

Racial Reconciliation: Examining Systemic Injustices

Central Union Baptist Church | 24 August 2019

TALK 1: *What Does the Bible Say About Race? And Why It Matters.*

Our Goal

We desire to play a small role in bringing greater awareness to the historical roots and present forms of racism in our city. The goal is not merely greater intellectual knowledge but greater compassion, so that we are better positioned to empathize and strategize toward the end of “adorning the doctrine of God our Savior.” (Titus 2:10)¹

Our Outline

1) What does the Bible say about race?

- It speaks about race **biologically**...

GEN. 1:26-27 | *God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

ACTS 17:26 | *And [God] made from **one man** every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place. 27 That they should seek God.*

- It speaks about race **ethnically**...

ACTS 7:19 | *But as the time of **the promise** drew near, which God had granted to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt until there arose over Egypt another king who did not know Joseph. He dealt shrewdly with **our race** [the Hebrews] and forced our fathers to expose their infants, so that they would not be kept alive.*

MATT. 28:19 | *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations [of all ethnicities, people groups], baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

- It speaks about race **spiritually**...

GEN. 3:15 | *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring [seed] and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. (See also John 8:44, where Jesus says to the Pharisees they’re of their father, the Devil.)*

EPH. 2:14-15 | *14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both **one** and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 ...that he might create in himself **one new man** in place of the two, so making peace.*

1 PET. 2:9-10 | *9 But you are a chosen **race**, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people.*

¹All Scriptures are taken from the English Standard Version.

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2) What does the Bible say about racism?

Because racism is a loaded term, and some suspect an unbiblical agenda when it is invoked, let us say precisely what we mean by racism, biblically and theologically defined. **Racism is the denial of the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27) and its implications to someone of another ethnicity.** Racism in the church is a contradiction of the visible unity of all believers in Christ (Ephesians 2:11-22; Revelation 5:9, 7:9). Racism inside and outside the church is a contradiction of Jesus' command to love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:31, Luke 10:25-37, esp. 29, 37), and of God's creation of all people in his image (Genesis 1:27, Acts 17:26, 6:10). So theologically, racism entails a denial of the biblical doctrines of creation, man, the communion of saints and is disobedience to the moral law. We will not mince words: Racism is not only sin; it is heresy of the deepest dye.

JAMES 2:1 | *My brothers, show **no** partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

ESTHER 3:5-6, 9 | *5 And when Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage to him, Haman was filled with fury. 6 But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone. So, as they had made known to him the people of Mordecai, Haman sought to destroy **all the Jews**, the people of Mordecai, throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus...9 If it please the king, let it be **decreed** that they be destroyed.*

3) Why does it [the Bible's teaching on race and racism] matter? It matters...

- For our Father's glory and our joy
- For our neighbor's dignity (and ours too!)
- For our coming together
- For our staying together
- For our witness together
- For Christian preaching and pastoring
- For understanding Christ's Lordship
- For our confidence in Scripture's sufficiency
- For preserving sound doctrine
- For our hope in racial trials

Our Definitions: A Brief Glossary

Two-speed Thinking – A mode of reasoning, common among American Evangelicals, that reduces realities and responsibilities to either 1) something of ultimate importance or 2) something of no importance.

Race – A word which today can refer to the human race or a specific ethnic group, but which can be falsely used to mean a category of people with an inherently different value than other people (the latter is false and due to the social construct of race). Compare with “race” in the Bible (Acts 7:19; 17:26; 1 Pet. 2:9).

Ethnicity – A word which today commonly refers to the way people identify with each other based on commonalities such as language, history, ancestry, nationalities, customs, cuisine, and art. In the Bible, the word “*éthnos*” can refer to people groups (who, most basically, would recognize “us” as being different from “them”) but can also refer to a race or nation. In Matt. 28:19, Jesus refers to “all nations” (all “*ethne*”).

Racism – The poisonous idea of people or governments rewarding social and economic privileges to one group of people by virtue of skin color or ethnic background. It appears in overt ways and covert ways, individually and systemically. Most importantly, what we must understand, is that racism is *sin*.