

Romans 1:16-17  
 Becoming A Gracious People  
 RO1703

January 15, 2017 AM  
 Romans

### The Gospel and Race

INTRODUCTION: As we come to Romans 1:16-17 we touch upon the two verses that are the *heart* of Paul's Gospel ...

1. They are equivalent to the Apostle John's central truth at the heart of his Gospel:

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)*

2. For Paul, that same truth is expressed in these famous words:

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." (Romans 1:16-17)*

3. This *Gospel*, of which Paul is extremely proud, is supported by these four truths:

- a) *Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. (1 Cor. 15:1-8)*

- b) *Christ died for our sins ...*

(1) *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, (1 Peter 3:18)*

(2) Christ was crucified to atone for our sins.

- c) *Christ was buried ...*

(1) *When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. (Matt. 27:57-60)*

(2) Jesus was truly dead.

- d) *Christ was raised from the dead ...*

(1) *And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. (1 Cor. 15:17-22)*

(2) Jesus is now very much alive!

e) *Christ has appeared to the Apostles*

(1) *On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. (John 20:19-22)*

(2) Eyewitnesses to the resurrected Christ

(3) *This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. (Acts 2:32)*

(4) *and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. (Acts 3:15)*

(5) *And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. (Acts 4:33)*

(6) *But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." (Acts 5:29-32)*

4. Jesus Christ then sent the Apostles, Paul included, out into the Roman Empire to preach the "Good News": *Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again!*

a) *and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. (Luke 24:46-48)*

b) *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8)*

5. Paul was numbered among these Apostolic witnesses to the resurrected and living Christ –

a) a constant part of his *personal testimony* of salvation.

b) His preaching of the resurrection and the offer of salvation to the Gentiles caused him great trouble ...

- c) *“When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance and saw him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’ (Acts 22:17-18)*
- d) *Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial. (Acts 23:6)*
- e) *The following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome.” (Acts 23:11)*
- f) *Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead? (Acts 26:8)*
- g) *To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles. (Acts 26:22-23)*

6. Paul now writes to Rome, and he informs them of this wonderful truth:

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:16-17)*

- a) *The power of God for salvation*
- b) *The power of God over race and prejudice*

*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3:28)*

- c) *The power of God “to the Jew first and also to the Greek”*

7. Our task this morning is simple: To discover what this text means and to discern how it applies to us.

#### I. WHAT DOES THE GOSPEL MEAN FOR US? (Romans 1:16-17)

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:16-17)*

1. Paul states that the Gospel (*evangelion* = good news) is *“the power of God for salvation.”*
2. There are **Five Central Truths** of Christianity encased in these two rich verses ...
3. **First:** The Gospel of God is the *power of God* ...
  - a) literally: *dunamis* (hence our words: dynamite; dynamic)
  - b) the divine ability of God mediated through someone or something.
  - c) e.g. *“You shall receive power (dunamis) when the Holy Spirit comes upon you...” (Acts 1:8)*
  - d) The *Word of God* (Bible) and the *Word of the Gospel* (Good News) are instruments of God’s power to save.

- (1) *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)*
  - (2) *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Heb. 4:12)*
  - (3) *Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:19-21)*
  - (4) *And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. (Acts 20:32)*
- e) Power of God = Grace of God. So “the word of His grace” is the “power of God for salvation.”
- f) **One cannot be saved unless he (she) embraces the Word of God and, in particular, the message of salvation in Jesus.**
- (1) *Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:36-41)*
  - (2) **Note:** “those who received his word”

4. **Second:** The Gospel is the power of God for salvation.

- a) Greek: *sōterion* (rescue, deliverance, preservation, saving power)
  - b) **Newman** and **Nida**: “The good news is God’s tool by which he can save all who believe.” (Handbook; p. 19)
  - c) What is it we are being saved, rescued, delivered from? Answer: **Sin** and **Death**.
- (1) *The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Gen. 2:15-17)*
  - (2) *Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die. The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not*

*suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. (Ezk.18:4, 20)*

(3) *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)*

(4) *But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. (James 1:14-15)*

(5) *The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. (1 Cor. 15:56)*

d) The Bible speaks of salvation in **3 Tenses**: “*I have been saved, I am being saved, I will be saved.*”

e) **Donald Grey Barnhouse** explains this salvation in three tenses (*Romans, I:171*)

*True salvation is in all three of these tenses. In the past, the believer has been saved from the penalty of sin; in the present, he is being saved from the power of sin; and in the future, he shall be saved from the very presence of sin.*

f) In Jesus we have *already been* rescued from the **penalty** of sin: condemnation to eternal death in hell.

