

Copyright © Two Journeys Ministry

Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

www.twojourneys.org

Please use in accordance with the copyright policy found at twojourneys.org

There is No Racism with Christ

Ephesians 6:9

Paul evaluated his preaching to the Corinthians with this amazing assessment:

1 Corinthians 2:3 I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling.

I feel that way this morning. I usually feel a sense of personal delight in preaching the Word of God to you, because you are a people who so often displays an evident delight in the Word... a hunger for it... a thirst to grow in Christ

Yet I feel a sense of weakness right now, because of what I feel led by God to preach on... one of the most divisive topics that confronts our age – racism

Tim Keller, pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian in NYC, in his foreword to John Piper's book on racism called *Bloodlines*, talked about the painful history of COMPLICITY of evangelical churches in systematic racism... churches like FBC Durham were COMPLICIT in sustaining and promoting racist policies and practices. Keller talked about his first pastorate in a small town in the South in the 1970s. The courts had recently ruled that the whites-only public swimming pool, operated by the town with taxpayers' money, had to be integrated. So what did the town do? It shut down the pool completely and opened a PRIVATE swimming pool and club, which did not have to admit racial minorities. Keller, as a young pastor, was often invited to swim there, and he often did, with his family... not really aware of what the pool represented.

Keller said plainly that conservative evangelicals, particularly white ones, are becoming MORE INDIFFERENT to the topic of racism as the years go by. Why? 1) the stubbornness of the human heart, which is **exceedingly reluctant to hear the bad news of what is still wrong with us...** 2) American culture has so evolved that just about the only thing popular media calls a sin is racism and prejudice of any kind... recently including LGBT as well... and they often lay the guilt of racism squarely at the feet of social conservatives... therefore, many social conservatives just simply don't want to hear about racism anymore. They give a LIP SERVICE to it being sin, but they are weary of getting blamed for the sins of past generations. Also, it's the sinful luxury of the dominant group in a society to be free from having to think about race... whereas the minority groups THINK ABOUT IT ALL THE TIME

So, the issue is polarizing, divisive, and painful... that's why I somewhat identify with Paul's self-assessment: WEAKNESS, FEAR, MUCH TREMBLING

BUT I also stand before you today with a supernatural confidence in the Word of God and the plans of God and the power of God to crush racism forever...

Paul continued in 1 Corinthians with this statement:

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, ⁵ so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

I believe that racism is a subset of the overall DARKNESS of sin that has covered the entire human race from the fall of Adam...

The SIN is the darkness... but God had sovereignly shone his LIGHT in the darkness:

Isaiah 9:2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

Jesus Christ is the LIGHT OF THE WORLD:

John 8:12 "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

God's Word is LIGHT:

Psalms 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

Therefore, God's church is LIGHT as well:

Isaiah 60:1-3 "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. ² See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. ³ Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn."

The Obstacles are HUGE... the problems are COMPLEX and seem to be insoluble

But when the darkness is the THICKEST, God's light can shine the brightest. Where the enemies are the mightiest, God's power is displayed all the more gloriously.

I. Recent Events Search Our Souls

A. Summer of 2016... Intense Heat

1. Using Barack Obama's language: A culmination of a series of recent incidents between People of Color and Law Enforcement
 - a. On July 5, Alton Sterling, a 37 year old African-American man was shot several times at point blank range while being pinned down by two white officers in Baton Rouge, LA; the incident and the downloading of the videos led to even-escalating protests, resulting in a July 9th demonstration in which police officers were injured
 - b. On July 6, Philando Castile was fatally shot by Jeronimo Yanez, a St. Anthony, MN, police officer, after being pulled over in St. Paul. Castile's girlfriend, Diamond Reynolds, was with him in

the car; after being asked for his license and registration, Castile told the officer he had a license to carry a weapon and had one in the car; the officer told him not to move; as he was putting his hands up, the officer shot him in the arm four times.

Diamond Reynolds, the girlfriend, livestreamed the immediate aftermath of the shooting; the video showed her interacting with the officer as the mortally wounded Castile lay slumped over, moaning.

