

The Abolition of Race
Pastor Sam Richards
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Can anyone exempted from the charge of being racist? Are we all hopelessly and inescapably guilty of racism? And, with all the current emphasis on white racism, has black racism, or Asian racism, for that matter, simply ceased to matter? Has it become culturally and politically passe'? Is there a Christian defense against this charge of racism? In fact, we can affirm scripturally, based on Ephesians 2:13-22, that as Christians we are positively post-racist.

I believe we are! Here's why. Christ abolished race, through the assimilation of all races in Himself (starting with two: the Jews and Gentiles). By this action, the foundations of racism were cancelled once for all. Racism belongs to the fallen age of Adam, it has no place in the Kingdom of God. This may be some of the best news you've heard in months, if not years.

However, it is not enough to know you are fundamentally, truly "post-racist" as a Christian, this is something which you are going to have to convince others of. *They may be quite ignorant of this transformation.* Additionally, Christ is the only path to reconciliation with God and mankind. It is only by assimilation to Him that we become children of God and are liberated from the ancient and divisive alienation that have plagued world history for millennia! Those in our day who seek to divide us from each other, to perpetuate an alienation *removed once and for all* through the cross of Christ through guilt, shaming and ignorant accusation need to get this memo: Christ has cancelled race. Come now into the post-racial unity offered in Him and love one another as the brothers in Christ you have, by union with Him, become. Those who are in Christ are **one new race** with each other and they are, by faith, fully reconciled to God. Thus the cause of alienation, hostility and enmity—which sin-bred racism fosters!—has been entirely removed! And we are free, in Christ, to identify as "post-racists!" The barriers, or walls of systemic racism have been breached, torn asunder and down. Now the sheer beauty of God created diversity can shine forth! The image of God restored in us is not obscured by skin color, or gender (male/female) any more. The indelible trumps the immutable.

When Christ died upon the cross, racism was cancelled! Apparently, cancel culture has a very long legacy. Yes, the guilt of sin was also abolished. And, yes, and the penalty of sin was executed on Him, while the punishment due us was paid in full by Christ's dying in our place. ***It was, and is, and ever shall be our great day of abolition.*** Then when Jesus rose from the dead, death was defeated and the grave was also vanquished . . . and the power and fear of those things was also abolished/cancelled in that hour, on that day. Jesus ended racism by assimilation, by the assimilation of all the races of mankind into himself—as represented by the assimilation of the Jews and the Gentiles into **one new man** in Christ. Once the great light shined, the darkness was terminated. Those who are in Christ are post-racist—racism is one of the *former things* to be left behind. Now being **one new man** is all that matters. Declare it, proclaim it, enact and live it!

He breaks the power of cancelled sin

He sets the prisoner free
 His blood can make the foulest clean
 His blood availed for me. (v. 5 "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing")

The blood of Christ atoned for these very things, and the power of the resurrection accomplished the rest. That's what transpired on the cross in the course of the great exchange: our guilt, sin and transgressions were taken away (being atoned for) and we were entirely justified in God's eyes, for the righteousness of Christ was made our own. All of this, accomplished for us by God, is sealed in us by the workings of the Holy Spirit. However there are two further accomplishments of the cross that bear mentioning: the abolition of race, and the termination of our separation from God and, therefore, *alienation* from one another.

Our former hostility, ours by nature as well as through sin, was cancelled! If race has been abolished on the cross, and it has(!), if Christ did ***create in himself one new man in place of the two***, then the scourge of racism has been ended (nullified) on the cross. *Those who believe*, regardless of race, are one new, created in Christ race, therefore the old distinctions have been abolished. And, whenever, and wherever, racism appears it is: a. a false racism (based on obsolete distinctions!) and b. a repudiation of Christ's work on the cross (both the abolition and the unity in Christ). The first is unsustainable and the second is blasphemous. ***Wherever racism occurs we are to apply the cross***, the finished work of Christ, to it and watch it dissipate! Christians are, by definition, post-racist. And not only that, we are members of a new emergent social order, the kingdom of God; we are the future! We are the fulfillment of the purposes of God, the redemptive, restorative and saving purposes of God. Martin Luther King Jr. may have had a dream, but the Creator of the Universe had the plan! Ultimately, friends, there is no other future. And the abolition of race was inevitable because of what Christ has created in himself: **one new man**.

