

How Christians and the Church MUST Become Part of the Solution – Jesus on Racial Prejudice

How Christians and the Church Must Be Part of the Solution

This is one of the most troubling times in the history of our nation between the COVID 19 challenges of increased spreading and the civil unrest brought on by racism in our country that is more pervasive than many believed after so many years. Today I am going to talk about that and teach what Jesus had to say regarding racial prejudice.

I always try to keep myself behind the Word, so as to never make it about me, because it is not. It is all about the Lord and for His glory. But before I begin today, I felt the need to share a few things about myself so you know more about me as your teacher. Then you can decide whether or not to keep watching, listening, or reading.

Let me say up front that I am a sinner saved by grace with my own issues. Fortunately, racism is not one of them. I was a Navy brat, raised in non-racially biased home, even though both of my parents were from south Alabama. I was around racist people all of my years into early adulthood. I add that most of my best friends were like myself—not racist and in fact we were openly opposed to that kind of language and behavior. That carried throughout my adult life including my marriage of 37 years. We raised three children who were taught that all are created equal in the image of God.

My ministries have always been directed largely to the poor and disenfranchised that were and are mostly minorities. I believe with all my heart they would testify that I love them

as God does, no matter what they have done or the color of their skin.

When I have to distinguish between people based on color, I use color and not some other ethnic designation because many of those are incorrect.

- 62%-73% of Americans are white. ~13% are black There are now more Hispanics than blacks in the US. I will tell you more about that shortly.
- Unarmed people killed by police thru June 5, 2019: 15 blacks, 25 whites (Washington Post) Without a doubt, when we look at the percentages based on population, that is a disproportionately high number of blacks. No one argues or disagrees with that. It needs to stop. Where there are racist police, they need to be ferreted out, fired, and prosecuted.
- According to the FBI, 48 police officers were killed in the line of duty in 2019. We need to do what we can to protect them as well and celebrate their lives and service. Very few of us would be willing to go into places many of them do – even if we were armed.
- **Abortion** is the number one cause of death among blacks in the US. One report wrote ~1000 per day. 40% of abortions are on black women, while they make up only 13% of the population. Just so you know, the founder of Planned Parenthood was an avowed racist against blacks, Asians, and people with disabilities. They put abortion clinics near poor black communities. Some of her language was very scary. Yet she won awards? Your federal tax dollars at work through Title X and Medicaid.

Don't those black lives matter? Any news outlet carrying their stories? Any famous athletes ranting or taking a knee for them?

Now that everyone is sufficiently riled up, I will segue to my

message—a word from the Lord, this one directed to Christians and their churches. I begin by stating the most important fact.

Jesus condemned racism.

In case you are not a student of the Bible, especially the history covered therein, Jesus was a Jew. Jews as a people were the most hated race in the history of man. Jews have been discriminated against throughout their history beginning in Egypt, through all their captivities, the most horrific attempt at genocide – the Holocaust, today in many Arab nations, and in the U.S.—by people who hate everyone that does not look like them, and racist hate groups.

The sad truth is that racism exists where people do. Believe it or not, despite the fact that they were captives, hated by many Romans, the Jews of Jesus' day were also racists. We find that story in Luke 10. It is one of the two best-known of Jesus' teaching parables. Yet too few take it to heart today in a world where its message and meaning are needed most—especially in the church.

The Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37)

The Context. Jesus had sent out the seventy disciples among the people to preach and do signs and wonders as He did. they returned rejoicing and praising God and Jesus did so with them. As that story ends in v24, this famous one began when a lawyer (scribe who knew and interpreted the Laws of Moses) stood up **to test Him**, and asked Jesus what he had to do to inherit eternal life. We pick up the conversation between him and Jesus there.

A lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" And he answered, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND

WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE." But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. "And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. "Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. "But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. "On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return, I will repay you.' "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" And he said, "The **one who showed mercy toward him.**" Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

This story is one of racism and prejudice. It was named the Good Samaritan by someone years later. Jews hated Samaritans. **History.** Samaria was the capital city of the Northern Kingdom called *Israel* after the nation of Israel split in two (after Solomon died). This Israel was captured by the Assyrians in 722 BC. They did as many capturing nations in those days and transplanted Jews to Assyria and moved some of their people to Samaria. Over time, the two co-mingled and became, to the southern Jews of Judah, half-breeds who were despised.

Later, Judah was captured by the Babylonians (586 BC)—never again a sovereign nation until 1948. Yet they continued to despise this mixed-race people. That is why Jesus told the story as He did. He knew it would incite the legalistic Jews,

especially religious leaders. They hated Samaritans so much, they walked around that part of the country when traveling north. Jesus walked through it. We know because this is where the woman at the well story occurred.

Three people passed the man who had been beaten and left for dead. A priest. A Levite. A hated Samaritan. Here is a unique way of viewing this story today. Some will object strongly and that is fine. Perhaps I take the racial prejudice comparison too far, but based on where we are today in our culture and all that is going on, I think it is better for Christians and the church to look at things more intensely than they ever have before.

The Priest. He was the religious leader of the synagogue, fully aware of God's Word and commands to love one another—even aliens who joined their religion. He may represent the pastors and church leaders who have known this as well and yet for many years, ignored the rampant racism practiced in their churches and such views held by members and parishioners.

The Levite. Levites were responsible for things around the "church" that did not fall on the priests (pastors). In our case, they could be teachers or just regular members who are always there when the doors are open—some thinking this may increase their standing with God like the lawyer asking Jesus the question. Despite this story that has been told for generations in their churches, and all the other *love your neighbor as yourself* verses, some are "closet" racists or highly prejudiced against people who do not look or act as they do.

The Samaritan. This half-breed was unwelcomed in their presence and especially their synagogues (churches). Yet this man was the only one who demonstrated the love and compassion of Christ. He went well beyond checking to see if the man was alive. He cared for him there and expended personal time and

money to make sure he would be thereafter.

That was the point of Jesus' story. One more point about the deep racial bias of this lawyer. Notice in v37, this Jew did not use the word *Samaritan* but referred to him as "the one" or "the man" depending on your Bible version. I am sure that caught Jesus' attention as well.

Here is my challenge. If you are a Christian, church member, pastor, teacher, elder, deacon, truly concerned about what Jesus taught on this volatile subject and your role in the problem today, please do this. Get alone with the Holy Spirit and spend time in these four areas:

- Reflection. How you think and act toward people of different races. 2 Corinthians 10: 5
- Repentance. Confess where there is sin. 1 John 1: 9
- Rededication. Tell the Lord you want to begin anew. Psalm 51: 10-12
- Reconciliation. Building-Rebuilding relationships. 2 Corinthians 5: 18-20

Then my dear brother or sister, servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, I exhort you to obey His words and proceed by the power of His Spirit to,

"Go and do the same."

For Christ's sake,

Walter