- c. Castile died 20 minutes later in a local ER
 - d. Over the next several days, protests began occurring, peaceful but intense; but on July 9-10, violence broke out between protesters and police, resulting in a crowd throwing rocks and bottles, and Molotov cocktails; police used pepper spray and tear gas to disperse the crowd; 21 officers were injured, one seriously
2. Shooting of Police Officers in Dallas (July 7) and Baton Rouge (July 17)
 3. This the recent in a series of high profile events, incidents meeting these criteria

The pattern has been this... some African-American individual (usually a man) is killed by law-enforcement officers... the incident is reported in a variety of ways, but witnesses and later analysts calling into question whether **excessive force** was used; the **officer is evaluated** at some level – perhaps by his superiors, perhaps beyond that by the judicial system, including Grand Juries – and the officer receives in the opinion of many an excessively lenient sentence or no punishment at all

- a. Names have been burned into people's minds: Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, John Crawford III, Michael Brown... places like Ferguson, MO and North Charleston, SC have become the focus of intense national scrutiny
4. April, 2015, Baltimore race riots... incidents involving the injuries of Freddie Gray at the hands of law enforcement officials pushed

the outrage of the African-American community to a boiling point, and demonstrations got violent

5. A controversial group called “Black Lives Matter” organized around one of these incidents and has become increasingly vocal and visible

Borrowing from Thomas Paine’s opening words in his *American Crisis*, “These are the times that try men’s souls.”

B. My Own Anguish and Journey

1. My background

- a. Raised Irish Catholic in eastern Massachusetts, didn’t know what a Baptist was, never mind a southern Baptist... certainly never dreamed as I was entering MIT as an unsaved freshman in 1980 that I would someday be Senior pastor of a Southern Baptist church in the Bible Belt

2. My position

- a. Now I find myself the pastor of a predominantly white urban congregation in the South, a church which (by much anecdotal evidence) was complicit in the institutional racism of the segregated south during the Jim Crow era
- b. I find myself a pastor in the Southern Baptist Convention, which was started in 1845 when slaveholding missionaries demanded the right to take their slaves on the mission field, and the northern baptists refused
- c. The more I have learned details about the struggle for Civil Rights and the terrible injustice and the crimes committed against black people for over a century after the Civil War ended and the 13th and 14th Amendments were passed, honestly, the more I’ve tended to disavow all connection... my REVULSION and HATRED of those crimes and the injustice has kept me from thinking more deeply about what I still could do about racism and social injustice and race relations in the name of the gospel

- d. I have come to realize more and more that I have a position of responsibility for which I will be held accountable on judgment day... I will have to give the Lord an account of many things... and what I did to destroy racism is one of those themes

3. TGC and Mika Edmondson

- a. I am a member of the Gospel Coalition, a group of evangelical leaders that meets once a year for fellowship, prayer, and discussion on key topics facing the church
- b. This past May, Dr. Mike Edmondson spoke to us on the topic of “Is Black Lives Matter the New Civil Rights Movement?”
- c. He did a great job showing the significant differences between BLM and the Civil Rights Movement, especially in that Dr. King was a pastor and the Civil Rights Movement flowed from the church and embraced non-violence in the pattern of Jesus Christ, seeking to actually ennoble both blacks and whites with freedom from racism... Mika also showed that BLM’s embracing of the Gay Rights agenda makes it clearly outside the biblical pattern that the Civil Rights movement sought... as a matter of fact, the dressing of the Gay agenda in the language and garb of the Civil Rights movement has been offensive to many black leaders of the Civil Rights era
- d. Mika finished with a passionate appeal to us as evangelical church leaders... he said BLM grew in the VACUUM of no solid evangelical church movement for solving of race issues... the evangelical church has tended to stay quiet and on the sidelines, and the obvious unbiblical fallacies of BLM (like the Gay agenda, and the socialism, and the violence) is if anything a REBUKE to the true church that we haven’t come up with a powerful voice that counters it and addresses the true issues with love and justice and with the gospel of Jesus Christ
- e. WE CAN DO BETTER... he said passionately... WE HAVE TO DO BETTER!!!
- f. His words burned in my heart