The first obstacle we face in enacting the kingdom of God is the *ignorance* of mankind. *They do not know that racism has been abolished*. And, probably, they are equally unfamiliar with some of the other abolition's accomplished by Christ I mentioned. We must shed the light on these matters and I hope to equip you to do so. This is vital news in our divided times. It is up to us to unmask those who make their living off sowing division, hatred, fear and racially tainted suspicions. These merchants of hatred are very wicked men; their intolerance, arrogance and callousness is born of greed. They cannibalize Adam's miserable race.

Okay, my main topic is the abolition of race on the cross. Let's walk up to that by considering the more familiar items: the abolition of sin's penalty implicit in forgiveness of sins. Oh, yes, we are familiar with that theme: Christ died that our sins might be forgiven. That's clearer to us than the abolition of race. We get that. Therefore, if our sins are forgiven by faith in Jesus Christ, then the whole matter of guilt is transformed. Before our sins were forgiven, guilt was legitimate and true, but after our sins are forgiven what is the use of guilt? None. Indeed, any guilt we feel for our forgiven sins is patently false guilt. False guilt is a very real thing. And the only way to discern which is which is, again, to apply the cross to it. Did Christ atone for this sin? Yes? Then, it is forgiven. I do not need to be dragging the guilt of it around anymore and guilt does not need to be dragging me down either! If it is forgiven, then I am free of it and loosed

from any sense of guilt over it. Once you master this, it appears very, very basic—only so it is except that we do too often forget! Your reaction may be how could I be so stupid as to forget that? No, not stupid, human. Ever “lost” your keys?

I should illustrate this:

“I am living a life of penance,” P. confessed, “that is why I am here doing what I do today. I hope to make up for my sin.” Then P. proceeded to share his story how as a prodigal son he had rebelled against his less-than-perfect father, hurt him deeply and disappointed God. He related how, in 1998, he came to his senses, or to himself as it were, and decided to seek a meeting with his father to ask his forgiveness, face to face. His father initially rebuffed him. Then P. pleaded, “All I want to do is see you face to face, tell you that I am responsible for my sin and rebellion, and ask your forgiveness. I want us, if it is possible to be reconciled.” Dad relented, “Alright,” he replied gruffly, “I’ll buy you some tickets to come home.” That was Thursday. On Friday, P.’s father, who had history of heart issues, checked into the Cleveland Clinic, suffered a massive heart attack and died. P. learned of his father’s death at the airport. “So, we were never reconciled and that is why I am doing penance twenty-two years later.”

Up until this moment I had been a fly on the wall. For P. was making his confession to Dick Durost as he lay dying. I spoke to P., “It would appear that you are Roman Catholic, for few others take much notice of penance these days. Now I am a Protestant but I think there is something you need to know about our God. So, P., the desire of your heart was to be reconciled to your father and, I take it, you prayed about this matter, right?” “Yes,” he replied. “So I have great news for you . . . your prayers expressing the desire of your heart went, imperfect though they might have been, to the Father through the Holy Spirit, who edited and amended your prayers so that the Father heard a perfect prayer for reconciliation with your father on earth. And it is my belief that when that prayer arrived at the throne of mercy, it was answered. You and your father are reconciled even if you didn’t get to meet face to face on this earth. Furthermore, the sins you committed in alienating yourself from God, yourself and your father, those sins are forgiven you. If you keep the faith, you and your father will meet again, face to face and you will know your peace is true and lasting.” P. wept, gathered himself to move on about his work, and said, “Thank you.” He left that bedside with a healed heart, if not an entirely new one! I had the pleasure of doing the Lord’s work with Dick one last time. Together we helped to abolish guilt in P.’s aching, wounded heart. Praise God for his mercies.

P.’s problem was not that he wasn’t reconciled, his problem is that he was ignorant of God and therefore ignorant of the mercy of God which answered the desire of his heart in the instant of his prayer. His false guilt had to go—and it did.

