

Key:

Purple – Introduction, Conclusion, Main Points, and Sermon Thread

Blue – Explanation/Exposition

Red – Application

Green – Illustration

Brown – Quotation

Yellow – Sermon Notes

## Dare to Be Convictional

**Introduction: Amen.** Well today, we are continuing our series “Dare to Be Different.” And we are exploring ways that we might be obedient to **Romans 12:2**: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.” We’ve dared to be **KINGDOM-MINDED**, Harvest Decatur. We’ve dared to be **TRUTHFUL**. We’ve dared to be **LOVING**. We’ve dared to be **IDENTIFIED WITH CHRIST**. Last week, Paul Roberts dared you to **VALUE BROKENNESS**. Today, Harvest Decatur, I dare you to be...

You know I’ve been struggling with the title of this message all week. Can I confess that? I have all these ideas in my head that I want to convey, and I struggle sometimes to synthesize it down to a few words. And I’ve been wrestling in my spirit for the last year over some stuff that is going on in our world and in our country. And I haven’t quite been able to put my finger on that one item, that one word, that conveys what I desire to see in our church. Here it is, Harvest Decatur. This came to me on Thursday afternoon as I was preparing for this message at around 3:30pm. I dare you, Harvest Decatur... I dare you to be **CONVICTIONAL**.

Now I could cover a lot of ideas under that umbrella. And I am going to cover a lot of items today. **So cancel all your lunch plans.** Here’s what I want to cover today. I want to cover abortion, euthanasia, gender, sex, gender dysphoria, sexuality, marriage, racism, the sanctity of human life, and Jesus Christ as the only remedy for our human sinfulness. **Buckle up, church. Here we go!**

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**Write this down as #1 in your notes. I’ll give you this morning...**  
*Five Biblical Convictions that Every Christian Should Have:*

**Here’s the first:**

1. Human life, from the womb to the grave, is **sacred**

Let me state now for the record, I am convictionally and unabashedly pro-life. What happens to pre-born babies in the womb at Planned Parenthood centers and elsewhere is an abomination. It is morally repugnant, and it is an affront to the God of the Universe. And by the way, this is not a political issue, it’s a moral issue. It’s a pre-political issue. God creates each and every one of us in our mother’s womb. And there is no biblical warrant for abortion. Period.

The Bible says, “Thou shalt not murder” (**Ex 20:13**). The Bible says, “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image” (**Gen 9:6**). The Bible in **Job 31:15** says, “Did not he who made me in the womb make him? And did not one fashion us in the womb?” **Isaiah 44:2** says, “Thus says the LORD who made you, who formed you from the womb and will help you...” In **Jeremiah 1:5**, **Yahweh** tells **Jeremiah**, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.” **Psalms 139:13** says this. **David** writes...<sup>13</sup> *For you formed my inward parts; Literally “my kidneys” in Hebrew.* The kidneys function here as a metaphor for both our physical and our metaphysical properties. **“You created my body, but you also created my soul,”** says **David**. *you knitted me together in my mother’s womb.*

That word “knitted” could be translated “intertwined” or “plaited.” **God wove us together in our mothers’ wombs like an embroidered quilt. Think about the intricacies of the human body for a second. Think about the elaborate ways in which your nervous system and skeletal system and circulatory system come together in your body. There are 60,000 miles of track in our human circulatory system. There are 60,000 miles of track in your body right now including arteries, capillaries, and veins. The only time we think about that is when we have a problem with one of those arteries, because we have too much cholesterol in our diet.**

Yet God created that system. God laid that track. God knitted that together inside of you while you were in your mother’s womb. And yet an untrained, unlicensed abortionist pretending to be a health-care professional, can come and vacuum a human being out of a womb and dispose of it like medical waste.

