

Biblical Wokeness, Part 3

The Doctrine of the Church

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Bible Text: Ephesians 2:17-19

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All right, yeah, I'm ready. That's fine. That's no problem. We're rolling, so all right. Well, good evening. It's good to see you all. It's good to be here. Yes, yes ma'am, absolutely.

All right, well, we're going to come back into our discussion of biblical wokeness. This is "Biblical Wokeness, Part 3." We'll have one more after this probably and then we'll finish up this text in Ephesians 2, but tonight we're going to be looking at verses 17 through 19. Ephesians 2:17 through 19 under this idea of biblical wokeness. Now where we've been as we've gone through this text together has been that wokeness or awareness, that's really what that word means, everybody says that you need to be aware but we're missing, most people miss what they really need to be aware of and what they need to be aware of is their standing before God, and that really what we're driving at is that we need to understand that apart from the gospel, apart from Christ, we're lost and people are lost and that's really the wokeness that we need to pay attention to. So tonight as we come to this third installment, we're going to be talking about this, that the doctrine of the church, that is, God's call to people requires that all people regardless of their ethnicity identify in Christ and not other distinctions. You know, I really think if we would just set all this other stuff aside, you know, our culture, our heritage, where I come from, where I think I come from, you know, the injustices that I think somebody has perpetrated against me, if we would set all of that aside in the church, then I think things would be a lot better. Let us identify in Christ first and then I think that Christian charity will, and in the Spirit obviously, will cause these other differences really to take care of themselves. But I'm concerned that people are still highlighting the differences among persons, you know, my heritage, my ethnicity, whatever, and we're missing the gospel and that's really what's happening. So the truth is as we'll see tonight in this text, that our identity is in Christ and there really is no other distinction that we need to be concerned about other than our identity in Christ.

So Ephesians 2, starting at verse 17 reading down to verse 19 it says,

17 And he came [that is, Christ] came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then [as a result of this]

you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

Father, we thank you again for the day that you have given to us and we continue to praise you for your grace and your mercy, and we just ask, Father, that tonight as we look upon this text, that we would truly see that as a Christian, as a believer, one who has been changed, that our only identity is Christ. And Father, help us to really understand what it means to be a Christian, to be a little Christ and help us, Father, not only to put all other differences aside but help us, Father, to be salt and light in the world, to insist that there be no other distinctions made other than the work that Christ has done in each of us. And Lord, may we be vocal and lovingly but openly about the reality of the necessity of the gospel. We thank you, Father, that you've given this truth to us. We pray that you would help us to live by it in all that we do, and that we would honor you as we share the things that you've given to us for the world around us. We love you, Father. We praise you and we thank you and continue to ask these things in your name, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit we ask. Amen.

So other distinctions. Well, in response to this idea of our identity in Christ or not, we're going to look at several things. The first is this, that biblical awareness, what I'm calling true wokeness, is only realized through the preaching of Christ. True wokeness, if you want to be woke, it is only going to occur through the preaching of Christ.

I think about some of the very well-known apologists in evangelical life for this CRT/I movement, people like Thabiti Anyabwile and Jemar Tisby, those two in particular. Those two men came out of a Reformed perspective. Thabiti, I know at one time considered himself to be a Reformed Baptist. Now I'm not so sure about Jemar, whether he was Presbyterian or Reformed Baptist, but they both came out of Reformed perspectives, Reformed understanding of the Scriptures and Reformed belief, and so I'm amazed that both of these guys have really kind of, if you want to be honest, abandoned the preaching of Christ. They've gone to other aspects of distinction, ethnic distinctions, cultural distinctions, social distinctions, and have, I think, in a sense, kind of set aside those distinctions as not really being changed by the gospel. Now I'm sure that if they were here responding to what I've just said, that they would say, "Oh, no, no, no, no. We believe in the preaching of the gospel." But the reality, as we'll see in this text, that when the gospel is preached, then those other distinctions are done away with. As we'll see in a moment, as Christ is preached, as the gospel is preached and the Spirit does his work in our hearts, then we are brought, we are adopted into the family of God and where there is no distinction, there is no Jew or Greek. The earthly distinctions become secondary to the distinction of in Christ or out of Christ.

