

Why OneRace? "The Necessity of Reconciliation"
8/12/18 – Jeff Lyle

Colossians 3:10-15 - "{You} have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful."

I. God's design in Creation:

A. In creation, God's design for humanity was never for us to live in division or opposition across cultures, genders, or generations.

B. Unity was God's original design, starting with our relationship with Himself, then extending to the family unit, and finally transcending society.

C. Sin caused the original separation between God and man, and then consequently between man and man.

D. Whatever sin is dividing us across cultural lines must be repented of through corresponding words, thoughts, and deeds.

II. Division is from the enemy

A. The word *devil* comes from the Greek word *diabolos* – this word means "a slanderer; a false accuser; unjustly criticizing to hurt (malign) and condemn in order to sever a relationship"

B. Satan's plan is to continually accuse us to one another so that he may divide humanity, in order to ultimately vilify us to one another, and finally cause us to perpetuate sin against one another.

C. History proves that those who conceive themselves to be greater than others will eventually abuse those they demean. **When they live subjugating and suppressing others, they will ultimately dehumanize them. This is why the sin of disunity is so grave it ultimately causes us to dehumanize those made in the image and likeness of God.**

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D. Any ideology which minimizes any group of people based on their culture or skin is a supremacist ideology and inconsistent with the Gospel.

E. Simply put: God is a holy unifier, Satan is an unholy divider. **Each day we cooperate with one or the other.**

III. Only through the Gospel is reconciliation between cultures possible

A. In the gospel these two reconciliations are absolutely clear:

1. We are reconciled to God through the cross

2nd Corinthians 5:17-21 – “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake He made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”

2. We are reconciled to one another through the same power of the cross.

Ephesians 2:13-16 – “Now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.”

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IV. Only by going to the cross are we able to be reconciled

Galatians 2:20 – “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

A. We must be willing to embrace the cross of Christ in order to truly live in the Kingdom.

B. We must resolve to continually die to our preferences and desires, including our own individual cultures, in order to become one in Christ.

C. We don't lose our cultural distinctions; we submit them to the cross. **They become lesser identifiers of us.**

V. Reconciliation and unity in Christ are commanded in Scripture

A. If your brother has anything against you go to him

Matthew 5:23-24 - “So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”

B. We are all to be united in thought and purpose

1 Corinthians 1:10 “I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.”

Romans 15:5-7 - “May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.”

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C. We must choose to forgive those who have wronged us, and also the people groups they represent (Ephesians 4:30-32)

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

Our Response: Are we adding to the unity of the spirit or are we contributing to the division across? If we are at odds with brothers what must we do to be reconciled? Have we made the Kingdom choice to forgive those who have wronged us? Will we repent of cooperating with the enemy in associating the actions of individuals within a particular racial group with everyone else in that same racial group?