I've heard Christians, even sometimes well-meaning Christians, refuse to take a stand against abortion by saying, "Well, it's complicated." Actually, no it's not complicated. Abortion is the murder of a pre-born person. Abortion is the murder of a pre-born child made in the image of God. **Dare to be convictional about this, Harvest Decatur. Dare to take a stand on this.**

The next time people ask you what your view is on abortion. Pull your shoulders back, look them straight in the eye with full conviction and say, "Abortion is the murder of a pre-born child made in the image of God." You don't have to holler or shout or lose your cool, although I wouldn't blame you if you did. But you are going to be more persuasive if you can say this with conviction and clarity. "You want to know my view on abortion? Here it is: 'It is the murder of a pre-born child made in the image of God.'" It's sin. It's not an unforgivable sin. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. But still, it's a sin.

Now let's transition from the beginning of life to the end of life. There's another threat to human sanctity in our world right now. Not only is abortion sin, but so is euthanasia. We need to be convictional about that too. The Bible doesn't allow for euthanasia. The Bible doesn't allow for physician-assisted suicide. **To be quite honest physician-assisted suicide is an oxy-moron. Physicians abide by the Hippocratic Oath: "Do no harm." How can a Physician swear by that oath, and then conspire with patients to kill them?**

Life is given by God; and life is taken away by God. And we are in no position as human beings to take our own lives by suicide, or to take another's life. And I think the arguments for assisted suicide are very dangerous. **Right now there are nine states in America that allow for physician-assisted suicide: 1) California, 2) Colorado, 3) Hawaii, 4) Montana, 5) Maine, 6) New Jersey, 7) Oregon, 8) Vermont, and 9) Washington. That's just absolutely shocking to me! When I was a kid, we thought Jack Kevorkian was a psycho, and we renounced his actions. Now we have nine states that have legalized what he used to do.** They call this "death with dignity" which is a horrible obfuscation. The problem with euthanasia is that it compromises human dignity, especially when you make the "right to die" a "right to kill." And I think the long term effects of this will be tragic.

And here's my argument for this. If you start normalizing euthanasia, and if you start moving from voluntary to involuntary euthanasia...I think that's an inevitable drift)... that's going to take us to some very dark places. If you start allowing family members and doctors to determine who lives and who dies, who's going to protect the rights of aging Americans when their healthcare needs become too expensive? Who's going to protect aging parents from children who want to accelerate their parents' departure so they can expedite their inheritance? Who's going to protect the aged and the weak and the medically disabled when people accuse them of being a drain on resources?<sup>1</sup>

I've told you before about how the country of Iceland celebrated the fact that they had eliminated the issue of Down syndrome in their country. And the world celebrated that. The media just fawned all over this. "They found a cure for Down syndrome!" But they didn't eliminate Down syndrome from their country, they just aborted every single unborn baby that received a positive test for Down syndrome.<sup>2</sup> **Is that a cure?** That was viewed by the European community and even some in America as a success. It was a healthcare cost savings for the country. How long will it be before we start adopting a similar policy in America for the aged and the weak and the mentally handicapped?

**When people ask you, Harvest Decatur, about euthanasia, about physician-assisted suicide, what do you say? How do you respond? Here's what you say. Pull your shoulders back, look someone square in the eyes, and tell them, "Euthanasia is the murder of a human person made in the image of God." "Physician-assisted suicide is the murder of a human person who is made in the image of God." "I refuse to condone it, lie about it, or obscure the truth about it." Dare to be convictional about that.**

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Write this down as #2 in your notes. Here's another thing I dare you to be convictional about.  
2) Gender is **binary**

I wrote something out this last week, and I want to read it to you. I think we need to be very clear and precise with our understanding of issues circulating in our world right now. So here is what I wrote:

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<sup>1</sup> For example, there is a company that harvests organs in Canada. This company has actually come under scrutiny for encouraging physician-assisted suicide to help grow their business. In other words, there's a financial incentive for this company to encourage physician-assisted suicide. See the report from Les Sillars called "Ditching the Dad Donor Rule" in the "The World and Everything In It" podcast for Feb 4, 2020. Transcript can be read here: <https://worldandeverything.org/2020/02/les-sillars-ditching-the-dead-donor-rule/>. See also Part 1 of Al Mohler's podcast "The Briefing" for Feb 7, 2020: <https://albertmohler.com/2020/02/07/briefing-2-7-20>

