***RACIAL RECONCILIATION***

**Colossians 3:11**

**By Andy Manning**

1. **INTRODUCTION**
   1. Let me begin this discussion with some good news. Racism is no longer a major problem in America today. Not in the sense that it used to be.
      1. America used to have a problem with institutional and systemic racism, because it used to be legal to own slaves, and it used to be legal to discriminate. But today all of that is behind us. Institutional racism no longer exists, even though you will hear the term thrown around a lot. Anytime someone says that America has a problem with institutional or systemic racism, challenge them to show you an institution, or a law that is racist. They can’t.
      2. **Dinesh D’Souza** “In a single decade, from the mid-fifties to the mid-sixties, America radically overhauled its laws through a series of landmark decisions: Brown v. Board of Education, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act, the Fair Housing Act. Through such measures, America established equality of rights under the law. Of course, the need to enforce nondiscrimination provisions continues, but for nearly half a century, blacks and other minorities have enjoyed the same legal rights as whites.”
      3. When I say that racism is no longer a major problem in America today, I mean that racism can no longer hold a black person back. Don’t take my word for it.
         1. **Herman Cain** “I don’t believe racism in this country holds anybody back in a big way.”
         2. **Larry Elder** “Racism can no longer hold you back if you are willing to work hard, and stay focused, and don’t make bad moral mistakes.”
      4. The proof is in the pudding:
         1. In 2008 America elected a black president. In 2012 it elected him again.
         2. We have a black Supreme Court Justice – Clarence Thomas.
         3. Under George W. Bush, Colin Powell served as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; he was in charge of the entire nation’s military, the mightiest in the world.
         4. Dr. Ben Carson, a black man, rose from poverty and a single other to become a brilliant brain surgeon and ran for president.
         5. People of color from all over the world would give anything for the chance to move to America. Immigrants see America as the land of unlimited opportunity.
         6. **Burgess Owens**, NFL Super Bowl Champ “40% of black households today live the middle-class American Dream. There are thousands of black Americans among our nation’s top 1% of income earners—doctors, lawyers, engineers and professors; not to mention music, TV, film and sports stars. Many of our society’s most revered and celebrated citizens are black.”
      5. The biggest issue today for blacks is not racism, but fatherlessness.
         1. 70% of blacks are raised without fathers.
         2. **Walter E. Williams** “The No. 1 problem among blacks is the effects stemming from a very weak family structure.”
         3. **President Obama** “A kid raised without a father is 5 times more likely to be poor; 9 times more likely to drop out of school; and 10 times more likely to end up in jail.”
         4. Is the weak black family the result of slavery or Jim Crow? No. In 1938, when racism was very high, and Jim Crow was still in effect, only 11 percent of black children were born to unwed mothers.
      6. Does racism still exist? Yes. But as Dinesh D’Souza put it, it is no longer systematic or institutional, but episodic. There are still individuals who are racist; there are still incidents of racism. But these are not just white on black. People of all colors experience racism.
   2. While racism is no longer holding anyone back from socioeconomic achievement, Satan is still using racism to divide Americans – even within the church. Racism is preventing the church from fully glorifying and from fully fulfilling the Great Commission.
   3. According to a 2016 CBS/New York Times poll, 60% of Americans say race relations are getting worse, compared to 38% a year ago. Why is that? And what can we do about it?
2. **TEXT**
   1. **Colossians 3:11** “In Christ there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all.”
3. **EXPLANATION**
   1. Greek – The upper class; the elite.
      1. **William Barclay** “The Greek was the aristocrat of the ancient world and he knew it.”
   2. Jew –
      1. **William Barclay** “The Jew looked down on every other nation. He belonged to God’s chosen people and the other nations were fit only to be fuel for the fires of hell.”
   3. Barbarian –
      1. Someone who did not speak Greek and was thought to be uncivilized (NIV Study Bible).
      2. These people were despised (NKJV Study Bible).
      3. Literally a man who says “bar-bar.”
   4. Scythian –
      1. From modern-day Russia. Especially known for their brutality; considered by others as little better than wild beasts (NIV Study Bible).
      2. Greeks often defined them as the most cruel and anti-Greek people.
      3. An uncultured person (NKJV Study Bible).
      4. **William Barclay** “The Scythian was notorious as the lowest of the barbarians; more barbarian than the barbarians, the Greeks called him; little short of being a wild beast, Josephus calls him. He was proverbially the savage, who terrorized the civilized world with his bestial atrocities.”
   5. Slave –
      1. There were 10-12 million slaves in the world back then. As much as two thirds of the Roman empire were slaves in the first century; before the first century it was as high as 90%.
      2. Many suffered the worst kind of abuse.
      3. **William Barclay** “The slave was not even classified in ancient law as a human being; he was merely a living tool, with no rights of his own. His master could thrash or brand or maim or even kill him at his caprice; he had not even the right of marriage. There could be no fellowship in the ancient world between a slave and a free man.”
   6. Why is this verse inserted at this point?
      1. This verse comes right after Paul’s exhortation to put away the vices of anger, wrath, malice, slander, filthy language, and lying.
      2. The verse comes right before Paul’s exhortation to put on the virtues of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, love, and peace.
      3. It appears as though the reason for much of the conflict and division in the church and in society was due to prejudice – racism, sexism, classism, etc.
      4. So Paul wrote this as a corrective.
   7. Paul’s meaning:
      1. In Christ, all are equal and should be treated as such. Don’t allow immutable differences such as race, ethnicity, religion, class, etc. to cause discord and division in the church.