4. LAST WEEK: Eddie White and my trip to Greensboro

- a. The Greensboro Four: four students at NC A & T who courageously invented a whole new pattern of protest against the injustices of the Jim Crow era
 - i) Back then, by law public institutions were segregated... the lying slogan was “separate but equal”... but the black facilities were nowhere near to equal
 - ii) Separate schools, separate motels, separate restrooms, separate water fountains, separate swimming pools, separate places on public transportation—blacks to the back of the bus, etc.
 - iii) John Piper: “How could you communicate more clearly the lie that being black was like a disease?”
 - iv) Woolworth’s in Greensboro (for you younger people, Woolworth’s was that generation’s version of Wal-Mart... a general store)... anyway, the Woolworth’s in Greensboro had a lunch counter where they served hot meals... blacks could order food there, but NOT SIT DOWN... no space at the lunch counter
 - v) Four students at the college decided to make a stand... they were David Richmond, Franklin McCain, Ezell Blair, Jr., and Joseph McNeil
 - vi) On February 1, 1960 at 4:30 pm, they courageously sat down at the “White’s only” lunch counter and ordered cups of coffee... they were obviously denied service, but they refused to leave... they stayed at the counter until the store closed that night
 - vii) The next day, more than twenty black students, recruited from other campus groups, joined in; white customers heckled them while they peacefully studied to keep busy... newspaper reporters and a TV film crew covered the second day, and more and more people got involved
 - viii) Within one week of the initial protest in Greensboro, students in other North Carolina towns started similar

protests... including here in Greensboro... the sit-ins spread to many other states

ix) Meanwhile at the original Woolworth's in Greensboro, the store was losing huge amounts of money... almost \$1.6 million in today's money; store manager Clarence Harris quietly asked three black employees to change out of their work clothes and order a meal at the counter... they were the first blacks to be served at that lunch counter... soon many other stores were desegregated

- b. Eddie White and I toured the Civil Rights Museum and saw deeply moving pictures of the history of the struggle for equality that black people have had to endure... pictures of violence, the Birmingham police turning a water cannon on peaceful protesters, freedom riders busses burning with a firebomb, lynchings, the gradual success of desegregation
 - c. I saw a Coke Machine from that era that was set in the wall of a bus terminal serving white people on one side and black people on the other... and the white price was 5 cents and the black price was 10 cents... so much for separate but equal!
 - d. At one point, I looked over at Eddie, my friend, and he had tears coming down his face; he related the stories of his mother's involvement in these sit-ins, and how much it all meant to him
5. One version of the non-violent protests that came about were "pray-ins" in which black people would visit white churches and attend worship and kneel in prayer and take whatever abuse came their way
 6. Some white churches responded by having deacons make a human chain in front of their church on Sunday morning to prevent these people from attending worship
 7. Within the last few years, a photo has surfaced of white men on the steps of this church confronting a black couple... it seems like they may have been seeking to prevent them from entering

C. What is "Racism"?

1. John Piper defines Racism: **“An explicit or implicit belief or practice that qualitatively values one race over other races”**

D. Why Am I Talking About This NOW?

1. Came to the commands to Masters:

Ephesians 6:9 And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

- a. The word “favoritism” caught my attention and it seems related to the issue of racism
- b. I think this has two senses
 - i) First, Christ equally DELIGHTS in all people as created in the image of God; he doesn’t delight more in white people, and less in black people; he delights in his works as he’s made them

Psalm 104:31 May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works

- ii) Secondly, Christ will equally JUDGE the moral behavior of all people... there’ll be no bribes, no special deals like you are the son or daughter of the judge and he’ll wink and look the other way

Romans 2:9-11 There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; ¹⁰ but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹¹ For God does not show favoritism.

- E. So... We Face the Challenge of Racism with the Weapons of Biblical Truth... and we are confident we will WIN

II. Biblical Doctrine Destroys Racism

Creation... the Fall... Redemption... The Church... Heaven... these bible doctrines have the power to destroy racism forever!!

- A. CREATION: The Whole Human Race Descended from One Man?

