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Sermon Notes

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## **Multicultural Unity in an “Us vs. Them” World**

### **Ephesians 2:11-17**

Last week... we saw how Christ’s death on the cross has demolished the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility between Jews and Gentiles by abolishing the law with its regulations... thus making PEACE between Jews and Gentiles

The Law of Moses EXCLUDED uncircumcised Gentiles from the assembly of the people of God... God established that barrier and did keep the Gentiles out. But God also REMOVED that barrier, made it obsolete by establishing a NEW COVENANT in the blood of Christ and welcoming ANYONE, Jew or Gentile, into close fellowship with himself. Jew/Gentile unity IN CHRIST is possible, promised, commanded as a result

BASIC THESIS OF TODAY’S SERMON: If barriers between people that God DID set up have been removed by Christ, how much more barriers that God DIDN’T set up!!

Christ’s death lays the foundation for the removal of EVERY BARRIER, EVERY DIVIDING WALL of hostility, resulting in supernatural UNITY between all Christians of every racial, ethnic background.

### **I. A World Divided**

We live in a bitterly divided world... with dividing walls of hostility around us constantly

We think about racial conflict in the US over the last year or more... and honestly, over the last century and a half

The issues of race connected with police incidents led to open racial conflict connected with Ferguson, MO, and demonstrations in Baltimore, MD; it has given rise to the movement “Black Lives Matter”

The level of hostility between blacks and whites has been one of the greatest disgraces in American history and it continues to be a bleeding wound in our national identity

Sometimes we wonder if anything could ever heal the rift, the rupture, the wound

But black-white hostility in America is not the only example of the deep divisions that continue to rend our world

We think about anything in human experience that causes two groups of people to have lasting, settled hatred for each other

Just go to the hotspots over the last century... take the Balkans, for example... the long history of racial and religious conflicts between Serbs and Croats that have bubbled again and again into war; when that happens, revenge creeps in, and a STEEL CURTAIN of hostility comes across people's hearts

Or think about recent events, like the invasion of the Ukraine by Russian troops under the command of President Vladimir Putin... the scars of national hostility and hatred that such actions leave

In 1994 in Rwanda, there was a terrible genocide of the Tutsi people by the dominant Hutu majority... a 100-day period in which 800,000 people were slaughtered; today, the survivors live side by side with those who killed their families, but the hostility and hatred seethes just below the surface

Many in Korea and China retain intense hatred for the Japanese, for the atrocities committed by the Japanese troops during WWII, as well as ongoing historical revision in Japanese textbooks in which past events are not dealt with honestly; in Nanjing, there is a Massacre Memorial dedicated to the memory of 300,000 Chinese people wantonly slaughtered by occupying Japanese troops; many Chinese people feel a national obligation to hate the Japanese forever; every year on December 13 in Nanjing, the date the massacre began, alarms are rung all over the city so people will never forget

I could go on and on

We live in a deeply FRAGMENTED WORLD... fractured by sin and hatred... with "dividing walls of hostility" all around us...

This is the very thing that Jesus Christ came to remedy... by reconciling sinners to God and then to each other!

## II. God's Plan for Unity

Key text: Ephesians 1:10

***Ephesians 1:9-10 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, <sup>10</sup> to be put into effect when the times will***

***have reached their fulfillment-- to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.***

As we said in Ephesians 1, sin has had a devastating effect on the universe... like a FRAGMENTATION GRENADE... blowing things apart

First and foremost, humans from God... secondly, humans from each other; thirdly, the physical world within itself... GROANING, in bondage to decay

Sin BLEW THE UNIVERSE APART... the gospel of Jesus Christ UNITES ALL THINGS and makes them one under Christ

This is the SUPERNATURAL UNITY of the human race that only the work of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ can achieve

The United Nations, with all of its diplomacy cannot... no treaties can... for human hearts are corrupt

But Jesus died on the cross to bring about perfect unity among his people:

***John 11:51-52 he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, <sup>52</sup> and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one.***

A. How Great is that Unity? PERFECT UNITY... based on the Trinity

1. Jesus' prayer

***John 17:20-23 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, <sup>21</sup> that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup> I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.***

2. Look carefully at what Jesus prays for there:

a. "that all of them may be one, Father... JUST AS YOU ARE IN ME AND I AM IN YOU..."

b. "all of them" = all of the elect, who will hear and believe the gospel

***Revelation 5:9-10 And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. <sup>10</sup> You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."***

Astonishing DIVERSITY on earth, but PERFECT UNITY in heaven

3. The unity between the Father and the Son is absolutely perfect
  - a. Never the slightest disagreement, never the slightest argument or moment of dissent
  - b. The unity between them is absolutely perfect
  - c. Never in all eternity have they ever disagreed about even the smallest detail!!

***Matthew 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father.***

AND... every time a sparrow falls to the ground, it does so not only by the will of the Father but in the perfect agreement of the Son!!

B. Unity in the churches is a HUGE ISSUE in the epistles

1. Ephesians

***Ephesians 4:1-6 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. <sup>2</sup> Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. <sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.***

You ARE one, so LIVE like you're one!

Make every effort to keep that unity in the Spirit!!

2. Corinthians

- a. Divided by factions...
  - i) "I follow Paul, I follow Cephas, I follow Apollos..."
- b. Paul pleaded with them to be one

***1 Corinthians 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.***

- i) That is the UNITY patterned after the TRINITY... "perfectly united in mind and thought..."

3. Philippians

***Philippians 2:2-4 make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.***

4. Romans... Jew-Gentile strife on debatable issues, meat sacrificed to idols, special religious days, etc.

C. The Greater the Unity in a Local Church, the More Powerful Our Witness in the Community

1. Being brought to unity before a watching world validates the gospel

***John 17:22-23 that they may be one as we are one: <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.***

2. “surprising unity” glorifies Christ!!!

In Palestine, when former Muslims and Jews each convert and become Christians, and then live out that unity in front of their Muslim and Jewish families and neighbors, that is a POWERFUL WITNESS for the gospel

In the Balkans, when former Serbs, Croats, and Muslims all join together in a worship service in Belgrade or Sarajevo, that is a powerful witness to the truth of the gospel

In Korea, when Korean and Japanese believers unite in worship, setting aside the bitterness of past history, that is a powerful witness to the gospel!!

And... in Durham, NC, when blacks and whites unite as one in worship, that is a powerful witness to the truth claims of Jesus Christ!

### III. Jew-Gentile Unity a Pattern for Worldwide Unity (Ephesians 2)

A. Home Base for Ephesians 2:11-16... Jew-Gentile Unity

1. But the spiritual works Christ did to make Jews and Gentiles one stands as a pattern for all unity around the world

2. The Jew-Gentile issue was a special case in Redemptive History, because it involved the LAW... the “Barrier, the Dividing Wall of Hostility” was erected by the LAW OF MOSES... the ceremonial law, that excluded uncircumcised Gentiles from the assembly of Israel

BASIC THESIS OF THE SERMON: If barriers between people that God DID set up have been removed by Christ, how much more barriers that God DIDN'T set up!!

Christ's death lays the foundation for the removal of EVERY BARRIER, EVERY DIVIDING WALL of hostility, resulting in supernatural UNITY between all Christians of every racial, ethnic background.