So I find it hard to reconcile the preaching of Christ at the same time espousing a CRT/I perspective. I don't see how those fit together. Here's why I'm saying this. Verse 17 says, Paul says, "And he," Christ, "came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near." Now we understand, we would understand that this terminology that Paul is giving to us here is still a reference to the Jews and the Greeks. At the beginning of chapter 2, Paul establishes this contrast. He's talking about those who were

far off as being the Gentiles, right? "You were once alienated from the commonwealth of Israel. You were apart from the blessings. You didn't have the law, you didn't have the patriarchs. You were far off as opposed to the Jews who were near in that they had Moses, they had no law, they had all the blessings, and yet the Jews didn't understand the gospel because even though they were near, they didn't accept the gospel as being by grace through the Lord Jesus Christ, the grace of the gospel." So he begins chapter 2 with that contrast and he's about to finish up chapter 2 with that same contrast, those who are far away, that would be the Gentiles, and those who were near, okay? But the faraway and the near is not necessarily, I think, Paul's emphasis here in verse 17 as much as it is what was done to or for those who were far off, and what was done to or for those who were near. At the end of verse 17 we have the preaching of peace, Christ came and preached peace to those who were far off and Paul emphasizes this again, and peace to those who were near.

So that's Paul's point, that there is peace in the preaching of the gospel. I don't know why so many pastors today are afraid to preach the gospel. I don't know. I have no idea. There are a number of pastors that I interact with locally at different times during the week and I noticed that I'm not getting nearly as many responses in my texts from some of those pastors because I send them the same texts that I send y'all, so you know what I've been sending out and, you know, in this last week when I was talking about that we need not waste time and only say those things that are beneficial and that we need to be good stewards of our time, one of my other Reformed brothers here in town actually responded to that text with a big "Amen!" Nobody else sent me anything. Now maybe they didn't get it, I don't know but I think probably what it was is that they didn't necessarily like the text.

What's my point? My point is that nobody seems to be, or very few people seem to be preaching the gospel anymore, and I know what is preached in a lot of pulpits. I hear it. I hear the backlash from it. I hear people complaining about it. You know, these moral axioms that make people feel good or encourage people to live in a more moral way or an ethical way, be a good person, be a good employee, how to honor Christ in your job, so on and so forth, and there's very little gospel preaching and there's very little preaching, there's a lot of pep talks but not a lot of preaching. This text tells us that if we desire to really have peace, if we desire to see two sides that are at enmity against one another reconciled, that it is through the preaching of the gospel. And again, there has never been two groups that were more irreconcilable than the Jews and the Greeks in Paul's day. There was a hatred between those two groups of people for each other. I don't think that, you know, evangelicalism proper who is fighting against CRT/I and vice versa, there is hostility between those two groups but they don't necessarily hate each other. So if the hostility between the Jews and the Greeks was so bad that they hated each other and that could be remedied by the preaching of the gospel, then why can't this breach that has occurred between evangelicalism proper and CRT/I, the breach that has occurred there, why can't the gospel fix that? Well, it can. It can. The preaching of Christ, the preaching of the gospel specifically brings peace between people who were far off and people who were near, people who were at hostility with one another.

Luke 15:4 through 7 put it this way, "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost," this is the Lord Jesus speaking and he goes out into the country leaving the 99, "until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so," Jesus said, "I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." Does that mean the 99 persons are insignificant to the kingdom of God? No, he doesn't mean that at all. What Jesus is saying, however, that the lost, the lost sheep, the one that went astray, the one that he went to go find, when that sheep is found, when that person is brought to repentance, when the preaching of the gospel takes hold in that person's heart and they change, there is great rejoicing. Why is there great rejoicing? Because the kingdom of God is about the salvation of souls, not the fixing of social problems. If we are preaching the gospel and souls are being saved, as we'll see as we go along, I think the social problems take care of themselves. You know, as I've said in many places before, if you really want to cure alcoholism and drug addiction, preach the gospel. The Holy Spirit fixes those. You know, there's a process you have to walk through but the gospel fixes addictions and bondage to addictions. If you want to heal hostilities and breaches between groups of people, preach the gospel. And we're right there right now in this divided world that we live in. Preach the gospel. As Paul said to Timothy be ready in season, out of season, rebuke, correct, train and so on so that we are applying the gospel in such a way that it binds people together, right?