Acts 17:26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

1. Paul's powerful assertion in Athens
2. Evolution Refuted... Evolution Leads to Racism
 - a. The idea of the "survival of the fittest" fed humanity's sinful pride
 - b. The Nazis, fed by this evolutionary worldview, looked on the Aryan race as the superior race, and that the genocide of Jews and other "subhuman" races would cleanse the gene pool, resulting in a superior breed of SUPERHUMANS
 - c. This concept is utterly wicked, foreign to the Bible...
3. We are all CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD, equally descended from one man
4. God Delights in the Wide-Ranging Genetic Diversity of the Races

B. FALL: The Whole Human Race Equally Sinned in Adam

1. Every single descendant of Adam SINNED in Adam

Romans 5:12 ... sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned

2. And every single one of us has SINNED in actuality

Romans 3:9-12 What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. ¹⁰ As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹ there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. ¹² All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

3. There is a SOLIDARITY in sin... though we don't all sin the same way, we are united in sin generally, and cannot feel superior to other sinners even if we aren't guilty of the same sin

James 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

Matthew 23:29-32 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. ³⁰ And you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' ³¹ So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. ³² Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers!"

My tendency to DISAVOW my guilt, saying I WOULD NEVER HAVE DONE THOSE THINGS... sounds a lot like that! I am in the same human family as every sinner who ever lived... though I am not guilty of the same sins

Though I have not committed the same sins as a Klansman who lynched a black man, or as a Birmingham bomber who blew up those little girls or as a governor that blocked the court order of desegregation or a racist who delights in racial jokes... though all my life I have hated those kinds of sins... yet in God's sight, morally, I AM NO BETTER THAN HIM... we are all sinners in need of a Savior

Daniel prayed in solidarity:

Daniel 9:5 we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws.

God does give to each person according to what he has done... it is true. But God also calls on us with humility to recognize that the same sin nature that is in us is in them... and our sin nature is no more appealing to God than theirs... and their sins are no more impossible to forgive than ours

C. REDEMPTION: Elect from Every Nation on Earth Were Equally Redeemed by Christ

Revelation 5:9 you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

Romans 3:22-24 *There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

D. CHURCH: The Church All Over the World is One in Christ

Galatians 3:27-28 *all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Colossians 3:11 *Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.*

E. HEAVEN: Heaven Will Consist in Perfectly Delightful Worship from Every Nation?

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. ¹⁰ And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."*

Isaiah's vision of the heavenly Zion is one enriched by treasures of worship brought from all over the earth:

Isaiah 60:5-7 *Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come. ⁶ Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD. ⁷ All Kedar's flocks will be gathered to you, the rams of Nebaioth will serve you; they will be accepted as offerings on my altar, and I will adorn my glorious temple.*

Isaiah 60:11 *Your gates will always stand open, they will never be shut, day or night, so that men may bring you the wealth of the nations--their kings led in triumphal procession.*

These five biblical themes have tremendous POWER to destroy RACISM... we need to meditate on each one... Created in the image of God, descended

all of us from one man; all of us equally sinful; all of us redeemed by faith in the blood of Christ; all of us incorporated into ONE BODY in Christ; all of us going to a heaven that will be perfectly one while amazingly diverse

III. A Journey of Unity

A. John 17: Jesus' Prayer

John 17:22-23 ... that they may be one as we are one: ²³ 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.

B. What It Means: The Unity of the Trinity

1. Individual PERSONS, BUT we will be perfectly ONE with each other as the Father and the Son are... in absolute perfect AGREEMENT about every topic; feeling the same way about everything
2. African, Asian, European, Latino, Slavic, Caucasian, etc.—we will be perfectly one!!

C. Progressive Unification

1. Verse 23: “MAY THEY BE BROUGHT to perfect unity...to let the world know that you sent me!!”
2. The more the church is supernaturally and surprisingly united, the better the gospel will do!!

IV. A Journey of Justice and Love

A. There Remain Serious Social Issues to Address

1. the evangelical church has a BLIND SPOT on social justice

Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Race: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* :

“Recall that in the Jim Crow era, most evangelicals, even in the North, did not think it their duty to oppose segregation; it was

enough to treat blacks they knew personally with courtesy and fairness." [quoted in Piper, 76]

2. Our goal on social justice:

"TO RENDER RACE INCONSEQUENTIAL FOR LIFE OPPORTUNITIES."