(1) death = separation from God. That’s what hell is.

(2) *This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:14b-15)*

*But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.” (Rev. 21:8)*

(3) Jesus saves us from this **penalty** of sin.

*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1)*

(4) When? In the past when He died for our sins.

g) In the Holy Spirit we are being saved from the **power** of sin – in this present life.

(1) Through the *sanctification* process

(2) *For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. (Romans 6:14)*

(3) *He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Col. 1:13-14)*

h) In the future, God the Father will free me from the very **presence** of sin ... in heaven!

(1) *And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” (Rev. 21:5)*

(2) *Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, (Rev. 21:9-10)*

(3) *But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Rev. 21:27)*

(4) *No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. (Rev. 22:3)*

(5) Men made new for a New World!

i) The Gospel of God is the great *instrument* of our rescue from death, deliverance from wrath, freedom from sin!

j) But ... *not for everyone!*

5. **Third:** The Gospel is God's power of salvation *for all who believe*. ("to everyone who believes")

a) Faith in Jesus Christ is the **link-pin** to God's salvation

(1) *And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." (Acts 16:31)*

(2) *because, 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. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:9-13, 17)*

b) The word Paul uses here is *pisteuo/pistis*

(1) used 3 times

(2) verb/participle "*those who believe*" (v. 16)

(3) noun: "*faith*" (twice in v. 17)

c) In Latin the word would be *credo*

(1) the root of our word "*creed*"

(2) what we *believe* in and *confess* is what the *creed* states! (*Nicene Creed*)

*We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God,  
begotten of his Father before all worlds,  
God of God, Light of Light,  
very God of very God,  
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father;  
by whom all things were made;*

*who for us and for our salvation  
came down from heaven,  
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary,  
and was made man;  
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered and was buried;  
and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures,  
and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father;  
and he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead;  
whose kingdom shall have no end.*

(3) Again, listen to **Donald Grey Barnhouse** (Romans, I:176-177)

*The statement is sometimes made that we can have faith without creed. That is really arrant nonsense. Such a thought arises, perhaps, out of the great ignorance of languages that is the mark of our time. The English word “creed” is straight from the Latin and is the verb for “believe.” If we say the Apostle’s Creed we begin, “I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and earth.” If we say the same thing in its older Latin form we begin “Credo ...” The noun, our beliefs, we took from the Latin and speak, therefore, of a creed. In the light of this simple linguistic fact, you see how nonsensical it is for anyone to say that he wants to eliminate a creed. He might as well say, “I want to have faith without faith, or believe with out beliefs.” It cannot be done. Even your unbelief is a creed.*

- d) We can **only** be saved by God’s grace, *through* our faith, and in Jesus Christ as Savior alone, and for the Glory of God.
    - (1) *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:8-10)*
    - (2) *by grace, through faith, in Christ Jesus, for God’s glory.*
  - e) This is true of New Testament believers and Old Testament saints, for Paul quotes the OT Prophet *Habakkuk* as his “proof text”
    - (1) *“Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith. (Hab. 2:4)*
    - (2) *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:17)*
6. **Fourth**, this is Paul’s *doctrinal point*: in the Gospel the righteousness of God has been revealed.
- a) *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:17)*
  - b) “in it” – i.e., in the Gospel

- c) **Please Remember this:** *Righteousness* is Paul's Theme in Romans; and the idea that ties all the parts of this letter together
- (1) *righteousness* is used 35 times in Romans; more than in any other book in the Bible except Isaiah (52 times) and The Psalms (69 times)
  - (2) 7 sections of Romans: aspects of God's righteousness
- d) A Righteousness of God that places all mankind under judgement do to *sin* = *unrighteousness* ...
- For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. (Rom. 1:18)*
- e) A Righteousness manifested in Jesus Christ for un-righteous people ...
- the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Rom. 3:22-26)*
- f) Christ's Righteousness credited/ imputed to us once we believe/ put our faith in Him ...
- For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness." But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, (Romans 4:3, 22-24)*
- g) A Righteousness that animates our souls as the Holy Spirit comes to live in us ...
- But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. (Romans 8:10-11)*
- h) A Righteousness that becomes the hallmark of our lives as Christians who live in the Kingdom of God ...
- For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17)*
- i) **Salvation in Jesus makes us righteous before God and develops righteousness in us by the Holy Spirit.**

**7. Fifth:** The Gospel comes to us in a deliberate manner and sequence: *to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

- a) *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Romans 1:16)*
- b) *Jews:* The children of Abraham and the OT covenant of grace.



