

RACISM AND THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST *(Ephesians 2:1-7)*

In the wake of the violent tragedy that took place in Charlottesville, Virginia, Christian leaders are calling for prayer and voicing out their concerns about the issue of racism in this country. Dr. Ronnie Floyd, a white American pastor and former president of the Southern Baptist Convention said this: *“These protesters do not represent in any form or way the Christian faith or the values followers of Jesus stand for. In fact, white nationalism and white supremacy are anathema to the teachings of Christ, who called us to love and to serve our neighbor – regardless of skin color, gender, or religion – to give up our life for our friends and to even love our enemies. As Christians, we do not tolerate or condone these protests, and we certainly and wholeheartedly denounce any form of supremacy, anti-Semitism or white nationalism that promotes racism, violence or hate.”* As believers and followers of Christ, how should we understand this issue of racism in our country? Reflecting on Paul’s message to the Ephesian church, let’s consider these two biblical truths which provide us the Christian perspective on racism.

1. _____ is the root problem.

Racism is an evil manifestation of our sinful condition. Racism could be defined as *“a prejudicial attitude or behavior directed against persons on the basis of their race”* or as *“an explicit or implicit belief or practice that values one race over other races.”* Theologian John Frame explains that racism is the belief that one race is inferior to another. He further says that *“racism is often equated with hatred, so it may be defined as hating people because of their color or race.”* The problem of racism is not merely a historical fact. The roots of racism are as deep as man’s sinful heart (Mark 7:21-23; James 2:8-9). All men and women, regardless of race, color or ethnicity, have one common Creator: The Almighty God; one common ancestry: Adam and Eve; one common dignity: image bearers of God; and one common root problem: sin (Acts 17:24-26; Gen. 1:26; Eph. 2:1-3). Sin in every human heart shatters any claim of racial supremacy for all men and women, no matter what the race or ethnicity, are equally guilty and condemned before our Holy God (Rom. 2:5; 3:9-12).

2. _____ is the ultimate answer.

The cardinal and glorious truth of the gospel of Christ is this: it is God alone through Christ who took the sovereign initiative to save and redeem the fallen and sinful human race from its impending judgment and punishment in hell (Eph. 2:4-7). God’s own love, mercy and grace motivate Him to sovereignly intervene, save and grant spiritual and eternal life to sinful people who turn to Christ in faith. It has always been the glorious plan of God to save and gather a redeemed people unto Himself, not defined by any one race or ethnicity, but rather defined by the reconciling work of His Son on the Cross (Rev. 5:9-10; Eph. 2:8-9; 2:13-16; Rom. 3:29-30; Gal. 3:26-28). Hence, what defines you and me as God’s redeemed children, is not our racial or ethnic blood but the blood of our Lord Jesus Himself who ransomed us for God from every tribe, language, people and nation (Rev. 7:9-17).