<sup>2</sup> See Al Mohler's podcast "The Briefing" for Sept 9, 2017: <https://albertmohler.com/2017/09/12/briefing-09-12-17>

**“Transgenderism is a confused ideology that asserts that the God-given genders of male and female are unfixed or fluid. The church should not teach, embrace, or endorse this false ideology. God created human beings both male and female. Gender is binary. Each gender is afforded dignity by their creator. Men and women are heirs of the grace of life, and saved men and women are equal inheritors of Christ’s eternal kingdom.**

**Those who struggle with gender dysphoria are made in the image of God, and should be treated with love and respect by the church. But the church should not accommodate false, unbiblical notions. The church and her people should not live by lies.**

**Those who are intersex are made in the image of God and should be treated with dignity and respect. Counsel should be sought (medically and spiritually) to determine how to live their lives appropriately in light of their gender ambiguity.”**

**It’s quite amazing to me how many of our contemporary hot button issues are an attack on the Book of Genesis. It’s as if people read that book and go after the foundational principles of Christianity: sex, gender, procreation, human life. It’s as if the world has just followed in Adam and Eve’s footsteps and just gullibly bought into the lies of the Devil. “God said this, did he? God said he made humans in his image? No! God didn’t mean that. You don’t have to abide by that. God said that there are two genders: male and female? No! There’s a better way than that. You can pick your gender if you want to. You can pick no gender, if you want to.”**

**Think how many problems and how much confusion we could avoid in this world if we just read and really believed Genesis 1:26-27. “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”**

**You should probably go ahead and just memorize these verses. Man was made in God’s image. Man didn’t evolve from primordial goo. Man didn’t evolve from monkeys or apes or amoebae. Man was created with intentionality and care. He was differentiated from the animals by God. And God created two genders—male and female. Gender is binary. And gender is good. It’s good that God created male and female.**

**And to that you might say, “What good, Pastor Tony?” Well allow me to state the obvious here. The human good that God created gender for is procreation. The male provides the sperm that fertilizes the egg. And the female provides the egg that is fertilized. Sperm can’t fertilize sperm, and an egg can’t fertilize itself. This is true even in the animal kingdom. Except in the animal kingdom marriage is non-existent, and monogamy, if I can use that term, is so rare, it’s negligible.**

**Not so for humans, though. God created human beings to have monogamous, heterosexual, marital relations. Why? Why did he do that? So that we could procreate! So that we could fulfill the mandate that God gave us in Genesis 1:28.**

**And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”**

**In other words, can I give you a loose paraphrase of that verse? “Make babies!” “Make babies, so that many human babies will grow up and rule over the earth!” One of the things that is lost in this world of gender-fluidity and same-sex marriage is that God created gender and he created marriage to perpetuate the species, so that more little *imago dei* creatures will be brought into this world. That’s not possible in a same-sex union, not without some very creative, biological maneuvering.**

**Yes, gender is binary. And marriage was created by God as a lifelong, monogamous, heterosexual, covenant relationship. Period! Pull your shoulders back, look people in the eye, and say that with conviction. “Gender is binary. Marriage was created by God as a lifelong, monogamous, heterosexual, covenant relationship.”**

**Some of you might be thinking, “But Pastor Tony, if we say that... If we believe that and admit that we believe it, people are going to look down on us. People are going to cancel us. We’re going to face opposition in this world.” Yes, you will. And Jesus makes no bones about that. Jesus said in John 15, “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted**

me, they will also persecute you” (15:18-20). Jesus said, “In this world you will have tribulation” (John 16:33). But Jesus also said, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.” Jesus also said, “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.” **Listen, the road to irrelevance is paved with cowardice and compromise. The road to blessing is paved with courage and conviction. Let me say that again. The road to irrelevance is paved with cowardice and compromise. The road to blessing is paved with courage and (biblical) conviction. I’d rather be unpopular than irrelevant. I’d rather be blessed by God than be applauded by the world.**

