

Jesus, The Wall Breaker

Ephesians 2:14; Mark 5:20; John 4:9, 4:41; Acts 10:11-15, 10:44-45; 10:38

June 14, 2020

Bible Verse

Ephesians 2:14 (NIV)

¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,

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Note

George Floyd, His murder inflamed the already present wound of racism in America. *Racism is the belief that one is superior to another based on skin color. And racism reaches way back to Bible days.

In Jesus' day the racism was between Jews (anyone born in one of the 12 tribes of Israel) and everybody else...the "everybody else" were called Gentiles. Matthew Henry states, "There was great hatred between the Samaritans (Gentiles) and the Jews."

In Jesus' day it had reached the place where Jews stuck pretty much to the northwestern region of the Sea of Galilee, because the "other side" represented all that was impure, decadent, sinful—meaning the land of the Gentiles.

One day Jesus commanded the disciples to get into a boat and journey to "the other side." This meant they were going to the land of the Gentiles! No doubt when the storm struck in the middle of the sea they thought it was a warning that they shouldn't be going to "the other side." Once they reached the shore, they encountered the demon possessed man of Gadara and a mighty deliverance ensued. This man was told by Jesus to go home,

Bible Verse

Mark 5:20 (NIV)

²⁰So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

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Note

This is one example of many we see in the Bible that when racial barriers were bridged, great miracles and salvations resulted!

At another time Jesus was traveling from Judea to Galilee and had to pass through Samaria—the land of the Gentiles. He sat at a well where a Samaritan woman approached. Jesus asked her for a drink and her first reaction was to ask,

Bible Verse

John 4:9 (NIV)

⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

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Note

She asked this because Jesus had bridged the racial barrier to speak with her! A dialogue ensued, she wound up believing in Him, and brought the entire town out to hear him! We note that while Jesus was talking with her, His disciples showed up and were shocked—“Why are you talking with her?” Jesus wound up staying in Samaria 2 full days. Once again, when the racial divide was pulled down, blessings and miracles resulted.

Bible Verse

John 4:41 (NIV)

⁴¹And because of his words many more became believers.

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Note

Once again, when the racial divide was pulled down, blessings and miracles resulted. In the book of Acts we see Simon Peter on a rooftop praying. He became very hungry and while the household was preparing a meal, Peter fell into a God-induced trance:

Bible Verse

Acts 10:11-15 (NIV)

¹¹He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners.

¹²It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds.

¹³Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.”

¹⁴“Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.”

¹⁵The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”

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Note

Right about then a knock came on the door. It was some men that had been sent by a centurion named Cornelius, who was a Gentile, as were the men at the door. Cornelius had seen a vision of an angel that instructed him to find and invite Peter to his house. When Peter realized they were Gentiles, the vision he'd just had made sense—these were men from “the other side,”—Gentiles—and he was not to look down on them, for God had sent them! Peter went, and as he shared the gospel with Cornelius's household:

Bible Verse

Acts 10:44-45 (NIV)

⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.

⁴⁵The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles.

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Note

This event became the door-opener for the gospel going to the entire Gentile world! Again we see that when the racial divide was bridged, it released miracles and salvation!

And finally, there was Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch, which I spoke on last week... The Spirit of God led Philip to leave a mighty revival in Samaria (which was “the other side” consisting of Gentiles, not Jews) and join himself to a traveling chariot in the desert. In the chariot was a black man, an Ethiopian eunuch with great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. He was reading from the prophet Isaiah about Jesus, and wanted Philip to explain to him what he was reading. Philip shared the gospel, the eunuch received Christ into his heart, and history tells us that: This Ethiopian eunuch wound up bringing the gospel to Africa where tradition tells us churches began springing up after his return! Again, when racial barriers are broken, miracles and salvations happen!

Today I want us to see that racism is not of God, and when racism is rejected and the racial divide is bridged, the blessings of God are released. So, I want to leave us with some simple, practical steps on how we here at Turning Point can bring healing to a racially torn nation:

1. Establish in your own heart that you want to be a part of the solution.

Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.” Blessing will rest on the head of every believer that becomes a racial healer!

2. Intentionally build a bridge with someone different from you, someone of a different race

I have 2 accountability partners who are also dear friends—one is black, the other is brown. They’ve helped me to understand life from their viewpoint, and it’s helped me be a better pastor and man. So build a relationship with someone different from you!

3. Recalibrate your families to judge people as Martin Luther said, by the content of their character, not the color of their skin.

Ask God to help you with comments made behind closed doors, attitudes, and actions that might be wrongly interpreted. Remember the little ears that are always listening, the eyes that are always watching, and the little brains that are always filing away what they see and hear.

4. Realize that God has called us, the church, to influence the culture.

Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world.” Earth and world are cultural, global words. The church is called to beat back evil, to do as Jesus did:

Bible Verse

Acts 10:38 (NIV)

³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

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Note

The church is to speak, not just the gospel, but the values of the gospel and of the kingdom of God—one of which is unconditional love for all people.