



ONE BLOOD, ONE RACE, ONE FAMILY

By Rev. Will Nelken

Presented at Trinity Community Church, San Rafael, CA, on Sunday, June 14, 2020

The portent of our days—for our generation and those to follow— is significant. I don't imagine that any generation has ambled through life, and others have certainly faced harsher, more severe days, than we have so far. Nevertheless, this is NOT just a test; this is real.

And we, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, have been chosen by God to lead the way with hope, kindness, and courage. Not everyone will listen. Not everyone will follow. It was the same for our Lord. Yet, our mandate is clear.

Let me be very clear: African-American lives matter.

Let me be very clear: Latino lives matter.

Let me be very clear: Asian lives matter.

Let me be very clear: Arab lives matter.

Let me be very clear: Caucasian lives matter.

If I simply say, all lives matter—in spite of its truth—some people will take offense, because they think it dismissive of the special plight of one group. I hear that.

The continued disrespect and hostility toward black-skinned people, especially here in the United States of America is a deep stain of shame upon our nation.

But I must say, they are not the only ones to suffer indignity and humiliation. Native Americans lost their freedoms and their homelands first.

Some fellow Europeans who crossed the Atlantic, found not freedom, but oppression.

Latin Americans were taken as slaves by the Spanish Conquistadors. Although, for the most part, they are not owned as chattel property anymore

In fact, slavery was not unique to the Americas; it is a part of almost every nation's history, from Greek and Roman civilizations to contemporary forms of human trafficking.

Women of the United States were not permitted to vote until 1920—300 years after the Pilgrims came to America!

One of the elephants that sits at the center of our history is coming again into focus among a new generation. Slavery, of various kinds, is still a major industry in America, perpetuated by our money and our attitudes and our beliefs, and sometimes, our indifference.

All of those lives—regardless of the color of their skin, their ethnic origin, their nationality, or their gender—are valuable to God who made them. And they should be—every one of them—to us, as well.

And why do they all matter?

Because they all were made in the image of God and they are loved by the Savior and redeemed through the cross of Jesus Christ.

Then, why has slavery persisted throughout history, and between various ethnic groups, and even among people of the same ethnic tribe? Because the issue is more than skin deep.

We have Charles Darwin to thank for popularizing the notion of separate races of humankind, according to skin color and other superficial features—higher races, lower races, black races, red races, and so on.

In fact, Darwinian evolution and human slavery share a long and sordid history. Since the theory of evolution proposes the natural selection of the fittest, its worldview consistently leads to such abuses as slavery, abortion, euthanasia, and genocide. These are the cobblestones that pave the Darwinian path to utopia.

Before Darwin, “race” was largely a political and geographical term—even groups who were closely related biologically (such as the English and the Irish) were considered to be separate races in that sense.

Geneticists have found that if we examine any two people from anywhere in the world, the basic genetic differences between them would typically be around 0.2%, even if they came from the same people group.

What we commonly think of as “racial” characteristics account for only 6% of that 0.2% variation, which means such characteristics represent a mere 0.012% genetic variation between human beings. Overall, there is far more genetic variation *within* a people group than there is *between* one people group and another.

To make racist distinctions is based solely on superficial, outward appearances, and NOT on sound scientific principles, nor clear Biblical reasoning. The only reason some people think such differences are major is because their culture has taught them to think that way.

A speaker at the convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in Atlanta, Georgia in 1997 stated:

“Race is a social construct derived mainly from the perceptions conditioned by the events of recorded history, and it has no basic biological reality.”

ABC News agreed: “More and more scientists find that the differences that set us apart are cultural, not racial. Some even say that the word ‘race’ should be abandoned because it’s meaningless. We accept the idea of race because it’s a convenient way of putting people into broad categories, frequently to suppress them—the most hideous example is provided by Hitler’s Germany. What the facts show is that there are differences among us, but they stem from culture, not race.”

The Bible uses the Greek word *ethnos* to describe nations or clusters of people who are set apart from others by their language, culture, geography, or religion. Modern missionaries use the term ‘people groups.’