**And I think we get this wrong in America. We seem to think that if you are persecuted or if people don’t like you, then we must be doing something wrong. If you are not healthy, wealthy, and well-liked, then you must have angered God with your actions. That is not what Jesus teaches.**<sup>3</sup> Jesus says, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” That doesn’t give Christians a blank check to go out there and be obnoxious in this world, so that we can be persecuted. Persecution doesn’t automatically mean blessing! But if you are never persecuted in this world, it might just mean that you never take a stand for anything. You are never convictional about anything. Tim Keller says it this way: “If you’re always [being] persecuted, you’re probably an obnoxious person, but if you’re never being persecuted you’re probably a coward... If you’re always being persecuted, you’re probably obnoxious, because Jesus wasn’t always persecuted, but if you’re never being persecuted, you’re probably a coward, because Jesus was [persecuted]. Don’t you see that Christians, by just living a godly life, are going to upset people?”<sup>4</sup>

Why was Jesus hated? Do you know? Why did people hate him? Was it because he healed people? Was it because he was a fantastic teacher that kept the masses enthralled? Was it because he was sinless and compassionate towards sinners? Think about it for a minute. Jesus never picked up a sword. He never led an army. He never sinned against anyone. He was perfectly righteous and perfectly holy. So why did people hate him?

I’ll tell you why. It’s because he was perfectly righteous and perfectly holy! He was altogether pleasing in God’s sight. He was different from this world, and he was convictional! That’s why people hated him. And Jesus said to his disciples, “Don’t be surprised if they hate you too.” “You’re different!” “You’re not from this world. You don’t belong here!” “You’re a nation of Abels living among a nation of Cains. So don’t be surprised when the Cains rise up against you and persecute you.” “And do not be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

**I know this is hard for those of us who really want to be liked. I don’t like being hated. I don’t like being disliked. I liked to be liked. But that’s not always our lot in life. We’ve got a cross to bear as Christians. We are called to this as followers of Christ. And let’s face it, some people didn’t like Jesus, so why would they like us?**

**Listen, Harvest Decatur. Dare to be Different in this world. Don’t be bullied into silence by power-brokers in our day. Don’t be pressured into accepting the status-quo. Stand for something. Stand up for the Scriptures. Stand up for the truth. Be convictional!**

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**Go ahead and write this down as #3 in your notes. Here’s a third “Biblical Conviction that Every Christian Should Have.” I’ve alluded to this already, but let me spell it out a little more precisely.**

**3. Marriage is primarily for baby-making (and babies are good!)**

**I know this is red-meat for this crowd.** I probably don’t need to emphasize this third point too much at Harvest Decatur. But let me explain, if I could, why this is so important as a convictional truth for us as Christians. I heard John Stonestreet speak recently on a podcast about “America’s Great Marriage Divorce.” And what he was talking about wasn’t divorce after marriage. He was talking about how many Americans, especially young people, have tried to divorce marriage from procreation. Stonestreet says, “**The distinctive of marriage is its inherent connection with procreation. The fundamental divorce of the sexual revolution**

<sup>3</sup> See Ajith Fernando, *Acts*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998) 360. Ajith Fernando, who was a missionary to Sri Lanka for 35 years, talks about this in his commentary on Acts. He says, “A common reaction of Christians when they see a fellow Christian suffer is to look for something wrong that the sufferer has done. They seem to think that these persons are suffering because they have done something that is not in keeping with God’s will. They may advise the sufferers or even rebuke them. If a person is tired because he has done God’s work along with his job and family responsibilities, he is rebuked for working too hard. When a person is unpopular in the workplace for taking a stand for Christ, she is rebuked for being unwise. When someone gets assaulted and ends up in the hospital for trying to make peace in a conflict, he is criticized for trying to act like a messiah, not minding his own business. Those who should be encouraging sufferers end up discouraging them and adding to their pain.”