- c) *Greeks*: meaning “all non-Jews,” Gentiles; the rest of mankind.
- d) *I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. (Romans 1:14)*
- e) *Jews ... Greeks ... Barbarians*: The three divisions of mankind in Greco-Roman culture.
- f) **Thomas R. Schreiner**: *Romans: ECNT*; p. 62

*Here and in the rest of Romans the term seems to designate all non-Jews. Paul wants to emphasize the universal reach of the gospel, that it extends to both Jews and Gentiles. Indeed, the universality of the gospel is a theme that resounds throughout Romans. Indeed, the reference to both Jews and Gentiles foreshadowed the detailed exposition of the place of Jews and Gentiles in God’s plan in the rest of Romans.*

- g) The need for the salvation of immoral Barbarians (Romans 1:18-32). The need for the salvation of the Greek moralists (Rom. 2:1-16). The need for the salvation of the Jewish legalists (Rom. 2:17-20).
- h) *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)*
- i) The word of salvation given first to the Jews (OT and Gospels) and then to the Gentile world (Acts-Epistles)
- j) *And they sang a new song, saying,  
“Worthy are you to take the scroll  
and to open its seals,  
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God  
from every tribe and language and people and nation,  
and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,  
and they shall reign on the earth.” (Rev. 5:9-10)*

8. Five Truths with great significance for you and me ...

## II. WHAT DOES THE GOSPEL REQUIRE OF US? (Romans 1:16-17)

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:16-17)*

1. The full answer to this question can only be arrived at by reading all of the New Testament! **A full-orbed life with God!**
2. But Paul touches on one aspect in Romans 1:16 ...
  - a) *To the Jew first and also to the Greek (Gentile)*
  - b) **The Gospel strikes at the very heart of racism, prejudice and any unjust discrimination based on ethnicity.**
  - c) *Things that are unrighteous!*
3. Remember: Paul was writing to the Church in Rome, part Gentile, part Jewish, and the tensions that arose in theology, ethics and culture.
  - a) a Gentile majority, a Jewish minority

- b) a Jewish Church that had become “Roman”
- c) Paul tell them: *“Forget all that silliness! The Gospel has saved Jews and Romans, and made you one in Christ with a shared hope of resurrection, a shared identity in Jesus and a shared message you must share with the world!”*

*First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. (Romans 1:8)*

- 4. This message strikes home to us: *“To the Blackman first, but also the white folks.”*
- 5. **Racial Prejudice has no place in the Church because it is antithetical to both the message of the Gospel and the great aim of the Gospel –**

- a) The **message** of the Gospel ...

- (1) *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)*
- (2) *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Romans 1:16)*

- b) The **great aim** of the Gospel ...

- (1) *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Gal. 3:28-29)*
- (2) *And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,*  
*“Great and amazing are your deeds,*  
*O Lord God the Almighty!*  
*Just and true are your ways,*  
*O King of the nations!*  
*Who will not fear, O Lord,*  
*and glorify your name?*  
*For you alone are holy.*  
*All nations will come*  
*and worship you,*  
*for your righteous acts have been revealed.” (Rev. 15:3-4)*

- 6. The Gospel **is the power of God** to overcome racism.
- 7. **Illustration:** A British political leader, named **Benjamin Disraeli** (1804-1881), who twice was elected Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, was born a Jew but became an Anglican Christian at the age of 12. He was subsequently made the Earl of Beaconsfield by Queen Victoria in 1876. As he entered Parliament one day, a snobby member of the House of Lords remarked how unworthy a Jew was of such peerage. Disraeli stopped and said to him ...
  - a) *“I am a Jew. And when your ancestors were living on acorns in the German forest my ancestors were giving to the world law, literature, religion, and our very Saviour.”*
  - b) In fact, Lord Disraeli was a “double believer” – a Jew first and also a Christian!