#### B. How It Was: Gentiles Excluded by the Law

***Ephesians 2:11-12*** *Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)--<sup>12</sup> remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.*

1. Paul wanted the Ephesian Christians... Gentiles by birth... to REMEMBER how it was for them SPIRITUALLY as PAGANS
2. He says they were SEPARATE FROM CHRIST
3. EXCLUDED FROM CITIZENSHIP IN ISRAEL
4. FOREIGNERS TO THE COVENANTS OF PROMISES
5. WITHOUT HOPE
6. WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD

#### C. How it IS NOW

***Ephesians 2:13*** *But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.*

***Ephesians 2:14-15*** *For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one*

Christ has BROUGHT US NEAR... so we are near to God, and to each other

Christ is OUR PEACE... so we are at peace with God and with each other

Christ has made us ONE... in the pattern of Ephesians 1:10 and John 17

#### D. What Christ Has Done to the Law

***Ephesians 2:14-15*** *For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,<sup>15</sup> by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations.*

1. The ceremonial law is what excluded Gentiles from the assembly of Israel
2. The ceremonial law required circumcision, and established dietary regulations
3. The ceremonial law forbade intermarriage with the nations in Canaan
4. The ceremonial law required national unity and annual pilgrimages
5. The ceremonial law upheld genealogies, the ability to prove that you were physically descended from Abraham
6. This law Paul calls the “BARRIER, the DIVIDING WALL of HOSTILITY”
  - a. Jews were hostile to Gentiles, felt superior to them, excluded them in ways BEYOND the law’s requirements... like they wouldn’t eat with a Gentile or go into his home; once God had given the Jews over to Gentile conquerors, they were jealous of the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans who dominated their Promised Land... HOSTILITY
  - b. Gentiles were hostile to Jews... saw them as alien, exclusive, arrogant
  - c. Long history of anti-Semitism, which I described last week!
7. The text is ASTONISHING... it uses two very strong words to what Christ has done to this BARRIER, this DIVIDING wall
  - a. Christ has DESTROYED the barrier... broke it down, tore it down,
  - b. Christ has ABOLISHED the Law... put it to an end, made it obsolete!!

So, circumcision is nothing spiritually anymore!!

Jesus declared all foods clean!!

In the New Covenant, the old racial distinctions are gone forever

E. What Jesus Has Done to Each of Us

***Ephesians 2:15-17 His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, <sup>16</sup> and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.***

1. Jesus has made us ONE

***Ephesians 2:14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one***

Our spiritual UNION with Christ makes us ONE with each other in his body!!

2. Jesus has made us ONE NEW MAN... a "New Creation"
  - a. The heart of stone is removed
  - b. The heart of flesh is put in
  - c. We are made NEW CREATIONS... new men, new women... thinking new thoughts
3. Jesus has MADE PEACE HORIZONTALLY between us
4. Jesus has reconciled us to God VERTICALLY... peace with God means peace with each other

***Ephesians 2:17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.***

***John 20:19-21 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"<sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.<sup>21</sup> Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you!***

***Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ***

5. Jesus has put to death our hostility BY THE CROSS
  - a. How? By reconciliation
  - b. By reconciling us to God through the forgiveness of sins, he has infinite leverage to make us forgive each other

Parable of the Ten Thousand Talents... "Jesus paid it all; all to him I owe"...

***Matthew 18:32-35 "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.'<sup>33</sup> Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?'<sup>34</sup> In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.<sup>35</sup> "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."***

So, when a Korean Christian wants to exclude a Japanese Christian because of specific memories of what happened in WWII, Christ is able to compel forgiveness on the basis of the blood he shed on the cross.

When a Serbian Christian will not extend the right hand of fellowship to a Croat Christian because of past history of hostility, Jesus is able to compel forgiveness and peace and reconciliation based on the blood he shed for each one at the cross

6. Jesus has opened access to the Father

***Ephesians 2:17-18 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. <sup>18</sup> For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.***

We are now at peace with each other and have free access to the Father by the same Spirit!

