

The Glory of God and Racial Unity

Ephesians 2

There are many perspectives about how the church ought to engage the racial tensions in our country. For some the question, however, is not really, “What should we do?” but rather, “Should we engage this issue at all? Isn’t it a distraction from preaching the gospel – the main thing God has called us to?” As we continue our study on the glory of God by looking at Ephesians 2, we will consider what the Apostle Paul says about this. From Paul’s perspective, engaging this issue is very much part of the gospel. If the church can model true racial unity, it is a great opportunity to glorify God’s name.

Read Ephesians 2:1-22

1. This chapter is all about relationships being made right. In the first 10 verses, Paul describes what God did to restore our relationship with Him and then in the rest of the chapter he describes what God did to establish peace between Jews and Gentiles. What descriptive words does Paul use to describe the Gentile’s situation before this peace was established?
2. How does Paul describe the nature of the relationship between Jews and Gentiles?
3. Paul teaches that the gospel is about a restored relationship with God (vv. 1-10) AND about restored relationships between those who were alienated from each other (vv. 11-22). How does Paul describe what Jesus did to restore the relationship between Jews and Gentiles?
4. In Christ, God did something new. What new entity does Paul say God brought into existence (v. 15)?
5. As you consider what Paul teaches in this passage, why is working for racial reconciliation not a distraction from the gospel, but indeed an expression of it?

6. What does racial reconciliation model for the world about the gospel?
7. How might God be glorified if the lost world around us sees the church living in true racial unity?

Brian said:

What does the truth that Paul is teaching in this passage, a truth we see illustrated in a church like New Life [a racially diverse EFCA church in Aurora, CO], mean for us here in Manhattan? We are not in Aurora, CO. It would not even be possible to have the kind of diversity that New Life has because that isn't Manhattan. Regardless of where we live, here's the principle: We should **seek to become the kind of Christ-followers who embody the fullness of the gospel by working to live in racial unity.**

8. How do you feel about this idea that each of us has work to do to become Christ-followers who embody the fullness of the gospel by working to live in racial unity?

Brian said:

Is there more that God might call me to? Of course, but leaning in, learning, listening and lamenting is a great place to start for me or any believer, who is seeking to become the kind of Christ-follower who embodies the fullness of the gospel by seeking to live in racial unity. It is a great place to start if we want to become the kind of church that embodies all of the gospel – both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of restoration – that we might bring the most glory to God's name.

9. **Leaning in** (i.e. deciding to truly engage the issue), **learning** (our history as a country and as an evangelical church), **listening** (to people of color to understand their perspective and experiences), and **lamenting** (when we see ugly stuff) are all aspects of seeking to grow. Where do you sense you need to start or to continue to grow in this area?

Practicing the Rhythms of Rooted



Prayer: Invite God to speak to you this week about His heart for you and your part in racial reconciliation. Invite him to help you engage this issue in ways that honor Him. Invite him to show you any personal sin in this area. Ask God to do a work at Faith that we would faithfully work for racial unity in ways that most honor and glorify God's name.