

Annihilating Boundaries

Racism and the Gospel

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Throughout the checkered past of human history, racism has been a strong force for creating distinctions and false ideas which lead to grave consequences. Someone might ask why in the world I am writing an article concerning this outmoded idea which we have evolved past. The reason is simple: ideas do not die; they only become reborn into fancier skin.

Throughout human history, racism has been used to force people into certain classes of lesser value. The chief cornerstone of racism centers on what it means to be human. The essential nature of humanity in each human being questioned in the bastions of racism and downtrodden in the actions of racists sparks a basic desire to quantify others versus ourselves. But we must push others down to raise ourselves up.

The results of such thinking, such as slavery, social injustices, holocaust, and other such blatant horrors blotting out the dignity of human life in our past loom with great evidence against the idea that we have beaten this racism thing. I am not attempting to question any advancement humanity has made on this issue. I am attempting to raise awareness of the motivation, the origins of such activity, so that when racism does occur, we do not ignore it and eventually become so desensitized that we have lost our own humanity by watching another's dignity vanish.

Especially as Christians, Jesus left no room for such ideals. The gospel, which annihilated sin in each person included certain imperatives and demands upon each person, otherwise, one would not "count the cost" of becoming a disciple of Christ (Luke 14:25-33). The Early Church saw in the gospel a barrier-breaking proclamation from God to all humanity. Peter proclaims in Acts 2:17-18, 21, and verse 39 that this promise is to those who are far off and those who are near.

Paul spends time in Ephesians 2:13-16 explaining how the gospel has broken down the dividing barrier between Jew and Gentile in the temple. There was actually a wall that separated the Gentiles from the Jewish courts so that they would not defile God's dwelling. The Jews would see themselves as better than the Gentiles because of these types of barriers, but God broke that wall of separation, because every believer is united with all other believers.

Numerous places in Paul's writings refer to the universal audience of the gospel. It is for the Jew and Gentile, the slave and free, the male and the female (Gal. 3:28). The gospel reaches across the globe and there is no person, no color, no social or economic barrier that it does not annihilate. Christ died for every human being on this planet without a care if they were black, white, Asian, European, Indian, homeless, those owning multiple houses, millionaires,

destitute, prostitutes, sinners, saints, believers, unbelievers, agnostics, and any other classification that can be made under heaven. Jesus paid full price for every one of us. In fact, the gospel is even available to Cleveland Browns fans (and that's the truth coming from a zealous Steelers fan!).

There is no separation which we can make that God cannot and did not tear down, so that the message of His glory and desire to unite with us cannot penetrate every human heart. There is no socially unjust situation in which God did not send His Son to reconcile the wrongs and make things right. There is no possibility of escape or dismissal from the fountain of salvation. All may freely come and freely drink.

Those distinctions we make among our own kind dishonor our representation, our ambassadorial mission, of Christ. Within every human lies the problem of sin and the disaster of living within a fallen world. Because sin touches everyone and everything, so also the gospel annihilates every boundary and seeks out every person and everything. God has saved this world wholly and completely despite our efforts to keep Him out. No matter who you are, how much money you make, what the color of your skin may be, how many relatives you have, whatever you have done, God has provided a way to not only find you, but to bring you out of the darkness into His glorious light.