But we can't go into the presence of the Father covered with the sin of bitterness and unforgiveness for past sins

F. How this Destroys Racism

1. Racism is essentially SELF-WORSHIP; we worship our own skin, our own culture, our own particularities and differences
2. The cross DESTROYS self-worship along with all idolatry
3. The cross HUMBLER all lofty, arrogant, proud hearts... and racism is lofty, proud, arrogant
4. The cross enables FORGIVENESS
5. The cross teaches the truth about race... it is just a matter of genetic variation in the human species

***Acts 17:26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth***

6. The cross levels the ground... we are all sinners saved by grace through faith; we are all going to the same heaven and will worship Jesus together

***Revelation 7:9-10 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. <sup>10</sup> And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."***

IV. Special Problem of Racism in the US... and at FBC

A. Long, Difficult History: Race-Based Chattel Slavery

1. The first slaves came to the New World, to Jamestown, in 1619 on a Dutch ship, which brought 20 Africans captured from a Portuguese slave ship; they actually may not have been slaves but indentured servants (as many poorer white people were, selling their freedom for seven years for the price of passage to the colony); but the records are a little sketchy; though white indentured servants had their names listed with the dates of freedom, the Africans had no date of freedom
2. Slavery was made legal in the colony in 1640, though there were only a few dozen slaves at that point
3. Lucrative crops like tobacco greatly increased the desire for field workers in Virginia and other colonies, but most of them were white indentured servants
4. But the Great Plague and Great Fire of London in 1660 wiped out the stream of indentured servants flowing to the New World; there was plenty of work to be done rebuilding London
5. So, the colonies began to turn to African slaves... and the slave trade began in earnest
6. Over the next two hundred years, somewhere between 6-7 million Africans were transported in inhuman conditions to America
7. The issue became intensely regional, as we know, leading to the Civil War

#### B. 1845: FBC Durham and the Southern Baptist Convention

1. The same year, both institutions were established
2. The SBC started because of a split over whether slaveholders could serve as slaves and bring their slaves on mission with them; the Northern and Southern Baptists divided over this very issue
3. The Civil War, Reconstruction, the Jim Crow era... lots of history that many of us know somewhat, and some know very well

#### C. The Civil Rights Era

1. The segregation of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century began to be the focus of the Civil Rights movement
2. Blacks and whites were separated in society and blacks couldn't use the same drinking fountains, attend the same theaters, eat at the same restaurants
3. The Woolworths on 124 W. Main Street was the site of a historic sit-in at a lunch counter, and MLK Jr. was present... this was one of the first presentations of non-violent but direct responses to segregation laws

4. This pattern became a major strategy for Dr. King's non-violent approach to overturning unjust laws

#### D. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"

1. Dr. King arrested in Birmingham, AL, for involvement in a demonstration
2. Wrote the letter on April 16, 1963, to white clergy who were urging him to be patient, and not take such radical steps toward racial justice

"For years now I have heard the word "wait." It rings in the ear of every Negro with a piercing familiarity. This "wait" has almost always meant "never." ... We have waited for more than three hundred and forty years for our God-given and constitutional rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jetlike speed toward the goal of political independence, and we still creep at horse-and-buggy pace toward the gaining of a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. I guess it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say "wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick, brutalize, and even kill your black brothers and sisters with impunity; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she cannot go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her little eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see the depressing clouds of inferiority begin to form in her little mental sky, and see her begin to distort her little personality by unconsciously developing a bitterness toward white people... when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodyness" -- then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over and men are no longer willing to be plunged into an abyss of injustice where they experience the bleakness of corroding despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience."

3. There is a sense of urgency even now to resist racism in America in the name of Christ

#### E. FBC's Shameful Photo

1. Two white men standing at the steps of FBC in the 1960s preventing a black couple from entering the church

#### F. Are We All Racists??

1. Matthew Hodges: racism is sneaky... it can raise its head in subtle ways we barely notice
2. Would it shock you if I told you that I don't struggle at all with temptations toward alcohol or tobacco products?
3. On the other hand, would you believe me if I told you I don't struggle at all with PRIDE???
4. Some sins seem universal, others don't
5. Racism may tend more toward the universal side than the special cases side
6. I don't think we all struggle with racism the same way or toward the same group of people... you may have nothing against one ethnic group, but develop an adversity toward another one

#### G. How It Is Now

1. FBC has grown and come a long way in the years since the Civil Rights Era
2. There are many fruitful ministries that cut across ethnic lines and put Christ on display
3. But the actuality is that there is a CLEARLY DOMINANT culture at FBC... a church may be said to be displaying ethnic diversity when the dominant culture makes up no more than

I was reading about one Baptist church, Wilcrest Baptist near Houston, TX...