<sup>4</sup> Timothy J. Keller, “War and Peace,” Matthew 5:9-12, March 4, 1990, *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive* (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013).



has been to divorce procreation from marriage. And when you do that, then you redefine marriage.”<sup>5</sup> Stonestreet says, “We’ve fundamentally misunderstood marriage and family as a society, and that fundamental misunderstanding has come into the church. So, what you hear is, for example, marriage talked about in all kinds of functional, practical ways. We have marriage seminars on how to have marriage, how to do marriage, how to do marriage better, how to love your spouse, how to have better finances and a better sex life and everything else. And what’s been missing is a fundamental teaching, a catechism on what marriage itself is. So, the culture has been defining marriage, so most evangelical people in the pews often will then think of marriage in the same way that the culture does. That it’s an institution of adult happiness. That it’s completely untethered from anything like procreation.”<sup>6</sup> **I’ll be honest with you, I’ve heard John Stonestreet say things like this a lot on podcast, and chide churches and pastors for not teaching Biblical truths about marriage and family. And every time I hear him say that, I say to myself, “Doggonit Stonestreet! That ain’t gonna happen in this church! We are going to teach God’s principles on marriage, sex, and children in this church.”**

So let’s teach it. Gender is binary. God created us male and female. But also, gender is complementary. There is a sameness to being male and female. We should never forget that. We are both made in the image of God. We are both *homo sapiens*. We are both biologically closer to each other than we are to any other animal species. We are both closer to each other than we are to God or to the angels. There is a sameness to being male and female. But that sameness should never be allowed to obliterate our differentness. We are different. Men and women are different, and their roles in the human project are complementary.

The female brings the egg to the reproductive task. The male brings the sperm to fertilize the egg. This is good. This is how God created this. We need each other to procreate. **We are not like starfish that just asexually reproduce ourselves... you know cut off part of our body and then regenerate new parts. We don’t do that. I’m glad I’m not a starfish, and I’m glad we don’t do that!** And I think we make a mistake in the Christian world when we talk about sex or talk about marriage as if making babies was optional.

Now I know I’m walking a tight-rope here. So please just give me some latitude as I try to explain why this is important. When God created marriage, and when God gave Eve to Adam as a wife, what’s the first thing that God told them? “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (**Gen 1:28**). That is the primary (not exclusive, but primary) function of marriage.

One of the great mistakes in our modern world has been the removal of sex from the marriage commitment. That has caused incalculable harm to our society. And I think the church has reacted to this by trying to sell the world on marriage. **“Marriage will make you happy. Marriage will make you fulfilled. Marriage will make you less lonely. Marriage is the better way. Get married!”** And there’s truth to all of those statements. But marriage is primarily God’s mechanism for populating the world with more and more image-bearing babies. That has to be the dominant purpose of the marriage relationship.

I think the modern-day world demonstrates an antipathy to marriage as the proper avenue for sexual intimacy. I think the modern-day world also demonstrates an antipathy towards large families and more generally towards children. **I know a missionary family who was in a foreign country when they had a second child. And after the mother gave birth to their second child, the doctors automatically started to perform Tubal Ligation. And the father actually caught on to what they were doing and asked them to stop. And when he asked them why they were doing that they replied, “You already have two children. Why would you want any more than that? No one in this country would ever want more than two children.”**

**Similarly, I heard Prince Harry say once... is he still a prince? I don’t really know anymore, but people still care what he says. He said after the birth of his son that he and his wife will have two children max! And absolutely no more than that. He said, “We are the one species on this planet that seems to think that this place belongs to us, and only us... Surely, being as intelligent as we all are, or as evolved as**

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<sup>5</sup> Podcast: “The World and Everything In It,” May 8, 2020. See the podcast interview with Stonestreet and the transcript here: <https://worldandeverything.org/2020/05/culture-friday-americas-great-marriage-divorce/>. See also the NY Times article “U.S. Marriage Rate Plunges to Lowest Level on Record,” Janet Adamy, April 29, 2020: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-marriage-rate-plunges-to-lowest-level-on-record-11588132860>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. See also Andrew Walker’s article “America is Undoing the ‘Genesis Mandate,’” May 4, 2020: <https://ifstudies.org/blog/america-is-undoing-the-genesis-mandate>. Walker says it best. In our modern-day world, we can have sex without babies, and babies without sex. Something is askew with that. We can also have sex without babies, and we can have babies without marriage. The Genesis Mandate that God gave us is being undone.

we all are supposed to be, we should be able to leave something better behind for the next generation.”<sup>7</sup> That ridiculous sentiment is not uncommon in our world today.

