



## Colorblind

Race-isms: Galatians 2:11-21

Pastor Jerome Gay Jr.

### Announcements

- First-time guest (Tour 4)!
- Gabbi's Grounds
- Bible Study Wednesday's at 7pm
- Suggested Reads: Oneness Embraced | Stamped from the Beginning | Letters to a Birmingham Jail
- Pray for Camille

(Body fat | not as far as I thought | Krispy Kreme | Race)

### John 13:35

35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

### Things said to me by 'Christians':

- How come you guys sing your sermons?
- The black church is entertaining, but we have the gospel.
- White people are smarter because we have bigger noses than you guys, you guys have broader shoulder which make you more physically gifted.

- White people will never serve under us, especially white men.
- All of that diversity talk is useless, they don't wanna be around us, man.
- I'm surprised you have diversity and your wife is black.
- If black people would just stop talking about race a lot of this would go away. (these are isms)

An **ism** is a distinctive doctrine, theory, system, or practice.

I want to show you some pictures (Chris Buck "Let's Talk About Race"):

- Maid (pic)
- Nails (pic)
- Dolls (pic) - displaced and invisible (black | white | brown)

This was designed to turn the tables, but it also reveals both stereotypes and other **isms** we all have to some degree. While we'll address racism in this series my hope is that we'll look within to address our **race-isms**. **The ism that causes us to judge without knowing, the ism that cause to convict without compassion, the ism to justify what James calls partiality.** One of the ways we've tried to address these isms is what I call the myth of **colorblindness**, I call it a myth because oftentimes the assumption is that **colorblindness equals godliness**, perhaps you've heard the phrase, I don't see color, I only see people. While I understand the sentiment, I don't think this is what the bible encourages, why?

### Take Note...

The gospel isn't **color blind**, its **color-engaging!** (Rev. 7:9)

**Psalm 139** is clear that God didn't just save me spiritually, but he fashioned me and you, physically. My color was a part of His creation, your color was a part of His creation. So, I don't have the privilege of colorblindness and I don't want it. I want to see you and appreciate our differences as a reminder of God's creative genius.

Over the next couple of weeks, we're going to tackle some seemingly polarizing topics: **race, justice, unity and human dignity**, while the topic of race can be divisive, my hope is for us to confront assumptions, stereotypes, prejudice, racism and any other **ism head on**. I have several disclaimers for this series, but the main one is this, **an explanation isn't affirmation**, because the reality everyone has hopes for a series like this:

- ❑ If you're hoping that I'll tell white people off and put them in their place, you'll be sadly disappointed.
- ❑ If you're hoping that I'll tell black people to focus on issues within our community and ignore injustice from other sources, you'll be sadly disappointed.
- ❑ If you're hoping we don't talk about it and just "get to gospel" while ignoring issues of race and justice, you'll be sadly disappointed.
- ❑ If you think we're going to solve hundreds of years of racial and social injustice in a 4-week series, you'll be sadly disappointed.
- ❑ Some of you will think I'm being **too hard**, while others will think I'm **not being hard enough**.

- ❑ If you're willing to look within and take the 18-inch journey from your head to your heart, maybe you'll learn something transformative about yourself. If you're hoping to learn more about you and seeking to understand others, that's the right hope!

### Take Note

The goal of reconciliation is not to **change stats**, it's to **change hearts**.

We can change the stats of a church service with hearts still remaining the same. Take the 18-inch journey with me through God's word and you'll grow in five ways, which are **our goals for this series**:

1. **Connecting with Jesus** – the only way He increases in you if you decrease of self.
2. **Self-Awareness** – we must look within for isms in order to achieve authentic unity.
3. **Empathy** – you'll seek to understand before correcting. Growing in empathy enables us to grow in compassion.
4. **Unity** – listen, I don't want us to be uniformed, but the gospel demands that we be unified. The gospel empowers us to achieve unity without uniformity.
5. **Crossing the cultural aisle** – willing to initiate a relationship with someone different than you. **(dinner)** The questions isn't who's coming to church, but who's coming to dinner – **Albert Tate**

**If I don't take the 18-inch journey, I won't take the cultural one!**

Let's take a quick look back because history helps us to understand how we got here. I like what Bryan Stevenson, the author of **Just Mercy**.