So the preaching, number 2 tonight, the preaching of Christ doesn't just highlight the division, it heals the breach in our fallen nature, okay? So we're talking about true wokeness, true biblical awareness being found only in the preaching of Christ and that preaching of Christ as Christ is proclaimed and the gospel is preached, it doesn't just highlight the division that exists between persons, it heals the breach of our fallen nature. It heals the source of that division.

Verse 18, Ephesians 2:18, "For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father." All right, so a couple of things going on here. Through him, through Christ. Through Christ we have access to the Father in the Spirit of Christ. It is the Spirit of Christ that makes the death of the Lord Jesus and the atonement applicable in the lives of individuals. So we've got the purchase of salvation through the death of Christ, we've got the application of that salvation that was purchased for us by the Lord Jesus, we've got the application applied to the hearts of the individual by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and those two things, the purchase price and the application of it by the Spirit bring us into a reconciled position with the Father. It not only reconciles but we'll see here shortly adoption as well, okay?

I'm trying to remember. There were so many messages in our series on the Trinity and I'm pretty sure that we hit this passage in Ephesians 2:18 because we have the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, all three here in the same verse, but the point is that the gospel doesn't just say, "Oh, you're rotten sinners and you're at enmity with God," the gospel

tells us that but then gives us the means by which we can be reconciled to a holy God and then reconciled one with another. Isn't it interesting that the two greatest commandments are love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your might, and the second one, love your neighbor as yourself. It is not just sheerly or purely theological in that love God and it doesn't matter how you live. No, if you love God and are called by him, then your life changes and you begin to love those who are around you. So this whole idea of being divided within the church along social lines or heritage lines, ethnicity lines, runs contrary to the clearest teachings of Scripture and I think you really have to do some theological gymnastics to try to make the text say something other than the unity of Christ, okay?

In Romans 5:1 through 11, we find this idea of healing the breach of our fallen nature. Paul says in verse 1, "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person--though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die-- but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation." Okay, so there's probably about three or four messages in that text all by itself but the point is that we have been justified by our faith. When we were enemies of God, it didn't occur when we were on friendly speaking terms with God, God did this when we were enemies of his and he did it through the blood of Christ, and now that that transaction has occurred in our life, we have peace with God, all right? We have been justified by faith and we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

So he goes through this discussion of sometimes you'll die for a good person, maybe you'd die for a righteous person but the Lord Jesus Christ died for wicked people. It was while we were enemies that he died and so the point is that the preaching of the gospel as we find in Romans 5:1 through 11 shows us the problem, that our sin is a problem, but then it heals the breach that has occurred, the breach between us and God in which we were at enmity with God. Christ has mended that breach, he's healed that division, and because we are now found in God, as we'll see in a moment, that we are bound together with others who have had that breach healed as well, all right? So it would be as strange for me to say I love Christ but then really hate you guys. That just doesn't make any sense. Because I love Christ, I now love you. Why do I love you? Well, because you're in Christ too and I can't hate, you know, I can't hate, I guess I could hate my wife but I don't. You know, it would be hard to hate your wife or hate your children because they're of your own flesh, they're your own family, and so it's hard to hate fellow believers because

they are in the family too. Does that make sense? How does that happen? Because the preaching of the gospel highlights the division but then shows us how that division is healed. All right, does that make sense?

And we find this in some other places. I was so moved by the cross-references this morning, I went ahead and included several others here that I will just mention in passing. Romans 8:15, "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'" And so we're not slaves in the gospel, right? We're not slaves in the kingdom of God. We don't do the things that God tells us to do because we're obligated to or we have to, or God is making us do that. No, we have been adopted into the family of God. We cry, "Abba, Father!" We look to God as a father and so our motivation for doing the things that we do as Christians is not obligation, it's love. So we love one another not out of obligation, we love one another because Christ has done his work in us and we want to honor him and we do so by loving one another, right?

1 Corinthians 12:13, "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and all were made to drink of one Spirit." So we're talking about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we're talking about the Spirit of Christ regenerating us and redeeming us, and Paul says because we have been redeemed by the Spirit, it doesn't matter your ethnicity, it doesn't matter your heritage, it doesn't matter where you come from or where you think you come from, it's where you are now because you're in Christ, right?