I read an article by Kevin DeYoung a few months ago entitled, “It’s Time for a New Culture War Strategy,” where DeYoung actually encouraged Christians to engage in the culture war by, gasp...are you ready for this?... having babies! He said, “Here’s a culture war strategy conservative Christians should get behind: have more children and disciple them like crazy... Do you want to rebel against the status quo? Do you want people to ask you for a reason for the hope that is in you (1 Peter 3:15)? Tote your brood of children through Target. There is almost nothing more counter-cultural than having more children.” “And once we have those children, there is almost nothing more important than catechizing them in the faith, developing their moral framework, and preparing them to be deeply compassionate lovers of God and lovers of people and relentlessly biblical lovers of truth... The future belongs to the fecund.”<sup>8</sup> From what I heard, DeYoung got into some hot water for those statements. But I’ll just tell you, I’m all for that. Forget what Prince Harry has to say. I’d rather embrace that. I’ve said it before, let me say it again... **We are raising up an army of Jesus-followers here at Harvest Decatur. Children are a gift from the LORD, and we are not going to buy into the cultural narrative that children are a drain on resources or a burden to our world. We take our cues from the Bible, and we take our cues from Jesus. Jesus said, “let the little children come to me.” And then he said, “to such as these belongs the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 19:14).**

Now I need to clarify something. Is marriage only about procreation? No. Are marriages invalidated if they don’t produce offspring? No. Sanja and I have dealt with infertility issues. Other people get married beyond the years of child-bearing. That doesn’t invalidate the marriage or make it unbiblical. **My pastor, when I was growing up, used to tell the story about his mother who got remarried in her eighties after her first husband died. And she had a loving, affectionate relationship with her second husband. And it was wonderful. I have no doubt that God looked down on that with joy and approval, even though she and her husband had no biological hope of bearing children.**

Marriage is not only about procreation. And we see that even in **Genesis 2**, where one of the reasons God gave Eve to Adam is because “it is not good for a man to be alone” (**2:18**). So marriage is both the means of procreation, but also a means of companionship. But procreation has to be primary in the purpose of marriage. I don’t think we should downplay that in this world of “anything-goes marriage.” Marriage between a man and a woman is primarily meant for procreation. And that’s good. We should affirm that with conviction.

**And by the way, let me say one more thing about gender and marriage before we continue. Women should be proud to be women. And men should be proud to be men. God created gender as a human good, and God created womanhood as a human good. Women should be proud to be women. You are made in God’s image. You are an indispensable part of human flourishing. Only women can be mothers! Only women can bear children. Only women can mother children. Women should be proud of that! Only women can be wives. Women should be proud of that, and women should not envy men.**

**And men should not envy women. Women should not want to be men. And men should not want to be women. And men should affirm women. And women should affirm men. According to Douglas Murray’s book *The Madness of Crowds*, some of the most popular tweets on Twitter include #allmenaretrash and also #killallmen.<sup>9</sup> Is that the way forward? Is that helpful? I don’t think so. God created us male and female and there should be mutual respect and even admiration for one another. We can do that without buying into the notion that gender is a social construct or that gender is non-binary.**

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**Go ahead and write this down as #4 in your notes.**

**4) All human beings are created equal in dignity and worth**

That’s not a “Declaration of Independence thing.” That’s a biblical thing. That’s the logical outworking of *imago dei* in the book of Genesis. Racism is a sin. Racism is unbiblical. But also racism is nonsensical,

<sup>7</sup> See the NY Times article: “Prince Harry Plans 2 Children ‘Maximum,’ for the Sake of the Planet” by Palko Karasz, July 31, 2019: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/world/europe/prince-harry-children.html>

<sup>8</sup> Kevin DeYoung, “It’s Time for a New Culture War Strategy,” TGC Website Blog, June 17, 2020: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/its-time-for-a-new-culture-war-strategy/>. See also his follow-up article “Once More on Faith and Fecundity,” TGC Website Blog, August 26, 2020: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/once-more-on-faith-and-fecundity/>