Our history has scarred us, it has bruised us, and it has injured us, but when we tell the truth about our history, we can change things. If we create spaces where we resurrect the truth, we can get to something that feels more like freedom; and we can achieve something that looks more like justice. We can shift this narrative that has burdened us and **resurrect hope**. – **Bryan Stevenson**

**The question is what is the scarred history that either many of us either are unaware of or don't care to address?**

#### **Publius Tacitus (pic)**

- ❑ Roman historian and author of *Germania*.
- ❑ Said Germanic tribes are **free from taint of intermarriages**.
- ❑ Stressed the superiority of Anglo-Saxon religious and political institutions.
- ❑ Tacitus stressed the superiority of their institutions was in their blood.
- ❑ Kelly Brown Douglas in her book *Stand Your Ground*, calls this the rise of the Anglo-Saxon Myth of superiority.

#### **Gomes Eanes de Zurara (pic)**

- ❑ A commander in Prince Henry's Military Order of Christ and his mission was to create reasons to affirm the monetary decision **to exclusively trade African slaves**.

- ❑ In 1453, just a year later, Zurara finished the first book on Africans written by a European in the modern era called *The Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea* and this would be one of the first recorded documents of anti-Black racist ideas, this was more than class hierarchy, but **race-based oppression**.
- ❑ While Zurara didn't create whiteness, he certainly defined blackness, which was needed in order to demean black people and make others superior.

#### **Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (pic)**

- ❑ German physician, naturalist, physiologist and anthropologist.
- ❑ Credited with coming up with racially based categories: **Caucasian** = White, **Mongolian** = Yellow, **Malayan** = Brown, **Ethiopian** = Black and American = Red.
- ❑ Much of Blumenbach's scientific work was based on skull size which he used to determine beauty and value.
- ❑ Studies based on the **Degenerative Hypothesis** which sought to advert social decline by using pre-scientific method to find the lowest contributors to society.

So, race is a social construct, but certainly one that we can't ignore. I like to break race into four categories, because when we call everything racist, we dilute the term and its effects.

1. **Racial Ignorance** – don't know
2. **Racial Indifference** – don't care

- 3. **Racial Insensitivity** – willful ignorance
- 4. **Racism** – willful hatred and partiality (James 2:9)

**To black people I'd say everything isn't racist, to my white brothers and sisters I'd say some things are racist and should be shunned and to my brown brothers and sisters I'd say, I see and hear you!**

Paul's letter to the Galatians was addressed to a group of churches in Galatia, a region of present-day Turkey. Paul had preached the gospel in these churches. He wrote to counter those who taught that Christians must be circumcised in order to be accepted by God. Paul began with a defense of his apostolic authority (chs. 1-2), then made it clear that all believers, Jew and Gentile alike, enjoy complete salvation in Christ (chs. 3-4). In chapters 5-6 Paul showed how the gospel of grace leads to true freedom and godly living. Perhaps the central message of Galatians is "a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ" (2:16). Paul wrote this letter sometime between A.D. 48 and 55.<sup>1</sup>

### **Galatians 2:11**

11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned.

### **Thought Tattoo**

Reconciliation is impossible without confrontation.

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<sup>1</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ga.

Paul makes it clear that Peter's (John 1:42) behavior was so detrimental and unbecoming of someone who claims faith in Christ that he had to oppose him to his face. Paul makes it clear that he didn't go behind Peter's back nor did he ask someone else what he thought about Peter's behavior, he approached him directly and firmly. Something that shouldn't be overlooked is the fact that **a Jewish man confronted another Jewish man on his partiality**. What made him do that? One of the reasons was the diverse nature of the team sent with him when he was commissioned for ministry:

- ❑ Antioch is where we hear the term **Christian used for the first time** (Acts 11:26).
- ❑ The missionaries were sent from Antioch were diverse: **Barnabas** – Jew of the diaspora, **Simeon called Niger** – most likely African, **Lucius of Cyrene** – Cyrenian Jew like John Mark who wrote Mark, **Manaen** – friend of Herod the Tetrarch and **Paul** – Jewish (Acts 13:1-3).
- ❑ **What would make Paul oppose Peter to his face?** What would make him go from **standing with him in Jerusalem** (Gal. 1:18), to **standing against him in Antioch** (Gal. 2:11)? **Duplicity in behavior and deviation from the gospel**, which Paul will say later.