20% black, 30% Hispanic, 42% white, 5% Asian, with 3% of other ethnic backgrounds. According to the website, 44 nations are represented in the congregation.

Pastors Emerson and Woo define a multiracial congregation: **"no one racial group comprises 80 percent or more of the people"**.

Emerson argues that 20% is not an arbitrary figure:

"Research in race and gender relations in multiple contexts suggests that 20 percent constitutes the point of critical mass. At this percentage, the proportion is high enough to have its presence felt and filtered through a system or organization."

Research also shows that only about 7% of congregations in the US are truly multi-racial

Some have said "Sundays are the most segregated day of the week in America."

Others cite the HOMOGENEOUS UNIT PRINCIPLE from the mission world: "People like to worship with people like themselves."

I have yearned for years to see us get past all that and be a truly multi-racial congregation

#### H. Not Just Black-White, But Many Races On Display Here

1. International Connections
2. People from many different nations worship here every year
3. The "black-white" issue is not the only one
4. This provides us with some great opportunities

#### V. Some Practical Steps

##### A. Come to Christ!! Racism Cannot Truly Be Dealt With Apart from Salvation in Jesus

##### B. Delight in What God Is Doing Here

1. International Connections
2. Prison Ministry
3. Caring Center
4. The City Outreach over the years with Matthew and Zinnada Hodges; Jobs for Life; Robert Oakley and others at Liberty Street on Tuesday evening
5. The fact that racism would not be tolerated here and that African-American brothers and sisters are delighted in, cherished, and welcomed is a wonderful thing

***1 Thessalonians 4:9-10 Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. <sup>10</sup> And in fact, you do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more.***

##### C. Get Involved in IC, Prison Ministry, and/or City Outreach

1. God is really blessing these ministries, but they need laborers
2. International Connections is a very fruitful ministry, with opportunities to interact with people from all over the world

3. Prison Ministry needs men to step up... we'll be hearing a testimony in baptism very soon
4. Durham Rescue Mission
5. Jobs for Life
6. Caring Center

D. George Robertson, Pastor of First Presbyterian in Augusta

Openly preaches and talks about race issues, yearns to see their Sunday morning worship to be as reflective of the diversity we'll see in heaven as possible; is praying for 400 persons of color to join their church by 2020.

The Gospel Coalition: Ten Steps for Interracial Relationships that Advance the Gospel

1. Pray: that you would personally be covered with the Holy Spirit and that our church would be aware of ways to grow and reach out in racial reconciliation
2. Say YES to opportunities for interracial activities in the city of Durham...some will not be worth your time, but others could blossom; ask God to give you wisdom on how to get involved without compromising the gospel or theological truth... but find things to say YES to
3. Follow up one on one: as you do get involved in some interracial activities, find some folks with whom you feel a "gospel chemistry" and build a friendship with them
4. Pray for gospel-centered pastors in the city
5. Look for non-political ways to bless elected officials; one thing Pastor Robertson does is make an appointment with them and say "I am just here to find out how I can pray for you."
6. Offer gospel resources—training times, labor for their projects, etc.
7. Listen to interracial friends... that's the only way to grow from a narrow perspective
8. Do "normal" stuff together... find ways to eat together, invite people over your house; talk about normal things like kids activities, car troubles, illnesses, etc.
9. Take risks: stretch yourself
10. Work on common initiatives

