



Colorblind

Human Dignity: Ephesians 2:11-22
Pastor Jerome Gay Jr.

Announcements

- ❑ First-time guest (Tour 4)!
- ❑ Suggested Reads: Oneness Embraced | Stamped from the Beginning | Letters to a Birmingham Jail

(18-inch journey | tape measure)

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 being understood or correcting. Growing in empathy enables us to grow in compassion and connect authentically.
4. **Unity** – 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 question isn't who's coming to church,

but who's coming to dinner – **Albert Tate** The dinner challenge extends beyond this 4-week series, you have all year, but don't procrastinate.

As we conclude our **Colorblind** series today, I want us to get a picture of how God sees us in order to help us see each other properly. We've talked about:

- ❑ **Race-isms** – we all have **isms** that cause us to prejudice, assume, castigate, reject and it's our isms that keep us from engaging each other.
- ❑ **Justice** – God defines, displays and delivers justice to through Yeshua.
- ❑ **Unity** – love which Jesse addressed last week is both defined and personified by Yeshua (1 John 4:7-8; 1 Cor. 13). This means issues aren't isolated by race, gender, age, etc. we care about injustices and respond because Christ responded to our injustice against by delivering justice to us; **he saved us**.
- ❑ **Human Dignity** – there's a doctrine known as the doctrine of **imago dei**. Having the "image" or "likeness" of God means, that we were made to resemble God. Adam did not resemble God in the sense of God's having flesh and blood. Scripture says that "God is spirit" (John 4:24) and therefore exists without a body, **He's incorporeal**. However, Adam's body did mirror the life of God insofar as it was created in perfect health and was not subject to death. As humans we have the ability to reason and can display care that other aspects of creation don't have and are incapable of doing. As we talk about **human dignity**, I want you to get a picture of yourself through the lens of scripture, because God

assigns dignity to everyone and you getting a picture of yourself through the lens of scripture, you'll see other properly and will assign value to everyone.

What is Human Dignity?

Human dignity is the recognition that **human** beings possess a special value **intrinsic** to their **humanity** and as such are worthy of respect simply because they are **human** beings. As stated, humans bear the image of God because we've been created by God.

Gen. 1:26

26 Then God said, "Let us make man **in our image**, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth."

Where does human dignity start?

Human dignity starts at creation, NOT salvation!

God says because you and I bear His image that we're valuable to Him and **deserve dignity, honor and respect (Caesar's Image | God's Image | Matt. 22:15-22)**. We don't only assign dignity to Christians; Christians are supposed to assign dignity to everyone, even those that disagree with us **theologically**. We don't wait for people to get saved in order to show them honor and respect, they don't have to be in our camp in order to receive dignity.

Why?

Because we're crafted by a loving Creator!

We are the pinnacle of His creation and distinct from everything else in creation. God goes from saying, "let there be..." and speaking things into existence to **fashioning and creating humanity**. God gave you and I a personal touch and when He very well could've spoke us into existence, He chose to make us like Him.

Psalm 139:13

13 For it was you who created my inward parts; **you knit me together** in my mother's womb.

Kanika Kapur holds the guinness world record for knitting the largest blanket **(pic)** in the world, its **3952 square meters and she won this award in 2019**. As detailed and amazing this is, **its holds nothing when compared to humanity**. Knit in Hebrew means to interweave, which is another reminder of how we need people, some of the people we may be prone to reject are the people we need, and God has knitted our lives together.

God knitted:

- Your gender
- Your personality
- Your eye-color
- Your hair or head if you're bald
- Your color

This means several things:

- Your life has **meaning** – you are not an accident or inconvenience regardless of what anyone has told you. Remember God assigns dignity to everyone.

- ❑ Your life has **purpose** – God created you to give Him glory and He’s gifted you uniquely to do so. You don’t have to wonder if you have a purpose, you have a creator, so, your life has purpose.
- ❑ You are **valuable** – never again wonder if you’re wanted or cared for. **God gave His son for you.** (laptop vs. children | **Ephesians 1:4** he chose us in Him...)
- ❑ You have the capacity for compassion (**dementia vs dog**)
- ❑ You deserve **dignity** – I know we deserve destruction because of sin, but too often we talk about that more than we do the fact we deserve dignity.

Thought Tattoo

The Creator of the world defines our **dignity**, NOT the created world!

Think about this, **Jesus condensed commands to two important rules:**

- ❑ **Moses** – 613 (Genesis – Deuteronomy)
- ❑ **Isaiah** – 15
- ❑ **David** – 11 (Psalm 15)
- ❑ **Micah** – 3 (Micah 6:6-8)
- ❑ **Jesus** – 2 (Mark 12:28-31)

Mark 12:28-31

28 One of the scribes approached. When he heard them debating and saw that Jesus answered them well, he asked him, “Which command is the most important of all?” 29 Jesus answered, “The most important is Listen, Israel! The

Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. 31 The second is, Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other command greater than these.”