If the authenticity of the gospel is to be upheld and unity is to be achieved, you and I can't shy away from confrontation:

### **Take Note...**

We must not be afraid of **intra-racial** confrontation.

**How many racially charged conversations happen at your table that you would never want people to hear?**

**(Relative and racism)**

### **Galatians 2:12**

12 For he regularly ate with the Gentiles before certain men came from James. However, when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, because he feared those from the circumcision party.

### **Take Note...**

**Passivity** and fear hinder gospel unity.

The gospel mission is hindered when we place our personal preferences over God's mission. **Partiality of any form amongst Christian's should be confronted, but too often fear keeps us from addressing what needs to be addressed, what fear?** Clearly, Peter was afraid of something, but fear is never an excuse for racism or any other **ism** that excludes based on preference and prejudice. Peter feared the circumcision party more than he cared about the Gentiles, who were his brothers by faith, too. **Do you fear being seen or associated with people that are different than you?** **(Table fellowship was a sign of acceptance | Luke 15)** Before you answer, look at what Paul mentions about Peter, he withdrew and separated on certain occasions, this means that **the irregularity of his time with Gentiles allowed his prejudice to fester and the regularity of his prejudice to persist.** Peter didn't just have a moment, his prejudice towards Gentiles festered to a point to where he told God, "no."

### **Acts 10:13-14**

13 A voice said to him, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat." 14 "No, Lord!" Peter said. "For I have never eaten anything impure and ritually unclean."

Three things hinder gospel unity:

- Pride** – a refusal to change and listen. **"Motivated Reasoning"** is what social scientists call the process of deciding what evidence to accept based on the conclusion one prefers.
- Preference** – a refusal to explore
- Passivity** – a refusal to confront, it's not always your preferences that contribute to the problems of racial reconciliation, it's oftentimes your passivity. Your fear to confront, especially those of your own constituency **(Dr. King's letter to Protestants)**

Peter eventually confronts his own isms when God lets him know he's putting the law above grace.

### **Acts 10:26-28**

26 But Peter lifted him up and said, "Stand up. I myself am also a man." 27 While talking with him, he went in and found a large gathering of people. 28 Peter said to them, "You know it's forbidden for a Jewish man to associate with or visit a foreigner, but **God has shown me that I must not call any person impure or unclean.**

While reconciliation is the ministry God has given us (2 Cor. 5:18) and is a clear reality in scripture which starts with being reconciled to God through Christ, not everyone is happy with this reality:

### Acts 11:2-3

2 When Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, 3 saying, “**You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.**”

How are you using your access? Who do you fear more, God or man? In this moment for Peter, it's man.

- Fear of being called a **sell out**
- Fear of being called a **Marxist or SJW**
- Fear of being outcasted by **your family**
- Fear of not being **accepted**
- Fear of what you'll find inside of you!**

### Galatians 2:13

13 Then the rest of the Jews joined his hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

### Take Note...

A culture of prejudice is nurtured, when prejudice is not confronted.

Notice that others joined in on Peter's hypocrisy because when we operate in fear, we don't allow unity to be nurtured. In fact, in many cases we contribute to division (**Demeans - gospel Dehumanizes - others Deters - relationships**). Paul held Peter accountable for leading others astray, but notice he calls his behavior hypocritical. **Notice the text says the rest of the Jews, this means that Paul was outnumbered, but he still chose to stand for truth and human value.** Everyone will not receive the message, and everyone will not want to see diversity and

reconciliation realized because it disrupts their cultural comfort.

**Nurtured Delusion (Divided by Faith)** - if I stay in homogenous circles when I don't have to, than what I'm functionally saying is that I don't want to be challenged or stretched and it could mean that you don't want to fellowship with others that are different than you.

### Take Note...

Unity is nurtured when we have the **courage to confront!**

Rather than nurturing delusion about other races and cultures due to fear, pride and passivity, Peter who showed fear in Galatians, displayed courage in what Luke wrote in Acts:

### Acts 11:18

18 When they heard this they became silent. And they glorified God, saying, “So then, God has given repentance resulting in life even to the Gentiles.”

### Galatians 2:14

14 But when I saw that they were **deviating from the truth of the gospel**, I told Cephas in front of everyone, “If you, who are a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel Gentiles to live like Jews?”

### Take Note...

The gospel is **inclusive**, not **imperialistic**.