### E. Matthew Hodges

- Blood-bought ethnic and racial diversity and harmony is for the glory of God through Christ. It is all aiming at the all-satisfying, everlasting, God-centered, Christ-exalting, experience of many-colored, many-cultured worship, an aroma that delights the heart of God. (Bloodlines-John Piper pg.142)
- God is not too small to deal with racial hostility. (Beyond Racial Gridlock-pg. 150 George Yancey)
- The issue of racial and ethnic diversity and harmony in the church is not small, because the price God paid precisely for it was not small. It was infinite. (Bloodlines-John Piper pg.141)
- The window of opportunity for racial and ethnic unity (*at First Baptist*) in the church is now open (Multicultural Ministry pg. 41)
- Racism is a complex issue that needs the whole plan of redemption applied to it.
- Colorblindness, the idea that racism can be cured by ignoring racial reality, cannot offer a uniquely Christian solution for racism
- The conversation about race will not move forward if one typically responds by being defensive, deflective, and dismissive.
- Of all the moral issues that challenge the church from decade to decade, this one we are tempted to abandon more often, because in this battle we get more quickly and deeply wounded along the way. (Bloodlines-John Piper pg.178)
- Don't let fear ruin your joyful freedom in living and working and worshipping and relaxing and eating with brothers and sisters who are ethnically or racially different from you. (Bloodlines-John Piper pg.176)
- Ignorance of racial issues can spread to ignorance of the pain minority group members and the need for race-specific solutions. (Beyond Racial Gridlock-George Yancey pg. 40)
- One of the best ways to heal racial strife is to fellowship with Christians of different races. (Beyond Racial Gridlock-pg. 144 George Yancey)
- Christians should not think that because they have a friend or two of a different race, they understand people of that race. (Beyond Racial Gridlock-pg. 146 George Yancey)
- Christians must make the effort to go out of their way to gain friends of different races. Most of us would be surprised, if we looked at our workplaces, schools and social circles, to see how many people of different races there are around us. (Beyond Racial Gridlock-pg. 146 George Yancey)
- We should be humble enough to recognize that we ourselves are not perfect. As imperfect sinners, all we can do is seek to help each other and help ourselves overcome the poison of sin in the form of racism. (Beyond Racial Gridlock-George Yancey pg. 133)
- We must be open to others who do not see the issue of race as we do. We must be quick to listen and slow to speak (James 1:19). More than ever we must take

- seriously the biblical command not to judge others (Matthew 7:1). (Beyond Racial Gridlock-George Yancey pg. 134)
- We cannot develop godly relationships with those of different races if we see those who disagree with us as enemies to be conquered. (Beyond Racial Gridlock-George Yancey pg. 134-5)
  - When we are in a very large majority, we do not even operate with the category of our own ethnicity. *We* are just human, so we are prone to think. *Others* have ethnicity. This makes us very vulnerable to the assumption that God is our God in a way that minimizes his being the God of other ethnic groups. (Bloodlines-John Piper pg.155)

### ***Practical***

- Jesus is the end of ethnocentrism-globally and locally. (Bloodlines-John Piper pg.119) Therefore, examine your heart and confess the sins of prejudice, racism, biases, and pride when they manifest in your life.
- **Go out of your way to find friends of different races, not only for yourself but for your children and for the next generation of believers. (BRG-pg. 146 George Yancey) INVITE PEOPLE OVER FOR A MEAL!!!!**
- We need to rid ourselves of us/them distinctions and lead others in ridding themselves of us/them distinctions. (Disunity in Christ-Christena Cleveland pg. 62)
- Pray for Union Baptist Church and Bethlehem Apostolic Faith Church to preach the gospel and make disciples of Jesus Christ. *We* are seeking to bless Durham with the gospel and good works
- Use your voice, position, and power to confront individual and structural racism.
- Conversations about race/racism take time, grace, patience and forgiveness.