Here's the point, in most cases we don't have any issues loving ourselves, it's loving our neighbor who's different and God says you have more in common than you think. **Within the golden rule is human dignity, love for humanity.** This is why Paul talks about how vertical reconciliation in verses 1-10 before talking about our horizontal reconciliation in verses 22-21.

Eph. 2:11

11 So, then, remember that at one time you were Gentiles in the flesh — called “the uncircumcised” by those called “the circumcised,” which is done in the flesh by human hands.

Take Note...

Remember our common brokenness.

Paul wants the Gentiles and us to remember who they were prior to Christ and we need to remember who we were prior to Christ, he explained this in chapter one and in verses 1-10 of chapter 2, but this time goes further into explaining the mechanics of salvation to address the results of sin; separation. **Sin not only separates us from God and self, it also separates us from each other.** Paul wants us to stay from the scale of value (**scale**), where we feel we have to look down or put down others in order to feel better about ourselves.

How broken are you?

Ephesians 2:1-5

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins 2 in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient. 3 We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, 5 made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!

I love how Tim Keller says, he says, **“God sees us as is, accepts us as is, loves us as is, saves us as is, but by His grace, never leaves us as is!”**

This reality applies to both Jew and Gentile which is why he reminds them of how Jews saw those that weren't circumcised.

Romans 2:25-27

²⁵ For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. ²⁶ So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? ²⁷ Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law.

Romans 3:29-30

²⁹ Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, ³⁰ since God is one—

who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.

Jesus' blood was/is for the Jew and Gentile it's for the Christian and non-Christian, because Christians we once non-Christians and God extended grace. We common brokenness that we're incapable of fixing, so how can we look down on someone else. Your brokenness should keep you:

1. **Humble** – how can someone who was dead in sin (Eph. 2:1) look down on someone else?
2. **Dependent** – Paul makes it clear that it's by grace that we've been saved, therefore we're dependent on the one who saved us **AND** we need each other for growth in Christ.
3. **Compassionate** – People who still struggle with sin have no right to look down on people. **(look down racially, immigrants, uneducated | what about your...)** This is why Peter says, **The person who lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten the cleansing from his past sins. - 2 Peter 1:9**

Eph. 2:12

12 At that time you were without Christ, excluded from the citizenship of Israel, and foreigners to the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world.

Take Note...

Remember our former hopelessness.

When you were in your brokenness you and I were without hope if everything depended on us. **In a weird way Paul is saying remember when you were hopeless to remember the hope you have now.** In other words, let your former hopelessness remind you of your present hope and joy. They were excluded by Jews primarily and they were foreigners, but now through Christ they have access.

Eph. 2:13

13 But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Take Note...

Remember our common access!

Jesus made it clear that He's the way, the truth and the life and that no one gets to the father except by Him (John 14:6), this means we all have one way to God.

John 10:9

9 I am the gate. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture.

Have you ever had an all access pass? To a concert, show or any event? (lanyard) It gets you access to almost everything, I had the privilege of being the guest of an artist when he was performing in town and he made sure I got in, but I didn't have a pass to wear around my neck. All I had was his word, so when I went to the door I didn't have a pass, so, I called and he met me at the gate and got me in and I literally had access to everything; the food, meeting the other artist that performed before him, his manager, tour guide, access to all the rooms in the building, etc. **I**

didn't have a pass, but I gotta pass because of a person.

Through Christ, we get an eternal pass where God says, she's with me, he's with me. Our access has nothing to do with us, but who we're with. Because of The Atonement you and I can say, I'm with Him and Jesus will confirm it. You got a pass not because of you but despite you, so let that be part of your motivation to give every human dignity, love and respect.

Eph. 2:14

14 For he is our peace, **who made both groups one and tore down** the dividing wall of hostility. In his flesh,

Take Note...

Remember our common oneness.

The Jews had intentional areas of separation **(walls)**:

- Outermost Court** – Gentiles, sick and poor, there was a sign that threaten death if you passed the dividing wall for Gentiles **(Jewish Jim Crow)**.
- Outer Court** – primarily for women.
- Inner Court** – for Israelites to worshipped, meditated and burned sacrifices.
- Holy of Holies** – the high priest could enter.

What causes hostility?

Short answer is sin, but let's dig a little deeper. It's our refusal to give up our isms.