<sup>9</sup> See Douglas Murray, *The Madness of Crowds Gender, Race and Identity* (Bloomsbury Continuum, 2019). See especially pages 98-106.

biblically speaking. We all come from the same line. We all originate from the same father and mother. We all originate from Adam and Eve. We all originate from Noah and his three sons. **Racism is cutting off your own nose to spite your face.**

You know there is all this talk about gender as a social construct in our day, which it's not. I'll tell you what's a social construct... white supremacy is a social construct. Attitudes of racial and ethnic superiority—that is a social construct! That is a nonsensical social construct. We all come from the same root. We are all related physically and metaphysically. We are all made in the image of God.

And here's why I'm so passionate about this issue. We as Christians have the best resources for believing this and applying this. We have the best resources to understand this. We have the Bible.

**Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood, was an atheist and a racist. One of Sanger's objectives with birth control, sterilization, and eventually abortion was to eliminate weaker and less evolved racial groups. And the entire eugenics program that was prevalent even in this country was very much a racist enterprise. It wasn't just Hitler who saw the Aryan race as superior to other racial and ethnic groups around the world. Many "intellectuals" in that day were of a similar mind, they just didn't take it to such a logical and bloody extreme.**

And a lot of this thinking derives from a Darwinian worldview. Race-based eugenics is the inevitable outworking of Darwinian evolution. If you believe in Darwinian evolution, if you believe that the strong eat the weak, then why wouldn't the stronger, more evolved members of the species eliminate the weaker, less developed of the species. It's just natural selection. **Darwin wrote, "At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilised races of man will almost certainly exterminate, and replace, the savage races throughout the world."**<sup>10</sup> That's the logical end-result of a Darwinian worldview. Racism and eugenics are implicitly part of a Darwinian worldview.

And some of you may ask, **"What's eugenics, Pastor Tony?"** Eugenics is the belief that some human beings are more worthy of life than others. Merriam-Webster calls eugenics **"the practice or advocacy of controlled selective breeding of human populations (as by sterilization) to improve the population's genetic composition."**<sup>11</sup> The word "eugenics" was coined by Charles Darwin's cousin Francis Galton. Etymologically the word means "well-born." (The Greek word *eu* means "good" or "well" and the suffix *genēs* means "born").

You might say, **"Who would ever advocate for something like that?"** Well quite a few people historically. There was a massive movement in Europe and in this country at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century to embrace forced sterilization and controlled breeding among humans... not animals... not cows or horses or emus... but humans!<sup>12</sup> **And you know what killed the eugenics movement in this country and in Europe. It was really popular for a while, and then it wasn't. You know what killed it? I'll tell you what killed it, or at least halted its momentum. It was a eugenicist in Germany named Adolf Hitler, who believed that the Aryan race was the one true race in the world and the rest of the races should be either exterminated or enslaved. After Hitler killed six million Jews, countless Gypsies, countless mentally handicapped, and other "inferior" people groups, people started to rethink the wisdom of the eugenics movement.**

But I will say this. The eugenics movement isn't dead. It has just morphed into the culture of death that advocates for abortion and physician-assisted suicide.

So racism and even class-warfare is the inevitable result of a Darwinian worldview. And when you throw in some Marxism and some Freudian perspectives on sex, you've got a volatile and violent cocktail. We're living through that right now.<sup>13</sup>

There's got to be a better way than that. There's got to be a better way to think about race and human dignity. And there is. It's called the Bible. **I've said it already, but let me say it again. Racism, according to the Bible, is nonsensical. You hate someone else because of their color or because of their culture. They**

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<sup>10</sup> Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 105. For an analysis of Darwin's book, see Wiker's chapter on "The Descent of Man" in *10 Books That Screwed Up the World: And 5 Others That Didn't Help* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2008), 85-98. See Also Wiker's *The Darwin Myth: The Life and Lies of Charles Darwin* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2009) and the article by Phil Moore "What Your Biology Teacher Didn't Tell You About Charles Darwin" April 19, 2017. The Gospel Coalition Website: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/what-your-biology-teacher-didnt-tell-you-about-charles-darwin/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/eugenics>