1 Corinthians 8:6 is another one, "yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist." All right, so there is only one way to enter into a right relationship with God, it's through the gospel, and if we come in through the gospel, then there is one Father, one Christ as we've already seen, one Spirit that binds us all together. Right, we have a common identity in the Triune God.

Galatians 4:6, "And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" So we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of Christ and we have God as our father, and if I have God as my father and you have God as your father, then we have the same father, right?

Then finally and there are many others but these are just the ones I mention tonight, James 3:9 which I thought was a very interesting verse. James 3:9, "With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God." I don't remember that one. Maybe I got the wrong one but I know what he's saying. He's talking about your mouth, right, and you don't get fresh water from a saltwater spring or saltwater from a freshwater spring, and so he saying, you know, your mouth is like a spring, you can't say that you love God and then hate others. That's basically what he's saying and that's the point is that if we say we love God, then the mandate, the biblical mandate is that we love all people and especially the brothers, okay?

So the idea here is that the preaching of Christ actually heals the breach of our fallen nature which brings me to the last thought this evening, a little quicker than what we normally go tonight, but the third thought is this, that once the breach is healed, the separation between people is remedied because we are adopted into God's family as beloved children, okay?

So true biblical awareness, true wokeness, is only realized or seen, understood, in the preaching of the gospel. That preaching doesn't just highlight our division like wokeness, earthly wokeness does. Earthly wokeness accentuates division, biblical wokeness accentuates unity, okay? It doesn't just highlight division, it actually heals. Earthly wokeness doesn't heal, earthly wokeness just leaves you right where you are divided. Biblical wokeness or biblical awareness shows you who you are and shows you how to heal that breach through Christ, and once that breach is healed, once we have been brought into fellowship with Christ, the separation between people is remedied because we're all adopted into God's family, okay? And so I just don't understand, again, I really don't see how you can call yourself a Christian or evangelical and then, like Jemar Tisby and Thabiti Anybwire, just begin to say but there's divisions within the church and there's a hierarchy in the church, and white folks owe black folks reparations in the church, and that all these structures that we see of unity and love and no difference among ethnicities, they would say is a white church or that's a white gospel, that's not the true gospel. I don't understand how they can do such gymnastics with the text to highlight and maintain division and separation between people who regardless of their ethnicity have been adopted into the family of God, right?

In verse 19, Ephesians 2:19, Paul says, "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." So in case we didn't understand what he meant, let me clarify it. Because we have access through one Spirit to the Father, because Christ came and preached peace to those who were far off and those who were near, the result of that preaching, the result of the work of the Holy Spirit is that in Christ we are no longer strangers. We're no longer strangers to God. Let me go right back up here to the beginning of chapter 2 if you want to join me there real quick, you can. Ephesians 2. Okay, so here are the things that Paul is saying is no longer a reality in your life in Christ, in the gospel: being saved, having been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. I'm starting in chapter 2, verse 1, you are no longer dead in trespasses and sins. Your sins have been forgiven. Your trespasses have been atoned for by the blood of Christ. You are no longer walking according to the course of the world. You're no longer following the course of the world. You're living in this world but you're not of this world. You're no longer following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. You're no longer to be counted among those who are disobedient to the gospel, okay? Because you're not a stranger, you are no longer one who is carried along by the passions of his flesh, this is verse 3, Ephesians 2:3. You are not given to fits of anger. You are not given to hatred. You're not given to divisions among people who are not like you or people who don't see things the way you see things. You no longer live according to your flesh. You no longer are carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and you're no longer by nature a child of wrath like the lost in the world. You're not there anymore because God was rich in

mercy, because of his great love, and while we were dead in our trespasses, he made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. That's what he means when he says you're no longer a stranger, you're no longer an alien. These things are no longer true about you. You are not apart from God and lost in the world whether you are a Gentile or a Jew. You're now a Christian and those earthly distinctions, those ethnic distinctions are still there, I mean, I'm still a Gentile, some people are still Jews, I'm a male, some people will still be female, ladies will be female, men will be men, some will be free, some will be a slave. Those distinctions don't change in certain respects but they're not what we look for. That's not how we account for people. That's not the distinctions that make a difference. The distinctions that make a difference are either in Christ or out of Christ, you're either a stranger to Christ and an alien to Christ or you're not. It's just plain as that.