      2. Christ is all – Christ is all that matters; not race, nationality, class, ethnicity. The only thing that matters is that Christ loves all people; He died for all people; He wants to save all people; He wants to incorporate all people into His church.
      3. Christ is in all – This has two meanings.
         1. All people are made in the image of God, and therefore are equal.
         2. All people in the church are indwelt by the Spirit of Christ, and therefore are equal.
      4. Christianity breaks down the following barriers:
         1. Nationality. Christians from different nations are equal and belong to the church of Christ.
         2. Ceremony. Jewish and Gentile Christians are not two different peoples, but one family united in Christ.
         3. Race and ethnicity. Christians of different races are equal and are members of the same body of Christ.
         4. Class. Rich Christians and poor Christians are equal and are children of the King of kings.
   8. Application: From the perspective of Christ, through the lens of the word of Christ, all people are equal and should be treated as such. We must not allow immutable differences to divide.
4. **4 STEPS TO OVERCOME RACISM**
   1. **Define racism correctly.**
      1. A new phony definition has arisen:
         1. Racism is said by some to describe a system of disadvantage based on race.
         2. Racism is said to be tied to power; therefore, only those in power can be racist. Whites are in power – controlling the systems and institutions in our country – therefore they can be and are racist. Blacks are not in power, therefore they cannot be racist. Blacks can be prejudice, but not racist. This is a lie.
         3. In 2013 Hispanic man George Zimmerman was acquitted for the killing of Trayvon Martin. After the not-guilty verdict, a group of black teens attacked and beat a Hispanic man named Melvin Garcia in Patterson Park in Baltimore for no other reason than that he was Hispanic. As they were beating him they said this is “for Trayvon.” That is racism; and that is racism committed by black people.
      2. What is racism?
         1. The traditional definition of racism is “prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior (Google).”
         2. **Derrick Green** of Project 21 said, “A racist is a person who believes that one race is inherently superior or inferior to another. It's not intelligence, character or values that determine an individual's worth; it's his or her skin color.”
         3. MLK’s definition: Judging someone according to the color of their skin rather than the content of their character.
      3. Racism is a sin problem, not a skin problem. Just as anyone can be jealous, and greedy, prideful, and lustful, anyone can be racist.
   2. **See people biblically.**
      1. To overcome racism we must see people the way that God sees them: All people are created equal. All people have equal dignity, worth, and value, regardless of race.
      2. 9 Biblical Proofs for the Equality of the Races:
         1. All people were created in the image of God. **Genesis 1:27** “So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female.”
         2. All people share the same ancestors. **Genesis 3:20** “The man named his wife Eve because she was the mother of all the living.” **Acts 17:26** “From one man he has made every nationality to live over the whole earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live.”
         3. All people are loved by God. **John 3:16** “For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”
         4. Christ died for all people. **2 Corinthians 5:15** “And he died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the one who died for them and was raised.”
         5. The gospel must be proclaimed to all people. **Matthew 28:19** “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations”
         6. The church made up of all people. **Galatians 3:28** “There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female; since you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
         7. God is the Father of all people. **Matthew 6:9** “Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy.”
         8. The Holy Spirit indwells all believers. **1 Corinthians 6:19** “Don’t you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own”
         9. All people will share heaven together. **Revelation 7:9** “After this I looked, and there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands.”
      3. In 1776, the United States **Declaration of Independence** expressed the Biblical position on race clearly, that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”
   3. **Treat people equally.**
      1. **Acts 10:34-35** Peter began to speak: “Now I truly understand that God doesn’t show favoritism, but in every nation the person who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.”
         1. Peter was speaking about Gentiles. He was saying that God doesn’t show racial favoritism to Jews over Gentiles, but accepts all who fear Him and do what is right.
         2. God looks at the heart, not the skin. He looks at the inside, not the outside. He looks at character, not color. He doesn’t see blacks and whites and Hispanics and Asians. He sees people who are all human beings.
         3. We must do the same. We must treat people equally, regardless of their color.
      2. 2 Forms of Racial Discrimination Exist in America Today: Affirmative Action and Diversity Initiatives.
         1. Affirmative Action.
            1. Government agencies, universities, corporations, and other institutions use race-based preferences in hiring, promoting, and admissions.
            2. If a white man and a black man apply for the job, and the white man is more qualified, companies will hire the black man because he is black. If an Asian student and a black student both apply to Harvard, and the Asian is much more qualified, the black student will be admitted because she is black, and the Asian student will be denied because she is Asian.
            3. The justification for this is to ensure that companies don’t discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, or national origin.
            4. But using discrimination in the present to overcome discrimination in the past is like trying to send the devil to defeat Satan. They are one and the same!
            5. **Chief Justice John Roberts** “The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race.”
            6. There are at least five major problems with Affirmative Action