While racial reconciliation is not the gospel, scripture is clear that the gospel produces the fruit of a transformed



life. Paul says that Peter is deviating from the gospel by his treatment of the Gentiles, hate and/or prejudice will never coincide with the gospel or **Christianity**.

### How should we approach culture?

- ❑ **Adopt** – style, hospitality, love for the arts, etc.
- ❑ **Adapt** – Paul at the Areopagus quotes one of their poets (Acts 17:28).
- ❑ **Avoid** – we can't accept every aspect of culture, especially when it opposes God's design.

Some would ask, but what about slavery, Jim Crow and several hundred years of oppression?

### 1 John 4:20-21

20 If anyone says, "I love God," and yet hates his brother or sister, he is a liar. For the person who does not love his brother or sister whom he has seen **cannot love God** whom he has not seen. 21 And we have this command from him: The one who loves God must also love his brother and sister.

### (Hammer | Build | Beat)

- ❑ Oppression doesn't give us a pass to be unforgiving.
- ❑ The Civil Rights Acts didn't change the hearts of men. You can't legislate the heart.
- ❑ Depravity Olympics **(the race to the bottom)**

We have to communicate community, not assimilation. The Judaizers not only got the gospel wrong, they also underemphasized it, they communicated their cultural norms above the gospel. That's what happens when we

allow cultural preferences to eclipse the gospel. Here's the phrase I'd like to coin, as a gospel-centered community, we must embrace or **eclecticity**. We'll never be one thing as it relates to race and culture, but we can emphasize one thing, **the gospel**, if we don't we'll respond just like Peter and it'll only get worse, Peter didn't even see his own issue and the reality is we, don't see ours, a philosopher said it best:

We struggle to have the right view of our neighbor "because I exclude the enemy from the community of humans & **myself from the community of sinners.**" – **Miroslav Volf**

One more time for the people in the back. We struggle to have the right view of our neighbor "because I exclude the enemy from the community of humans and myself from the community of sinners." What do I mean by that? My Pastor buddy **Jordan Rice** says it this way, "our view of our neighbor is so distorted that we end up removing them from the community of humans—men and women made in the image of God, and in turn we remove ourselves from the community of sinners, men and women in need of a savior, so, we don't see our own reflection. If you're not careful, because of what people have done, you'll remove them from the community of humans, and in turn, you'll start to think you're inherently better than people, and you'll miss out on the gospel all-together."

### Galatians 2:15-16

15 We are Jews by birth and not "Gentile sinners," 16 and yet because we know that a person is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we ourselves have believed in Christ Jesus. This was so that we

might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no human being will be justified.

### Take Note...

It's not color or culture, its Christ that saves AND unifies!

Here Paul communicates the overall theme of the book of Galatians, the spiritual birth means more than the natural birth. The law doesn't save, neither does ethnicity or nationality, **it's only faith in Christ**. That's it. Peter's behavior is glorifying fear of man and the law by distancing himself from the Gentiles. This is one of the reasons his behavior wasn't in step with the gospel.

### Galatians 2:17-19

17 But if we ourselves are also found to be "sinners" while seeking to be justified by Christ, is Christ then a promoter of sin? Absolutely not! 18 If I rebuild those things that I tore down, **I show myself to be a lawbreaker**. 19 For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live for God.

It's important to note that Paul is still talking to Peter, this is often missed in many of the commentaries that I've read. **The big idea being communicated here is that sinners all need grace regardless of color or culture.** Christ isn't the promoter of sin, He's the forgiver of sin and everyone is in need of grace. God has wiped our records clean because of the sacrifice of his son, not because of Jewishness or the color of anyone's skin. The law doesn't save because the law doesn't or can it legislate the heart, so, **don't appeal to change laws as a means to communicate social equality.**

A person with power can still have a heart of prejudice and hatred after a laws are written and enacted.

### Take Note...

How can a sinner look down on a sinner?

There isn't a premise where a sinner can look down on another sinner when everyone is in need of grace. This is why Paul says, "I show myself to be a lawbreaker."

### Galatians 2:20-21

20 I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

Paul's Jewish-ness was crucified with Christ and he's challenging Peter to realize this, so is your blackness and whiteness. If you're in Christ all of that has been crucified with Christ.

Stephan Whitley | No commissary | Hunger Strike | Unity

### Lock Arms

We are crucified **with Christ** because Christ has been crucified **for us**.