8. I am not certain what causes racism and prejudice. But I know these sins are common to mankind ...
- a) *No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. (1 Cor. 10:13)*
  - b) Jews vs. Gentile; Irish vs. English; Black vs. White; Rich vs. Poor; Republican vs. Democrat; Tutsi vs. Hutu (Rwanda); Ohio State vs. Michigan; Duke vs. Carolina; Protestant vs. Catholic; Gay vs. Straight; *and the list goes on!*
9. The essence of such prejudice, discrimination and racism is rooted in silly snobbery. **Tim Keller** spoke about this back in 2001 when he was preaching an Advent Service about Christ and Christmas.
- a) *Do you remember what an incredible snob you were when you were a teenager? Teenagers generally want nothing to do with people who don't dress right and look cool. Do you think you ever got over that? You're not really over that. You just found more socially acceptable ways to express it. You see, teenagers let that aspect of human nature out and don't realize how stupid they look, and after a while they get rid of it. But really they are just papering over it. There are all kinds of people you look down on and want nothing to do with – and you know it. But in Christ you have this amazing resource to decimate that – to remove it and take it away.*
  - b) Please don't be offended by Dr. Keller's use of the word "*stupid*" Think of the word "silly"
  - c) And know this: *We are all prejudiced. No one is exempt from this sin.*
  - d) **I am.** There are certain groups of people I don't like simply because (a) they don't like me, (b) they are in a group antagonistic to me, (c) or they look down on me so I look down on them – even if (when) they are **Christians!**
10. The Injustice of Prejudice and the Unrighteousness of Racism is **overcome** by the *power of the Gospel*. For the good news of what Jesus did for us strikes at the **Four Roots of Racism** –
- a) **First:** The Gospel changes our *identity*. We are no longer defined by divisive labels but now by one word: *Christian*.
    - (1) *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3:28)*
    - (2) There are not *black* Christians, or *white* believers, or *female* saints, or *male* disciples, or even *rich or poor* sons of God ...
    - (3) ... just one group with one identity: "*In Christ*"
    - (4) No longer am I primarily Mike Ross, white, male, Ohio State, Republican, Catholic turned Protestant, Gentile ...
    - (5) I am Mike Ross the *Christian*: crucified with Christ.
 

*I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal. 2:20)*
  - b) **Second:** The Gospel offsets the way we *fear* people who are different from us.

- (1) We come to see them, in Christ, as people with the same root problem: *unrighteousness and sin.*
  - (2) And we see them as either redeemed in Jesus or redeemable in Christ.
  - (3) God's love for me, in Christ, has cast out that fear of man.
  - (4) *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother. (1 John 4:18-21)*
  - (5) I don't need to fear people who aren't like me; what I need to fear is that I am not like Christ!
- c) **Third:** The Gospel overcomes the *enmity* we have for others whom I think have wronged us.
- (1) I am able to overcome my prejudice because the Gospel enables me to *forgive*: to forgive all the things those Wolverines have said to me over the years!
  - (2) ... and the Gospel empowers me to *ask for forgiveness*: all the times I said unkind things to Michigan fans!
  - (3) *Gospel forgiveness breaks the power of enmity.*  
*Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; (Heb. 12:14-15)*
  - (4) You come to see that Jesus loves them all – *even Michigan and Ohio State obnoxious fans!*
- d) **Fourth:** The Gospel puts to death the root of *pride* that makes us feel *superior* to others.
- e) How? The Gospel makes us all *debtors* to God in Christ and the *heirs* of the unsearchable riches of Christ – poor in sin; rich in Jesus!
- f) Adopted children of the King of Heaven ...
- The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Romans 8:16-17)*
- g) Tell me the truth: Do we really think we are better than others because ...
- (1) *We went to Duke and they went to Clemson?*
  - (2) *We drive a Mercedes Benz and they drive a Chevy?*
  - (3) *Our skin is beige and there is a dark shade of humanity?*
  - (4) *Our ancestors were Royalty and their ancestors were slaves?*
  - (5) *We left our wife for another woman but they left their wife for another man?*

(6) *We vote Republican (Trump!) and they vote Democratic (Hillary!)*

(7) *Their parents baptized them Catholic and our parents baptized us Presbyterian?*

- h) Here's the ugly truth: We all stand before God as needy sinners; we have no status with God except **condemned!**
- i) But here's the lovely news: In Jesus Christ we all gain the status of *Child of God* because in Jesus we're all **redeemed.**
- j) This is the **status of the Gospel**; the great leveler of mankind. (Righteousness of Christ)

*For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10:12-13)*

- k) Even for *Jews and Gentiles* –

*As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. (Rom. 11:28-30)*

11. Pure ... simple ... righteous: *The Gospel is the end of racism and prejudice!*

Conclusion: Today is **Dr. Martin Luther King** Sunday, when we seek for racial reconciliation in Jesus Christ.