Hopefully that is enough for me to proceed on to the abolition of race. Here is what we know: there are ***only two races of men***. The Jewish race . . . and everyone else. But wait you say, what about skin color? You know, Native American, Hispanic, White, African, Oriental, Arabic, Aboriginal, and Melanesian—and all the visible shades in-between? Right. Obsolete and irrelevant terminology. ***According to Scripture*** there is only the Jews, chosen, favored and elect people of God . . . and everyone else. The melatonin levels of “everyone else” do not factor into this basic division! The significant

distinction is spiritual—not skin color. Now this is according to scripture, may I remind you: *every other definition of race originates in custom and culture—entirely made up by humans.*

So, we have the Jews, a racial group as defined by descent, genes and genealogy, on the one hand—and everyone else with their own genetic paraphernalia, on the other. That makes up the **two**, found in the **created in himself a new man in the place of the two**. (v. 15) Our text informs us: **For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility . . .** we are setting aside, for the moment, **by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances**, in order to focus on the **wall of hostility**. (vv.14-15) We are going to take this expression, **wall of hostility**, as a metaphor for our condition of *alienation*. Indeed, it is the divisive nature of racism, its capacity to alienate us, *first from God* (who created us **all out of one man**, Adam—no one is inferior, or sub-human!) and *secondly*, from one another, inducing fear, and alienation between the mix of diverse races represented by “everyone else.” If racism didn’t alienate us, it wouldn’t be the scourge that it has historically been. Apart from the alienation, race might simply be a cause for wonder, an amazingly beautiful thing. *But it is inseparable from alienation, an alienation that originated in our spiritual estrangement from God—yes, in sin, brothers and sisters!* It is not enough to know that racism is a sin, we have to know more than that! Racism originated in sin and it is sin that must be dealt with decisively so that the alienation, that so many promote, can be abolished indeed. Racism is atheistical—it is an *ignorant* rejection of divine goodness, a repudiation of the work of the cross. But, all of that was **abolished** on the cross and what remains is for us to apply God's remedy to the disease.

Now it occurs to us, that in order to deal with racism, we must start with sin as it impacts Jews and everyone else—which is precisely what Christ does on the cross! The reconciliation of the races begins with reconciliation to God!

Jesus atones for human sins—abolishes it, wiping out fear of punishment and guilt in the process, and at the same time he abolishes racism, cut it off at its very root. That is the work of the cross. It took more than an Emancipation Proclamation to end racism! What it took was a creative act, it took Christ making us both (all) one new race in him. It took Christ ending our separation from God, and our division from one another. It took Christ to bring us home to the Father, drawing us all near as His people, abolishing the alienation which had spread through the world, replacing enmity with friendship and wrath with redeeming love . . . eradicating the works of the devil, dispersing the darkness and undoing the effects of sin. By union with him Christ cancelled racism once for all!

What distinguished the Jews from every other race was divine favor—an act of sovereign free will, or divine discretion(!) and there followed, **the law of commandments expressed in ordinances**. This, not their numbers, choiceness, or any innate superiority, is what made them ethnically distinctive—and distinguishable! And, while I cannot prove this, it is this *favoritism* by God which may account for the near universal contempt to the Jews reflected in European history. The Jews were by divine will brought nigh to God, given revelation and light, covenants, promises and a

commonwealth—while the rest of the world remained in darkness, mired in the pooling swirls of sin! “Everyone else” was left, *temporarily*, at a greater distance, unable to draw near—they were non-participants in the sacrifices of Aaron and his priestly successors! They had no share in the Promised Land. And were physically barred from Temple worship with barrier walls! Such vast advantages/blessings provoke jealousy—misprized though it be— which is quite human, and we can sympathize **but** jealousy remains *none-the-less reprehensible*. Further, it appears to me, that the “Jewish racial distinctiveness” was catalyst to much of what we call “anti-semitism,” which is treated as synonymous with anti-Jewishness in our day despite the Jews actually being only one branch of the Semitic peoples—other descendants of Abraham through Ishmael, and Abraham’s later sons (all the Arab peoples) all technically in the same bracket. They are cousins, they are among **the other nations**! However, Israel is the one great nation which fulfilled the promises to God to Abraham. And, we should remember, they can take credit for none of it!

So what to do about being a post-racist Christian? Talk it up. Enter into discussions about being freed from racist thinking and racism itself. Explain what it means, what it looks like and what the biblical foundation for it is (the benefit of Christ redeeming death on the cross). Encourage others to see it for what it is (obsolete) and invite them to pray about this change of worldview because “All souls Matter.” All souls matter because race doesn’t.

Amen