Devaluing Our Neighbors: Racism

Mark 1:1-3; Acts 17:26

Introduction:

1. “and He made from one *man* every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,” (Acts 17:26)
   1. What a wonderful scripture, and so comforting
   2. My mother told me one time about the segregated water fountains and schools in West Texas when she was a child.
   3. To this day there is a neighborhood known as Little Mexico.
   4. I was 10-11 years old before I had a white neighbor and I thought that was the most interesting thing ever!
   5. I embraced my difference.
      1. I had mom make me a dozen or two burritos for school lunch and I would sell them at school, or trade the for peanut butter and jelly sandwiches!
      2. I really did not see the difference of race or color because I really did not care.
   6. But many of the adults around me did care. And that’s how I eventually learned to see the ethnic and racial differences.
2. Mark 1:1-3
   1. Christ was the cure for all sins in the 1st century and is the cure for sins in the 21st century.
   2. All social ills and injustices.
3. With Acts 17 and Mark 1 in our minds let us consider:
   1. God
   2. Racism
   3. Us
   4. Our neighbors
4. God is the Creator of all People (Acts 17:24-26)
   1. “Race” was used mainly as a geographical and political term
   2. Darwin’s theory redefined the term to think of higher and lower races, black, white and red races.
   3. God places us all on the same plane-the human race
   4. What do we all have in common?
      1. Descendants of the same man-Adam (Acts 17:26; Gen 2)
      2. Descendants of the same woman-Eve
      3. Made from the same material-dirt
      4. Given the same life force-breath of life
      5. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23).
      6. Christ came and died for all, the human race, the descendants of Adam. (Philippians 2:6-8; 1 Cor. 15:45).
   5. The Great Commission commands us to preach to all nations and to make disciples of all people, not respecting origin, tongue or color, because the gospel is no respecter of persons and neither is God! (Matthew 28:19-20)
      1. In the eyes of God every soul is of equal value, equal worth and is in need of a Savior.
      2. There is no distinction of origin (Rom. 10:12).
      3. “There is power in the Gospel to save everyone! No one is better than anyone else. The Gospel makes us respect everyone the same and that there be no divisions.” – Marshal Keeble
5. What is the problem with racism?
   1. It rests in the heart of man.
      1. It is a learned behavior.
         1. Children learn it from their parents.
         2. Sometimes from their surroundings.
      2. It has nothing to do with a hymn, flag, country, Facebook or Twitter.
   2. It is wrong because we were made in the image of God. (Gen. 1:26; Gen. 9:6)
   3. It is wrong because it goes against what the blood of Christ has already accomplished. (Galatians 3:28).
   4. There is no love and there is no truth when one says awful, nasty and hurtful things that are racists.
      1. Mixing races at church @ Spearsville Road (They should have their own church)
      2. I’m not prejudiced, really.  That’s just the way I was brought up.  I don’t mean anything by it.
      3. I’m not prejudiced, really.   I just don’t want them moving next door.
      4. I’m not prejudiced, really.  I just think they could thrive better if they had their own church.
      5. I’m not prejudiced, really.  I don’t mean anything by the jokes I tell.  They’re just jokes.
      6. I’m not prejudiced, really.  There’s nothing wrong with those words.  They’re just too sensitive.
      7. I’m not prejudiced, really.  I’m just not comfortable and don’t feel safe around a group of them.
      8. I’m not prejudiced, really.  I just think people ought to know their place and stick with their own kind.
      9. I’m not prejudiced, really.  After all, the Bible’s against the mixing of the races, right?
      10. It’s not a racist word. Look it up in an old dictionary. It means a hard-working person.
6. What about you, me, us?
   1. No one would ever deny that racism is wrong.
   2. But we could all get caught up in racism.
      1. Whether it be after a racially motivated shooting.
      2. Or, a racially motivated riot or demonstration.
   3. Our world is challenging, it is evolving, it is full of hatred and fomenting racial maliciousness more and more. So, how should we respond? (List from Benjamin Lee)
      1. Examine your heart: Acts 10:34
         1. Are you a racist?
         2. Jesus has destroyed walls, don’t rebuild them. Make sure you are not the problem, if you are, then repent.
      2. Be a pioneer: When racial problems arise, don’t help divide, be a Barnabas and bring people together (Acts 9:26-27).
      3. Don’t judge too quickly. People are too quick to throw the word “racist.” Think before you speak, post or Tweet. (1 Cor. 13:7)
      4. Hold your brother accountable (Galatians 2:11)
      5. Be quick to forgive (Galatians 2:11) - This is a must!
      6. Don’t be a sell-out (Ephesians 2:16-17). Don’t sell out your faith in Jesus or your fellowship with brethren because of your family, your race, or your political views.
      7. Pray for the racists (1 Timothy 2:1-4).
      8. Don’t hate and leave vengeance for the Lord. (Romans 12:17-21)
7. Our neighbors
   1. Matthew 22:37-40 Greatest Commandment
      1. Love God your entire being
      2. Love your neighbor as yourself
      3. On these two commandments hinges/swings the door to heaven!
      4. Love of God, by necessity entails the pursuit the welfare of others, regardless of race, class, or economic condition!
      5. (GOD PLACES A HIGH VALUE ON OUR NEIGHBORS!)
   2. The Good Samaritan, in response to the questions-Wo is my neighbor? (Luke 10:25-29; Luke 10:36-37)
      1. At times, we might help our neighbors and feel like we have fulfilled the Royal Law, but then ignored the destitute of our community.
      2. A lawyer asked Jesus a padded question, “who is my neighbor?”
         1. Priest, Levite and Samaritan (least expected of the lot).
         2. Jesus purposely used a mongrel, mixed race to prove a point. Who proved to be a good neighbor? Go and do the same!
   3. God places a high value on all people, regulates how we should treat our fellow man by calling them our neighbor.
      1. Do not devalue our neighbor with racism, hatred, bigotry.
      2. Value our neighbors with the love of God!

Conclusion:

1. When it comes to racism the Word of God is clear:
   * + - 1. God has always hated the concept of mistreating his children on the basis of their race.
         2. If Christ was the solution in the 1st century, then He most certainly is the solution in the 21st century! (Acts 17:26; Mark 1:1-3)