

The Word Says



You Matter

We are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:8-9) and nothing else – especially race (Galatians 3:28). Peter was building walls between Christ and people that were torn down (Galatians 2:17-19). Paul told the Ephesians (2:11-22) that the Jews and Gentiles were reconciled through Christ. Jesus was the “peace who has made both become one and has broken down the wall of division between us (Jew and Gentile) having abolished in His flesh the enmity, reconciling them both to God in one body through the cross thereby putting to death the enmity...giving both access to Jesus by one Spirit.” Both groups who were now in Christ were together citizens, saints and members of God’s household (v. 19).

In Christ, through the Gospel, we are all the same. People of all nations, genders, backgrounds, and social status, are invited to God’s table through the blood of Christ. That table of grace covers all our sins and separations. This is the picture of heaven in Revelation 5:9 and 7:9 where a great multitude no one could number of all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues stood before the throne of God and worshipped Him together.

As true believers, oneness in Christ permeate through our, activities, thinking, and endeavors. Instead of racism, we are charged to practice gracism.

Growing up in Columbia, South Carolina, I was borne in the “Black hospital.” Until seventh grade, I attended Black schools. Until the early 1990s there were remnants of race designated water fountains.

Jews did not associate with Samaritans because they were considered lesser and of no value because of their race. Samaritans intermarried with the Gentiles and the pure Jew hated this mixed race of Samaritans. But Jesus didn’t bypass the Samaritans. Jesus healed a Samaritan leper (Luke 17:16), preached to the Samaritans (John 4:40-42), honored a Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37), and talked to the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4). The woman at the well was even shocked Jesus would speak to her. Jesus even rebuked his disciples when they asked to call down fire from heaven and destroy the Samaritans after they rejected Christ (Luke 9:54-55). Jesus loved the people of Samaria and desired them to be saved and loved (Luke 9:56). Jesus illustrated true Christian love does not recognize race.

Paul even publicly confronted Peter about his racist actions from not eating with the Gentiles in the presence of Jews (Galatians 2:11-21). Peter feared a group of Jews who were acting racist toward the Gentiles. He had previously eaten and drank all of the things the

Gentiles did and fellowshiped with them when those certain Jews were not around. But when pressure came, Peter withdrew and basically told the Gentiles by his actions they were not worthy of God's grace because of their race. Paul was furious and withstood Peter "face to face" (v. 11) because he was "playing the hypocrite" (v. 13) and influenced others to do the same. They were not being "straightforward with the truth of the Gospel" (v. 14), which adds nothing (no works, race, achievement, social status, etc) to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

Yet, today there is the need to declare "Black lives matter!"