When we are speaking with our children, or grandchildren, or neighbors, or co-workers, we need to stop speaking about ‘races’ and start speaking about ‘people groups.’ Then, we will be in agreement with what Paul wrote:

Romans 10:12 Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. ¹³ For “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Modern science continues to affirm (bit by bit) what the Bible has revealed for millennia: we are all biological descendants from the same parents—the first man, Adam, and the first woman, Eve.

These are the facts:

1. We came from one man.

“The first man [was] Adam.” (1 Corinthians 15:45)

2. We came from one woman.

“Eve... was the mother of all the living.” (Genesis 3:20)

3. We are fully human from conception.

All the genetic information is present from the very start; a fertilized human egg cell is totally human and nothing else.

4. There is only one race of humans.

We all descended from the first two people, with a common ancestry—we are NOT different biological races; we are one blood.

Acts 17:26 From one man He created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and He determined their boundaries.

As an example, the color of human skin is derived from a single pigment, melanin—a medium shade of brown. People actually DO NOT have different colors of skin, only different shades of the same color.

What we have called racism is sin, because it ignores the foundational truths of our creation by God—in His image, both male and female. It is a lie.

Racism is sin, because it ignores the Message of the saving grace of Jesus Christ that has been sent to all peoples everywhere. It is blind.

Racism is sin, because it spreads hatred for people whom Christ loves. And no one can love God while they hate a brother or sister. It is mean.

If you want to solve the issue of racism in your own life, start believing the Bible and do what it says. Millions of dollars have been spent, thousands of laws have been created, thousands of programs have been instituted to deal with racial problems, and many hundreds have lost their lives in the fight—yet we are hardly any farther along the path to wholeness. Why?

Because it's not a skin issue; it's a sin issue. Until the hearts of men and women are healed and transformed by the grace of God, and we learn to treat one another as Jesus treats us—breaking down so-called racial divisions, ethnic divisions, and gender divisions, and even political divisions that have been fabricated in our minds by worldly thinking—we won't make any lasting headway.

We need to move beyond the divisions of race relations to the unity of grace relations! Relationships united by the love of God through the cross of Christ, and governed by the Bible, lead to reconciliation and fruitfulness.

Jesus prayed,

17:20 "I am not praying only on their behalf, but also on behalf of those who believe in me through their testimony, 17:21 that they will all be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I am in you. I pray that they will be in us, so that the world will believe that you sent me. 17:22 The glory you gave to me I have given to them, that they may be one just as we are one—17:23 I in them and you in me—that they may be completely one, so that the world will know that you sent me, and you have loved them just as you have loved me.

I know that God the Father hears Jesus' prayers, but if it is to show up in our lives—if others are to see the change in us, the Kingdom impact—then we must be intentional to follow the Spirit's lead. Passivity will not achieve Jesus' dream.

The Holy Spirit leads us, He prompts us, He reminds us, but He does not move our hands and feet for us, or make a sound in our mouths apart from us. This life of faith is a dance—a responsive movement of relationship with the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:25 *Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*

At its core, this issue is certainly not a red or blue issue, a have or have-not issue; it is a human issue. The prophet Samuel suffered the same tendency, and God interrupted his way with these words: *"People judge by the outward appearance; God judges by the heart."*

Holy Spirit, lead us! We need divine insight.

It's time for you to intentionally show others the way that you have found. Get ready to cross the street with your hand outstretched, to shake the hand of another shade of melanin.

Take a brother or sister of another skin tone out for coffee and ask to hear their story.

Pre-judging and labeling others is about as natural as checking the weather or thinking about food, so you're going to have to commit yourself to rooting it out whenever it appears in you. God is ready to forgive and transform, if you are ready to repent and pursue righteousness.

Discourage people from speaking slanderously of others, especially based on superficial appearances.

Remember, we are one blood, one race, and, in Christ Jesus, one family. *"Bend every effort to maintain the unity the Spirit gives in the bonds of peace."*