<sup>12</sup> The most famous eugenicist in our country was Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood. In her book, *The Pivot of Civilization*, Sanger divided human beings who had a below average IQ into the following categories: Idiots, Morons, and Imbeciles. In her mind, those human beings who fit into those categories should be sterilized in order to prevent breeding. She said, "Each feeble-minded person is a potential source of endless progeny of defect; we prefer the policy of immediate sterilization, so that parenthood is absolutely prohibited to the feeble-minded." By the way, don't go to a Planned Parenthood clinic or Planned Parenthood's website looking for Sanger's book. Not that book anyway. You won't find it there.

<sup>13</sup> For more on that, see Carl Trueman, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020).

are just like you. You come from the same source that they do. You might as well be hating yourself. I didn't learn that from Darwinism. I learned that from the Bible. Darwinism doesn't teach that. And Marxism doesn't teach that either by the way. Marxism teaches that the oppressed and the marginalized in society have more dignity and value than those who aren't ("the oppressors"). That's not the way forward. That's the way to unending violence. Just look at the countries that have embraced a Marxist worldview. It's not pretty.

And here's what I learned about race as a Christian. Here's what I learned about human dignity in church. Here's what I started singing even around the time I started to talk. "Red and yellow; black and white; they are precious in his sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world." That song is true. That song is derived from the Bible. The Apostle Paul said when he was in Athens, "[The Lord] made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him" (Acts 17:26-27). That's the way forward for race relations and racial strife in our world.

And here's the reason that I want us as Christians to be more courageous and more convictional and more outspoken about these matters. First of all, because there are forces in this world that are actively trying to silence Christians and Christian conviction on this matter. And let me just tell you, it has never been customary for Christians to be silent on matters. Christianity has always been a proselytizing religion. Christianity has always been a vocal religion. Christianity has always been a prophetic religion, in the sense that it points out the sins and the errors of the world. When the Roman Empire was killing people in gladiator sports, Christians spoke out and said, "That's not right." When the British Empire was engaged in the slave-trade, it was convictional Christians like William Wilberforce who said, "That's not right. Stop that!" When this country, even confessing Christians, supported things like Jim Crow laws and discrimination, it was convictional leaders like Martin Luther King and others who said, "That's not right!" We have not always been right as Christians in the ways that we have spoken out publically about matters. I admit that as a Christian pastor. We have not always been right, but we have never been silent or bullied into silence about our convictions. I want us to be brave and outspoken about these matters, because Christians have always been that way when they've seen error in our world. Be convictional, Harvest Decatur. The world needs to hear the truth about these things, what the Bible says about them. Don't be bullied into silence. I dare you to be convictional.

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And finally... fifthly. Let's prepare our hearts for communion with this last point. If you've already forgotten everything I've said today... if you checked out at point number 1 or 3 of 4... check back in now. If you only have the capacity to take one thing away from what I'm saying today... let it be this. Be convictional about this. Here's the fifth Biblical conviction that every Christian should have: 5) Jesus provides the only remedy for **human sin**

Let me be clear about this. Abortion is not an unforgivable sin. Sex outside of marriage is not an unforgivable sin. Murder is not an unforgivable sin. Homosexuality is not an unforgivable sin. Racism is not an unforgivable sin. Euthanasia and Eugenics are not unforgivable. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. As Christians we can never, ever forget that any good thing that we have in this world and any hope we have in the afterlife is strictly a matter of God's grace and God's forgiveness. When someone comes to you and says, "You're a Christian. What hope do we have in this world? What are we going to do? What hope do we have for humanity? What happens after we die, and how are we going to make all this right?" This is what you say. This is what you say with conviction. "All have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. But Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, died a bloody and gruesome death on a cross to save us from our sins. And he rose from the dead. And faith in Christ saves us from sin. And if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Say it. Say that. Pull your shoulders back, look them straight in the eye and say it. Say it with conviction. It might be exactly what that person needs to hear in order to turn to Christ for the salvation of their soul.