So because we are no longer strangers and aliens back in verse 19, Paul says you are fellow citizens with the saints. So we have a citizenship in Christ. We are kingdom citizens. Now we may not necessarily catch the full import of that but that's kind of a legal standing. We have protections afforded to us by the king that we serve, right? If we have sworn fidelity, fealty to that king, he has sworn to protect us. He has sworn to provide for us. In the case of the Lord Jesus Christ, he has sworn to intercede for us as a prophet would. The Holy Spirit is interceding for us with groanings too deep for words. So there are provisions and protections and promises that the monarch, the Lord Jesus, has made because we are kingdom citizens, right? But as I say so many times when we do the Lord's Supper around here, we're not just just kingdom citizens, we are actually children of God.

We have been adopted into the family of God and Paul reiterates this at the end of verse 19, we are members of the household of God. Now you notice he didn't say servants in the household of God, right? Did y'all catch that? He didn't say servants, he said members, all right? I'll just do something real quick. I didn't do this earlier, I should have but I can do it right here. I'm just curious what this word "member" means. Well, it says and just of the household of God. Yeah. One who belongs to a particular household or extended family; member of a family or a relative. So what we've got going on, you've got your study Bible there, you're kind of cheating. I've got my whole...

[unintelligible]

Oh, okay.

[unintelligible]

Well, but after that, fellow citizen...

[unintelligible]

God's household. But we are a member of the family. That's what it's striving at. We are sons and daughters of the living God.

[unintelligible]

Yeah, that's right. That's right. We're citizens but we're more than citizens, we're actually family. Again, I'm highlighting this idea that if we're family, that there shouldn't be any division or the divisions that exist in the earthly level are secondary or subsidiary to our unity in Christ, right? Now look, we're all different. You've got things you like, I've got things I like. You've got things you don't like, I've got things I don't like. Sometimes what you like, I don't, and what I don't, you do. Okay, that just happens, but that doesn't change that we're all children adopted into the family of God, right? That is the distinction that really needs to be made, okay? And again, in all of this CRT/I stuff that's going on, I would expect that division to exist in the world because that's just what lost people do, but this division that has come into the church has no place. All right, we are not to really be looking at one another by the earthly distinctions, we are to be looking at one another by the heavenly or the spiritual distinctions which is either we are children of God or we're not.

In 1 John 3:1, we find these words which I'll close with these. John says, "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is." Talking about the Lord Jesus Christ. "And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure."

So I want to just point out a couple of things from this 1 John passage. The first one is this, is that the kind of love that we're talking about, the kind of change that we're talking about where we are adopted into the family of God and we are saved by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a visible change, right? Listen to what John says at the very beginning of chapter 3, verse 1, "See, see what kind of love God has given to us." How do I see the kind of love that God has given to us? Well, because I see what Christ has done. Okay, I got that. But then that love that Christ has poured out in me then changes me to view others the way Christ viewed them, and to love others the way Christ loved them. That is a tangible demonstrable love that I can't do in and of myself, right? If we remember that Romans passage, Romans 5, in my lost condition I didn't care about any of that. I didn't want to be around goody two shoes people. I wanted to be around hellion friends because they were a lot more fun. You know, I didn't have love for others, I just wanted what I wanted and if I could get it out of you, I'd get it out of you, and if it burned you up or used you up, I didn't care because I didn't care about you, I just cared about me in my lost condition, right? Does that make sense? But now in Christ there is a demonstrable love by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit in that I'm no longer living that way, I'm no longer looking at other people that way, I'm no longer letting division exist to serve my own purposes. Then I would argue in this whole social justice CRT/I stuff, that the division is only serving those who are promulgating that division, not serving the ones who are divided but serving the one who is preaching that message. In Christ, that's not me. I am looking out for your good. I'm interested in what's best for y'all even if it costs me

something. That's the kind of love that God has given us, that we should be called children of God.