3. In other words, race would not matter at all in terms of what educational opportunities you have, or employment opportunities, or housing, or anything that enriches and blesses life

4. That is the social goal:

Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous statement: "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

"TO RENDER RACE INCONSEQUENTIAL FOR LIFE OPPORTUNITIES."

B. Biblical Commitment to Justice

Isaiah 1:17 Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.

Isaiah 58:6 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?"

Proverbs 31:8-9 "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. ⁹ Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."

C. Present Conditions

1. Law Enforcement and the Judicial Process

a. The terrible incidents that have so inflamed many in the black community have been polarizing

- b. Some people deny that there is ANY RACISM AT ALL in any of these cases, and simply say “When the police give you a command, obey it! All of these incidents occurred when people resisted arrest.”
- c. Others say that in this or that case, there was no resistance at all... look at the tape; they shot the black man right away... he never had a chance; they also say the judicial system is still not a safe place for African-Americans
- d. Bottom line... it is VERY DIFFICULT and DANGEROUS to be a police officer, and that terrifying moment when you think someone may have a gun is one of the hardest in your career... BUT ALSO black people have a level of fear of the police force that white people never have to deal with
- e. Many of the African-American people right near our church that we would seek to reach with the gospel earnestly believe that **there is racial injustice** on the part of many of these incidents
- f. AND many of the police officers in the community are more afraid than ever before for their lives; their families... their wives are afraid of them going off to do their jobs, that they’ll never return
- g. We need to seek opportunities to minister the gospel in this very tense issue
- h. We need to see deeper social issues in the black community
 - Homicide is the number one cause of death for black men between 15 and 29 years of age, and has been for decades
 - 94% of all black people who are murdered are murdered by other black people
 - Of the roughly 16,000 homicides in this country each year, more than half are committed by black men. A black man in seven times more likely to commit a murder than a white man, and six times more likely to be murdered

- In the past several decades, the suicide rate among young black men has increased more than 100 percent
- In some cities, black males have a high school dropout rate of more than 50 percent
- Young black men are twice as likely to be unemployed as white, Hispanic, or Asian men
- Although black people make up just 13 percent of the general population, they make up 44 percent of the prison population
- At any given time, as many as one in four of all young black men are in the criminal justice system – in prison, or in jail, on probation, or on parole
- By the time they reach their mid-thirties, six out of ten black high school dropouts have spent time in prison
- About 1/3rd of all the homeless are black men
- In 1965, the year after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, 23.6% of black births in America were to single women; today, 72%

These heartbreaking statistics have a moral and an economic base...
the solutions are NOT EASY AT ALL

D. Two Seemingly Conflicting Poles

1. Two opposite sides... two MAIN COMPETING RACIAL STRATEGIES

- a. **Personal responsibility:** each person needs to take responsibility for his/her own actions and future...
- b. **Structural reform:** the social structures/institutions need to be reformed to make a level playing field for everybody

2. Finding the healthy balance

Henry Louis Gates Jr. Harvard: "The causes of poverty within the Black community are BOTH structural AND behavioral"

“Not to demand that each member of the Black community accept individual responsibility for their behavior – whether that behavior assumes the form of gang violence, ... sexual activity, you name it... is another way of selling out a beleaguered community.”

BUT on the other side: (STRUCTURAL SOLUTIONS)

Elijah Anderson (Yale) “Without a massive program of reconstruction, inner-city residents, especially young black men, will remain mired in hopeless circumstances...”

3. This tends to play out in the political process
 - a. Political conservatives focus on personal responsibility themes... calling on individuals to stop being a victim and rise and make something of your lives
 - b. Political liberals focus on government solutions... powerful interventions to solve social issues... Affirmative Action programs...
4. Government intervention has made a difference... like “Brown vs. Board of Education” making segregation in education illegal
5. BUT sometimes structural intervention makes things WORSE
 - a. Some leading black thinkers are strongly against Affirmative Action programs because they establish a PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT FOR BLACKS that permanently establishes inherent inferiority

Shelby Steele, Senior Fellow at Stanford’s Hoover Institution: “The most dehumanizing and defeating thing that can be done to black Americans is to lower a standard in the name of their race.”

