18; 1 COR. 7:2, 27-28**).
- Some may have questions regarding various aspects of race, racism, slavery, and interracial marriage. Since these are Bible subjects, we need to let the Bible provide the answers to these questions (**2 TIM. 3:16**).
- The whole counsel of God must be preached (**ACTS 20:26-27**),

RACISM IS A REAL & UGLY PART OF CHURCH HISTORY

- Racism is not just a huge part of American history; it's a huge part of American church history. Acts of racism, both overt and covert, permeated the Lord's church during the 20th century (and preceding centuries):
 - *“We were not accepted in the white churches except for the back seat or by special invitation ... The thing that hurt me greatly was for us to be saying there was ‘one church.’ We were obviously divided” (Andrew Hairston, Simpson Street church of Christ, Atlanta, GA, 2018).*
 - *“I could tell you stories of friends of mine who were fired just because they asked a black preacher to say a dismissal prayer at a gospel meeting” (Dwain Evans, Bering Drive church of Christ, Houston, TX, 2018).*

RACISM IS A REAL & UGLY PART OF CHURCH HISTORY

- But this isn't just a problem of the past.

Churches today are still mostly segregated.

- *“69% of congregations are almost all white, and 18% mostly black ... In a recent New York Times survey, 90% of whites said there were few or no blacks at their religious services and 73% of blacks said their congregations had few or no whites” (Robert Vischer, Racial Segregation in American Churches and Its Implications for School Vouchers, 2001).*
- *“We still have two brotherhoods – the white brotherhood and the black brotherhood – and we don't have too much fellowship between us” (Eugene Lawton, Newark church of Christ, Newark, NJ, 2018).*

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I've personally witnessed racism in the church during my lifetime (1994-today).

Misconceptions about race, slavery, and interracial marriage persist for various reasons.

RACISM (PREJUDICE)

- Being ignorant of another person's culture and life experiences is NOT racism or a sign of prejudice.
 - *There is a difference between ignorance and malice.*
- Making broad conclusions about a group of people based on the actions of one or more people in the social group IS a sign of prejudice (LEV. 19:15; PROV. 20:23; GAL. 6:4-5).
 - *Would you make judgments about all of the apostles due to Peter's mistakes?*
 - *Do you like it when people make judgments about the entire church based on the actions of a few people?*
 - *No, so don't make judgments about an entire group of people based on the actions of some!*
- Be careful how you make judgments (MATT. 7:1-2), both when judging an individual and especially when judging an entire group of people.
 - *Do not evilly surmise! (1 COR. 13:4-8; PROV. 18:13; JOHN 7:24)*

RACE

- The Bible never talks about different races. It acknowledges different nationalities, but not difference races. Why is that? Because there is only one race – the human race (**GEN. 1-3, 6-10; ACTS 17:26, NASB**).
 - *God did not create race, per se. Instead, He allowed differences in race to develop (evolve) over time (**GEN. 6-9, 10:32-11:9**).*
- NOTE:** You can be a creationist who rejects the numerous false aspects of Darwin's theories while still recognizing a few undeniable facts about certain evolutionary tenants (Natural Evolution, i.e. “Survival of the Fittest”).

SLAVERY

- The so-called “Curse of Ham” (**GEN. 9**) is NOT why black people were enslaved and suffered in various ways for centuries.
 - *Even renowned gospel preachers of old (David Lipscomb, etc.) were wrong in propagating this baseless theory to justify enslavement of black people.*
- Slavery is NOT inherently sinful, nor is it outlawed by the New Testament (**1 TIM. 6:1-3**).
 - *The New Testament regulated slavery & demands special attitudes from both servants and masters (**COL. 3:22-4:1; EPH. 6:5-9; PHILE. 10-17**).*
- However, racially-motivated, cruel, and persecutory enslavement IS sinful (**COL. 4:1; EPH. 6:9; MATT. 7:12**).

INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE

- The New Testament NEVER condemns marriage between people of different races.
 - *Jesus had an opportunity in **MATT. 19** to explain restrictions on interracial marriages, but He didn't.*
 - *Paul talked about mixed marriages in the sense of marriages between unbelievers and believers (**1 COR. 7:12-16**), but He never said anything about mixed marriages in terms of race.*
- Even under the Law of Moses, God's people were NEVER forbidden from marrying foreigners due to racial differences.
 - *Yes, the Israelites were forbidden from marrying foreign nations, not due to race but due to idolatry (**DEUT. 7:3-4; NEH. 13:26; SEE ALSO 1 COR. 15:33**).*

INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE

- Someone may say, “I’m not attracted to _____ race.”
 - *Do not conflate your preferences with what God has or has not said. God never said marry who you’re most attracted to, and He also never said bind your personal attractions as law onto others.*
- Who you seek for a mate should not be based primarily on who you’re most attracted to. Instead, you should be looking for:
 - *A Christian (**1 PET. 3:7**).*
 - *A Christian who is committed to:*
 - *God (**MATT. 22:37**),*
 - *and a potential spouse (**MATT. 19:6; 1 COR. 7:10-11**).*
 - *A faithful Christian (**JAMES 1:22-25**).*

CONCLUSION

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ” (GAL. 3:28).

- Racism in the church, or even indifference to it, must be eradicated.
 - *If we are guilty of racism, we must repent.*
 - *If we witness racism in the church, we must rebuke it.*
 - *Remember, our apathy can lead us to become guilty of partaking in another man’s sins (1 TIM. 5:22).*
- God’s word is right (**PSALM 119:160**). His word is right on these issues, so let’s accept what He has said.