We love the Father and we love each other because all of us are loving God and that's binding us together and John says so we are, we're God's children and the reason why the world doesn't understand that, the reason why somebody who is not following what I'm saying in terms of the biblical expressions of this, they may disagree with me because they don't know God. Now I'm not saying that everybody that disagrees with me is lost. I'm not saying that, you know, but I am saying that you can't reconcile social justice and the Scriptures, you just can't, and when people get upset that we are bringing the thought process and the discussion in line with the Scriptures and they are getting upset because they can't bring their discussion in line with the Scriptures or they can't do it without really doing some gymnastics, then the problem is that they are not aligning themselves with the Scriptures. So in that sense, they don't know God. They are not submitting themselves to the authority of God in the Scriptures, right?

Now a lot of church these days is based on experience and my experience might tell me that the social justice stuff is good but that's my experience and we just saw this past Sunday that God doesn't want his people to live by experience, he wants his people to live by his word, right? So we can throw the experience part of that out to a certain degree. Yeah, I understand experiences and I think we ought to have sympathy with people who have had some bad experiences, okay, but it doesn't make their voice more valid than, in this case, God's voice. Just because I come from a disadvantaged segment of the society, just because I might have gender bias against me, just because I might have race bias or ethnicity bias against me, just because I might in the pain that I'm feeling in the world trying to medicate that by some aberrant behavior doesn't make my voice more authoritative than the Scriptures, all right? The whole critical race theory/intersectionality stuff is the more oppressed boxes you can claim you can check off, the more valid your voice is. Well, none of that makes you more valid than the Scriptures. None of it, and so people who don't know God don't know that, what I'm saying according to verse 1.

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared, I mean, we're not glorified yet, we're still falling, we still make mistakes, but what we will be, we know what we will be like in Christ when he appears because we will be like him, right? So there is a sense in which there is a forward leaning component of this. Will there be strife in society? Will there be disagreements within the church? Will we have these problems within the church? Yeah, I think we will according to 1 Corinthians 11 so that we will know who is and who isn't, and it will only take care of itself when the Lord returns, right? But in the meantime, I think we should insist upon remedying these divisions through the word of God and insisting that if we are adopted children of God, that we can't be dividing one against the other within the church. There's too much of that in the world already and the church doesn't need it. And those, I would just say this with all due respect, those who are promoting division within the church are preaching another gospel. They need to repent of that preaching of another gospel and if they choose not to repent of that preaching of another gospel, then they are lost. I don't care how good a

person they are, they are lost and that's what the biblical record tells us. That's not a white man's gospel, black man's gospel, pink, purple, polkadotted man's gospel, that's God's gospel and if you want to disagree with him, you need to take it up with him, not me, all right?

So that's it in a nutshell. It's getting, I hope, pretty simple and I hope we're clearing up the fog that all of this division that we're experience is man-made and the remedy is Christ, preaching the gospel, preaching Christ and the change that comes along with that.

So, all right? Okay, a little bit of a shorter time tonight. Thoughts or questions before we button up and go and get ice cream? I'm not rushing to go and get ice cream, I just got done early. It happens. Yeah.

[unintelligible]

[For me, when God saved me, he started working on race deal and if somebody would have said back then what has been said today, that there's only one race, it would have made it a whole lot easier for me to understand. But he helped me make it through that through different things and I really had, I'm not going to say I really had a problem with it, mixed marriages, not on the standard of Louisiana people. Coming from Wyoming, we grew up thinking that we were supposed to hate Indians and so when I came down here, I really didn't have a problem because I didn't know any Indians, but society I guess, encouraged me to make blacks, but I think, I know God helped me to get over that, to see the sin in it. Every other division God has helped me with it but every other division is sin, like homosexuality, that's sin but he dealt with me on hating people or I'm not going to say I hated them...]

But being prejudiced against them.

[Yeah, just thinking, just having ugly thoughts or bad thoughts or mean thoughts or just not trying to understand. He's really worked on me and gave me a concern for them and I guess you could say love for them because you've got... to be concerned for somebody, there's got to be some other kind of feeling in that. So like I say, the rest of the divisions were, had sin develop in it.]