6. Deeper still is the fact that education itself is not always cherished in the black community... the popular street culture makes being educated a display of weakness... accusing studious young black people of “acting white”... this puts pressure on them to stop excelling in school

7. Some have said the “racial achievement gap in public education K-12 is the greatest civil rights issue of our time.”
8. WHAT TO DO???????

Shelby Steele: “Blacks can have no real power without taking responsibility for their own educational and economic development. Whites can have no racial innocence without earning it by eradicating discrimination and helping the disadvantaged to develop.” [Piper, 82]

E. White People Need to Use Positions of Influence to Be Sure that the Playing Field is TRULY LEVEL

1. This means speaking up, advocating, learning about issues. Getting involved
2. But the more we get into this issue, the more complex it seems to become

F. John Piper: Seven Feelings Rise in My Heart

1. First, I feel REGRET for my own sinful contributions to this seemingly intractable problem
2. Second, I feel SORROW over cycles of despair and hopelessness, and over the ruin of so many lives
3. Third, I feel ANGER at the sins I see on every part of the landscape of race relations and race discussions and racial intervention... all sides! None of us is righteous, no, not one! (Romans 3:10)
4. Fourth, I feel FRUSTRATION over untold layers of complexity that make every proposal for improvement seem thanklessly embattled; Nathan Glazer (Harvard sociologist) “factors in infinite regress”
5. Fifth, I feel EMPATHY with the truth and emotion of both sides of the controversy
6. Sixth, I feel a great LONGING to see the gospel of Jesus Christ proclaimed, with the power of the Holy Spirit, into this situation and this controversy

7. Seventh, because of the power of the gospel, I feel HOPE that there are breakthroughs possible that human strategies from either side have not yet achieved

V. Applications

A. Come to Christ

1. This grievous topic should make all of us see the need for the only Savior there is... Jesus Christ
2. There is no freedom from any sin, racism, or otherwise, apart from faith in the blood of Jesus Christ

B. "Search me, O God..." (Psalm 139)

Psalm 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. ²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

1. Racism is SNEAKY... there may be hidden pockets of it within us
2. Ask God to show you where you tend to PREFER the perspective of your group over the other group... ask him to show you where you tend to speak hard words against one group or the other group
3. Ask God to make you DELIGHT in the amoral differences of skin color and hair and ethnic tendencies that God delights in

C. Seek Out Genuine Friendships

1. Perhaps the best thing we can do is change our lifestyles to enable us to make GENUINE FRIENDSHIPS with people different than ourselves
2. Get into genuinely loving and listening conversations with them
3. Let "iron sharpen iron"... when some controversial event happens, ask that person what they think... genuinely listen

D. Pray for an End to Racism

1. Pray that there will come a day in our land when there are absolutely NO barriers or obstacles to earthly blessings that come as a result of race
2. There is a feeling of a BIAS in society... some call it “white privilege”... it is one of the most hotly debated and emotional aspects

I think of it as a bike rider... what it’s like to go UPHILL... a long steady climb... gravity opposing you every moment... that’s when bias works against you; downhill, you barely need to pedal... gravity is pulling you faster and faster; both of those situations are BIASED... we yearn for the LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

E. Be discerning about Black Lives Matter...

1. The slogan should not bother us at all... it is not saying “Only black lives matter,” but “Black lives matter TOO”... like a slogan that says “Children matter”... doesn’t mean that “Adults DON’T matter”
2. BUT the BLM movement is deadly wrong about the homosexual issue... what the bible defines as sin can never be undefined by government or a political group as NOT SIN... all sin, whether racism or homosexuality... is spiritual poison... and we yearn to help people stop drinking it

F. Pray for FBC Durham to be a “Light in a dark place” and a “City on a Hill” in this issue... obviously, evidently, supernaturally united in Christ... pray that we would become a much more multicultural church

G. Don’t Seek “Color-blindness”... but seek the SAME DELIGHT AS GOD in racial diversity