It teaches black people that they are inferior, because the only way they can compete with white people is with race-based preferences.

It robs black people of the pride of achievement, because people assume that their success is based on their race and not their hard work and talent.

It causes resentment in white people and Asians when they are passed over because of the color of their skin. It sows the seeds of racial discord.

It puts blacks at a disadvantage when they are admitted to a school that they aren’t qualified for. They end up dropping out.

It hurts society as a whole when the most intelligent and hard-working people are passed over for people who are less intelligent and talented. Consider medical schools. What if medical schools decided to admit students, not based on merit, but on skin color? Do you think this would raise the overall quality of medical care in the United States?

* + - * 1. Affirmative Action is the perfect example of the old saying, “Two wrongs don’t make a right.” We cannot correct past injustices by committing present injustices. Race-based preferences are wrong, regardless of your motive.
      1. Diversity Initiatives.
         1. The Diversity Myth is the idea that government agencies, schools, businesses, and churches will be more effective if they reflect the diversity of the larger population.

For example, if a community is 30% black, then every school should have 30% black teachers and black administrators. Every business should have 30% black employees and managers.

Not only would society be better off, but this is how it would be if we were not prejudiced. If a company or government agency is not “diverse enough,” then it must be racist.

As a result, many institutions, both government and private, give race-based preferences to blacks to achieve diversity.

I work at a Fortune 500 company, and they openly give hiring and promotional preferences to blacks and women to achieve diversity.

* + - * 1. There are two big problems with Diversity Initiatives.

First, the idea that diversity improves everyone’s lives is not based on science or logic.

There is no evidence that a Board of Directors is more effective if it is diverse, with 12% black, and 50% female, than if it were all white males.

The NBA is 74% black, even though blacks only make up 12 percent of the population. Imagine if an NBA team decided to put together a more diverse roster – with only 12 percent black, and the rest white? Do you think that team would play better? The best NBA team is not the most diverse team, but the team with the most skill and talent.