- Traditionalism**
- Sexism**
- Classism**

- Ageism
- Racism
- Skepticism
- Cynicism

Matthew 27:50-51

And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. ⁵¹ And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, **from top to bottom**. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split

Christ tore down ALL of our isms by His finished work on the cross, but many of us are working to resurrect them through your refusal to deal with your own ism **(wall torn down)**. He has made us one, so our differences no longer divide, but they remind us of God's creative genius and grace.

How did God equip Paul to write this?

Romans 15:14-16

14 I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another. 15 But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God **16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.**

Paul crossed the cultural aisle and God is challenging us to do the same. Oneness can't be achieved without engagement.

Eph. 2:15-18

15 he made of no effect the law consisting of commands and expressed in regulations, so that he might create in himself one new man from the two, resulting in peace. 16 He did this so that he might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross by which he put the hostility to death. 17 He came and proclaimed the good news of peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

There are two words for new; *neos* which means a new model of something new that already exists and then there's another word, he uses the word *kainos*, which means a new invention. God has created a **transcultural, eclectic, gospel-centered family through Christ**. How can we welcome people into our family if we don't see and assign value to them as God does? This doesn't mean to don't hold to a biblical ethic on gender, sexuality, work, etc. but we see His imprint on people. **The New Testament norms was multi-ethnicity; a *kainos* reality!**

Eph. 2:19-22

19 So, then, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints, and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building, being put together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you are also being built together for God's dwelling in the Spirit.

We're no longer foreigners, we're family (Eph. 2:19), this is why Paul uses the phrase, "God's household".

2 Samuel 9:1-13

David asked, "Is there anyone remaining from the family of **Saul** I can show kindness to **for Jonathan's sake**? 2 There was a servant of Saul's family named Ziba. They summoned him to David, and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" "I am your servant," he replied. 3 So the king asked, "Is there anyone left of Saul's family that I can show the kindness of God to?" Ziba said to the king, "There is still Jonathan's son who was injured in both feet." 4 The king asked him, "Where is he?" Ziba answered the king, "You'll find him in Lo-debar at the house of Machir son of Ammiel." 5 So King David had him brought from the house of Machir son of Ammiel in Lo-debar. 6 **Mephibosheth** son of Jonathan son of Saul came to David, fell facedown, and paid homage. David said, "Mephibosheth!" "I am your servant," he replied. 7 "Don't be afraid," David said to him, "since I intend to show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all your grandfather Saul's fields, and you will always eat meals at my table." 8 **Mephibosheth paid homage and said, "What is your servant that you take an interest in a dead dog like me?"** 9 Then the king summoned Saul's attendant Ziba and said to him, "I have given to your master's grandson all that belonged to Saul and his family. 10 You, your sons, and your servants are to work the ground for him, and you are to bring in the crops so your master's grandson will have food to eat. But Mephibosheth, your master's grandson, **is always to eat at my table.**" Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. 11 Ziba said to the king, "Your servant will do all my lord the king commands." **So Mephibosheth ate at David's table just like one of the king's sons.** 12 Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. All those living in Ziba's house were Mephibosheth's servants. 13 However,

Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem because he always ate at the king's table. His feet had been injured.

Throughout this series I've asked you to simply have dinner. That challenged goes beyond this month and you have all year, but don't procrastinate. 2 Samuel 9 is a beautiful picture of human dignity, restoration and the gospel over dinner. David is a type and shadow of Christ; meaning he points us to Jesus.

Mephibosheth was crippled because he was dropped by his nurse (2 Sam. 4:4) as a baby. In order to fulfill the covenant that he made with Jonathan (1 Sam. 20:14-17), David showed kindness to Mephibosheth, taking him into his care, and providing for him a special place in his royal household (2 Sam. 9:9-13). David again showed Mephibosheth kindness in sparing his life by refusing to hand him over to the Gibeonites along with the sons and grandsons of Saul (2 Sam. 21:7).¹

Yeshua, restores human dignity by inviting us to the table WITH our issues.

Mephibosheth

- Could have been turned over the Gibeonites, but he was saved.
- Didn't understand his dignity, but David did.

¹ Arnold Gottfried Betz, "[Mephibosheth](#)," ed. David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 884.

- ❑ Defined himself by his issue, **he called himself a dead dog.** (black | bi-racial | dark | paralyzed)
- ❑ **Paralyzed** (Autism | Down Syndrome | Cystic Fibrosis)

With all of his issues, he still had a seat at the table, God has invited us all to His table by grace and through faith. **God says, you're broken, pull up a seat!**

Cross the cultural aisle of:

- ❑ **Communication** – talk without leaving.
- ❑ **Confrontation** – intra-rationally and interracially.
- ❑ **Community** – pursue diversity from love and for His glory, not guilt.