1. On March 31, 1968, while preaching at the National Cathedral, in Washington D.C., Dr. M. L. King delivered a message ...

- a) *"Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution"*

- b) In that message he said this ....

*Through our scientific and technological genius, we have made of this world a neighborhood and yet we have not had the ethical commitment to make it a brotherhood. But somehow, and in some way, we have got to do this. We must all learn to live together as brothers or we will all perish together as fools. We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. For some strange reason I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the way God's universe is made; this is the way it is structured.*

2. How true. We are one in humanity and sin, and we are one in Jesus Christ and salvation. This is the Gospel!
3. One man who knew this truth, lived this truth and preached this Gospel truth was **Rev. Bishop Daniel A. Payne.**
  - a) born in Charleston, S.C. on Feb. 24, 1811, to free black parents, he grew up in the ME Church
  - b) It was illegal to educate blacks or even teach them to read, but individuals ignored that unrighteous law, and tutored young Daniel.
  - c) He applied to be a seminarian (probationer) in the ME Church and was converted at age 18

- d) He committed himself to three grand causes: the salvation of souls, the education of fellow Blacks, and the abolition of slavery.
- e) On April 1, 1835 the S. C. General Assembly reacted ...

*The South Carolina General Assembly passed Act No. 2639, An Act to Amend the Law Relating to Slaves and Free Persons of Color. That Act prohibited any person from teaching or causing any slave to read or write and sanctioned free white transgressors with a fine up to \$100 and six months imprisonment, free persons of color up to fifty lashes and fifty dollars, and slaves fifty lashes. As if addressing Daniel Payne directly, the Act specified that if “any free person of color or slave shall keep any school or other place of instruction for teaching any slave or free person of color to read or write, such free person of color or slave shall be liable to the same fine, imprisonment, and corporal punishment as are by this Act imposed and afflicted upon free persons of color and slaves for teaching slaves to read or write.”*

- f) His school shut down, 24-year-old Payne enrolled in the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg, PA (Ironically 28 years later, Lutheran Theological Seminary would be the site of the first shots of the Battle of Gettysburg, during the Civil War.)
- g) He was ordained, labored in parish work and in education: “*Apostle of Education for the Negro*”
- h) He became the AME Bishop of the New England Conference.
- i) He was one of the founders of *Wilberforce College (University)*, in Wilberforce, Ohio; An African American College and Center for Abolition.
- j) He was an Evangelical, Reformed and Biblical Preacher.
- k) He went on to champion education for Blacks, women, and an educated African American Clergy ... Rooted in the Bible.
- l) **Thabiti Anyabwile** wrote this about Bishop Payne

*It could be said that Bishop Payne saw the divine workman as one who fits his own mind for the task of fixing other minds on Christ and His work. He envisioned a Christianity with educating power – instructing and enlightening in areas religious, moral, intellectual, civil, and political. His example and his teachings, challenged as he was by every disadvantage of slaveholding society and racial prejudice, leave for us who have no excuse an immense responsibility for improving our own minds and the life and minds of those the Lord entrusts to our pastoral care.*

- 4. Your Elders, as a Session, have committed themselves and our church to **Racial Reconciliation**, and have established a *committee to Study Racial Reconciliation at Christ Covenant Church*, led by Pastor **Mike Miller**.

- a) They brought forth and the session unanimously approved the *Bishop Daniel A. Payne Scholarship* ...
- b) ... to be awarded to an African American attending RTS Charlotte, in preparation for Gospel Ministry ...

- c) ... just the *first step* in welcoming minorities into our congregation, leadership and ministry.
- d) We desire to be *gospel people* in a true *gospel church*.
- e) We believe this, with all our hearts ...

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Romans 1:16)*

- f) We are **not** ashamed of this, but proud of how Jesus destroys prejudice.

5. We are asking you to join us in three Gospel ventures:

- a) *Racial Reconciliation in Jesus Christ.*
- b) *Gospel-driven Diversity in our Church.*
- c) *Support for the Bishop Daniel A. Payne Scholarship.*

6. *For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. (Romans 10:12)*