**FOCUS** in 2020

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**The Gospel & Race**

***Jesus on Race*** – Luke 9:51-56; John 4



Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Red, yellow, black and white they are precious in his sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world … **Then we grow up!**

**How did we get here?**

*History and Scripture teaches us that there can be no reconciliation without repentance. There can be no repentance without confession. And there can be no confession without truth.* Jemar Tisby, *The Color of Compromise*

There is lot to learn about the history of how race became such an issue. Race is not really a thing in the Bible. In the Bible, there are ethnicities, tribes, languages, nations.

The **past** is always **present**.

But it does not have to be our **future**.

Race is a **human** construct.

We are all created in the image of God. There was only one race, the human race.

Racism is a **sin** issue, not a **skin** issue.

*When you believe that racism is a skin problem, you can take three hundred years of slavery, court decisions, marches, and the federal government involvement and still not get it fixed right.* Tony Evans, Pastor

**Racism exists**; it always has and it always will. Racism is all about our hearts. You cannot legislate heart change.

Racism **rejects** others.

Any thought in your mind that leads you to believe you are superior because of your race, class or ethnicity and that another is inferior because of their race, class or ethnicity is **sin**.

*When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the* ***Samaritans****, to make preparations for him. But* ***the people did not receive him****, because his face was set toward Jerusalem.* Luke 9:51–53

Racism is also a justice issue. Individuals can be racist in their thoughts or beliefs about a person of a certain ethnicity. Then when they act on that racism, you have an injustice.

Our response to racism is often **reactionary** and **destructive**.

*And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to* ***tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them****?”* Luke 9:54

Jesus shows us how to **respond** to racism.

*But* ***he turned and rebuked them****. And they went on to another village.* Luke 9:55–56

*You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; for* ***the Son of Man did not come to destro****y men’s lives,* ***but to save*** *them.* Luke 9:55–56 (NASB)

Jesus acts in a way that rejects what the culture says about people and differences. Gender barrier, racial barrier, cultural barrier or moral barrier – **Jesus destroys the barriers ... the walls that we have built.**

*For he himself is our peace, who has* ***made us both one*** *and has* ***broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility****.* Ephesians 2:14

Walls that a sinful society **builds**, Jesus **destroys** with His **actions** -not just His **words**.

Jesus did not just say everyone had equal value, we are all created in the image of God, Jesus treated people that way.

We have a new **identity** in Christ.

*for in Christ Jesus* ***you are all sons of God****, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ* ***have put on Christ****. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* Galatians 3:26–28

In this new identity, we …

We have to go to and even through **difficult** places.

*And* ***he had to pass through Samaria****. So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.* ***Jacob’s well*** *was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.* John 4:4-6

We have to be willing to have **conversations** with people who are **different** than we are.

*A* ***woman*** *from* ***Samaria*** *came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you,* ***a Jew****, ask for a drink from me,* ***a woman of Samaria?****” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)* John 4:7-9

Different is not necessarily wrong, bad, or evil – just different.

**Pride says**: I do not understand, so you are **wrong**.

**Humility says:** I do not understand, so will you **help** me?

**Dialogue** is the key to unity.

Jesus throws off the acceptable lines of racism for the love of people.

Jesus engages her at her greatest point of need.

*Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of* ***this water will be thirsty again****, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will* ***never be thirsty again****. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir,* ***give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water****.”*

John 4:7-9

Physical needs can point to spiritual answers. Jesus sees and understands that what she really needs is the truth about who   
she is and who she can be. It is what we all need.

We are all universally **fallen** in sin and we are universally   
in need of a **savior**.

Jesus obliterates the **cultural** and **ethnic** divide.

What is her response …

*So* ***the woman******left her water jar*** *and went away into town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did.* ***Can this be the Christ****?”* John 4:28-29

We have to see our lives through the **lens** of our calling as disciples of Jesus.

**We all are looking through tinted glasses from a point.** A point of view is just a view from a point.

*Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and* ***to accomplish his work****.* John 4:34

*Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you.* ***As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you****.”* John 20:21

**What can we do?**

Focus on **listening**; be **slow** to speak and refuse to become **selfishly** angry.

*Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be* ***quick to hear****,* ***slow to speak****,* ***slow to anger****; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.* James 1:19–20

Listening helps us learn where to love. This is also a place for conviction and repentance as the Holy Spirit convicts us of our own sin and complicity.

Focus on **invitation,** not exclusion.

We love people well who are outside our tribe. Our circle. **This takes action.** This is what it means to follow Jesus and to lead others to follow Jesus. Love people like Jesus does.

**Unity Table** – a 5th Sunday emphasis and intentional opportunity for us to invite someone to lunch, dinner or coffee to listen, learn, love, live and lead differently in our lives. [www.unitytable](http://www.unitytable).

It is a time to create opportunities for intentional conversation and ultimately meaningful relationships, to establish a rhythm of learning and broadening perspectives with an appreciation of our individual uniqueness and a goal of oneness in Christ.

Focus on our common **humanity** and **need**.

We are all universally fallen in **sin** and we are universally  
 in need of a **savior**.

Focus on loving people ... **regardless** of differences.

When it comes to racism, we do not have to win;  
 **we have to love**!

*After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”* Revelation 7:9–10