And I think for a Christian, for believers, that's really an area that we need to be careful, we need to be mindful of and watch out for because I think it is really easy for us to say, "Well, homosexuality is a sin, the Bible says it's a sin, they are sinners and so they are lost sinners," and so we really discount the value of that person, we call it sin but it's really not a hatred of sin as much as it is a hatred toward homosexuality. Or another one that I have to be very mindful of, sloth and laziness. I mean, that just flies all over me. Look, I'm one of these guys that works six days a week. I mean, I work. I don't mind working. The Lord has put me in a position in terms of work in our business that I like. I like working and so I look at people who are lazy and entitled, you know, they think the world owes them something, and I have to be very careful and not automatically assign a bunch of negative qualities to that person that is really what I would say is the direct

result of laziness, like drug addiction, promiscuity, all kinds of moral indecencies, poor education, you know, very grotesque and profane language. I mean, just go down a list of stuff that I would attribute to laziness that in the analysis, those things are generally the result of laziness but that doesn't mean that every person that I think is lazy does those things, right? So prejudice creeps in in this area of sloth and laziness and entitlement where it's easy for me to begin to say, "Well, you're like this and you're like this and you're like this and you're like this because all people are lazy are like that. All people who are lazy do this. All people who are lazy expect that." Well, that's prejudice. Those are prejudicial statements based not on skin color or ethnicity but laziness, sloth.

So we have to be careful with that. You know, can we reveal truth to people that the reason why perhaps you can't keep a job is because of educational deficiencies? Yeah, I think we can say that but if we're going to be true to what we saw tonight, we can't just show the division, we have to show them how that division is healed and I would argue that even in that area of why people can't keep jobs being educational deficiencies are even remedied through the preaching of the gospel because the Spirit comes in and gives them a new heart, gives them a new mind, gives them a new person. There is an understanding that I have to care for myself. I have a responsibility, obligation to care for myself and those that depend upon me. The best way to do that is to learn something and keep a good job.

So you know, that's how that works, but, you know, I had commented, goodness, several months back, maybe even a year or so back on a message board one day somebody was talking about the racism in the south, and I said, "Look, I've lived in the south all my life. I was born and raised in the south. I lived in different parts of the south. But I am a Southerner, I have been a Southerner for over, well, going on almost 55 years now, and the kind of racism that you're describing and ascribing to the south, I've seen some people be that way, there's a minority of people everywhere but," I said, "as a general rule, I don't see that in the south and I've lived here all my life." Now they retorted back that I was just blind to it and I couldn't see it, that my privilege had blinded me to it, and I'm like, "Well, please explain that to me, how I can see, you know, white people and black people working together and one doesn't have ownership of the other, one is not elevated over the other, they are both, I mean, I've seen laborers working together, I've seen skilled tradesmen working together, I've seen upper management working together regardless of ethnicity, so how is it that I'm blinded by white privilege when I see people of different ethnicities and not just white and black, Hispanic, Asian, I mean, people from all over working together to accomplish a common goal, how is it that my white privilege has blinded me to seeing people work together because we need people to work and they have a skill and they do it? Explain that to me." And there was no response. I mean, you can't explain that because it's not white privilege. I wasn't looking at Southern culture through white privilege, I'm looking at Southern culture from what I've seen and what I've experienced, the good and the bad. Now look, there are some racist people in the world absolutely but they don't represent the majority, I think, of people within Southern culture. But at the same time, we have to be careful for other forms of prejudice and prejudicial thought processes that aren't necessarily based on ethnicity but they are based upon biblical mandate in terms of homosexuality, transgendered, cross-dresser, that kind

of stuff, and then things that are kind of cultural which is entitlement, laziness, you know, that kind of stuff. You know, we have to be careful because we can be just as divisive and prejudicial in some of those areas as if we were being prejudicial against ethnicity or race. Does that make sense? But the gospel fixes all that. Christ fixes all that.

[Christ fixes that.

Amen.

[It might take a while but he fixes it.]

Well, we didn't get into our problems overnight and we're not going to get our problems resolved overnight.

[It's amazing in the woke movement that only really racism exists, it's the white male against everybody else. But there's racism on every level. You work around workers, you know, people from Honduras don't like people from El Salvador, El Salvador don't like people from Guatemala. You know, there's some real division there. And then, like, if you look at the country of China, they're very racist towards blacks and whites, and it's amazing how the woke movement sees this one definition of racism but they don't ever put... to all the other races in the world.]

The greatest here recently, I mean, I'll just say within the last probably, I don't know, three or four years especially, the most acute expressions of racism that I personally have witnessed have been black folks against me. I mean, I've had, I've run into black folks in town...