Second, Diversity Initiatives are another example of using sin to overcome sin. It is robbing Peter to pay Paul. It is cheating white people to help black people. It is treating people according to their skin color rather than their character. It is judging a company or a church not based on its actions, but on its demographics. It is giving race-based preferences to people – the very definition racial discrimination.

* + 1. Instead of using race-based preferences in the form of affirmative action and diversity initiatives, we must pursue a color-blind society. A society that treats people, all people, according to the content of their character rather than the color of their skin. We will never overcome racial discrimination until we stop practicing it altogether.
  1. **Repent of divisive behavior completely.**
     1. To overcome racism in our church and community, we must repent of racially divisive behaviors. There are many. Let me give you a list of five.
        1. Using racially offensive or insensitive language. You may not be offended by these, but many people are. And if many people are, then you need to avoid them.
           1. Racial jokes.
           2. Words like the n-word, cracker, honkey, etc.
           3. Blanket statements about entire racial groups.

Recently I heard black man say that light-skinned black athletes are not as tough and resilient as dark-skinned black athletes.

* + - * 1. **Romans 12:18** “If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”
      1. Claiming all white people are racist.
         1. There are many people today, both black and white, who say that all white people are racist, even if they cannot point to any specific racist behavior or statement.
         2. John Perkins, a black Baptist minister, said this is offensive as calling a black person the N-word.
      2. Living by double-standard.
         1. Many black people allow themselves to live by one standard, and demand another standard from white people.

They call one another the N-word, but white people must never use that word.

Many, such as the actor Samuel L. Jackson, admit to voting for Barack Obama because he was black. But if a white person were to say that he didn’t vote for Obama because he was black, or that he did vote for Trump because he was white, he would be condemned.

* + - 1. Demanding reparations.
         1. There many today who still demand that the US government give financial reparations to all black people because of the injustices of slavery and Jim Crow.
         2. Reparations are unjust:

Biblical reparations are when a victimizer pays a victim.

The modern notion of reparations are when a man who didn’t do anything wrong is forced to give money to a man who wasn’t oppressed.

* + - * 1. **Frederick Douglas** passionately rejected the idea of reparations. “No people can make desirable progress or have permanent welfare outside of their own independent and earnest efforts…. We utterly repudiate all invidious [unjust] distinctions, whether in our favor or against us, and ask only for a fair field and no favor.”
      1. Using the term “white privilege.”
         1. Many people go around using the term “white privilege.” The idea is that because you are white, you are privileged in America, and because you are black, you are underprivileged in America. There are at least four problems with the notion of “white privilege”.

The idea of “white privilege” is racist. It is a generalization about an entire group of people based solely on their race. That in itself is racist.

The idea of “white privilege” is racially divisive. It implies that white people are successful because of their whiteness rather than talent and skill. That white people are undeserving of their success. This is offensive to white people and stirs up resentment in black people.

The idea of “white privilege” hurts the black community. It implies that black people are unsuccessful because of their blackness rather than their poor choices. That black people are not responsible for their problems. This prevents black people from taking responsibility for their problems. And in the end, taking personal responsibility is the only real solution. As long as my problems are someone else’s fault, then I can’t solve them.

The notion of “white privilege” is unfair. It ignores individual experience. There are many black people who are very privileged, and there are many white people who are very underprivileged. Privilege is not based on skin color, but individual experience.

1. **CONCLUSION**
   1. Today racism is still a big problem in America. But it is not institutional racism or systemic racism. There are no racist institutions or laws in America anymore.
   2. Instead the kind of racism diving America and the church is political rhetoric and political policies that accuse all whites of being oppressors, and all blacks of being victims. That white supremacy is the cause of the problems in the black community, and therefore black people should be given special preferences and privileges because of the color of their skin.
   3. This rhetoric and these policies are destroying race-relations and dividing our country, our communities, and our churches. This kind of racism hinders the church from spreading the gospel.
   4. As the church of Jesus Christ, we know the truth. The gospel destroys all racial barriers. Let us then treat all people – at church, in government, at work, at school – according to the content of their character rather than the color of their skin.