

“Racism, Riots, and Reconciliation”  
Romans 3:10-18  
(Preached at Trinity, June 21, 2020)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. I have been asked why our church has not made a statement regarding our current social unrest, racial tensions, and the recent displays of racial injustice? In our current environment, to say nothing is to be declared a racist. Todd Graves with Raising Canes Chicken found this out when he was warned, “Silence is violence.” On the other hand, so say anything is to risk having your words twisted and being declared a racist, Drew Brees found this out. I'm fearful to say anything. This is a difficult day and tensions are high. A single word can be used to condemn. In our current “cancel culture” reputations are quickly ruined. So why even say anything?
2. As a church we have allowed our actions to speak for us. We have been a bi-racial church for over 20 years. We have tried to reflect the transforming grace of the Gospel that has removed human lines of division:  
In the Gospel we know all have sinned and have need of a Savior who has invited all to come. There is only one way of salvation for all men, regardless of race.  
In Christ we are now united as one body. Racial prejudices must be arrested and put away and replaced with the perfect bond of love and peace.  
**Galatians 3:28 NAU** - "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."  
**Ephesians 4:3-6 NAU** - "being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> *There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all."*
3. There is often pressure put upon me as a pastor to share my personal views and opinions. The question, “What do you think?” is often pressed upon pastors. I've had people call me the night before an election and ask who I am voting for. I understand that as a spiritual leader there is an expectation that I provide spiritual leadership and guidance.
4. But it is important that I provide answers from God's Word, not merely my personal views or opinions.  
We have one source of absolute truth. We have one source that describes for us the cause of the problems of our day and one source that provides the answers.  
They may not be the answers we like, but they are the truth, none the less.  
This one source of truth is the Word of God.  
Jesus said, “Thy Word is Truth” (John 17:17).
5. Our generation can no longer recognize truth. We are surrounded by lies. Our politicians lie to us, scientists lie to us, medical professionals lie to us, social activists lie to us, the media lies to us. Our president has coined the term, “fake news.”

6. Truth is very fluid in our generation. This is why I'm going to avoid simply giving my opinion, although I realize no one speaks in a vacuum. All of us are the products of our culture. But I hope to give you some Biblical insight regarding our current crisis. I title this morning's Sermon, "Racism, Riots, and Reconciliation."

I'm going to set it before you this morning under three headings.

- I. The Source of the Problem
- II. The Symptoms of the Problem
- III. the Solution to the Problem

I. The Source of the Problem

- A. Right away I'm going to lose 99.9 percent of most in our culture.
  - 1. This is why I'm preaching to my congregation this morning. I'm preaching to those who are likely to hear and understand because we are interested in truth.
  - 2. Everyone has an opinion regarding who's to blame in our present social crisis.
    - For some, it's the police and the many examples of injustice – defund the police and the problem goes away.
    - For others, it is the racism that has kept African Americans from sharing in the liberties and opportunities other Americans have enjoyed. Level the playing field and the problem goes away.
- B. I want us to understand the true source of the problem. The Bible reveals to us the ultimate source of the problem – It is sin.
  - 1. No one in our secular society wants to admit this. We don't like to talk about sin. We don't want to accept guilt. It's OK to talk about sin in the context of the other person, but no one wants to consider any fault of his own. And we want to be able to make the ultimate determination of guilt.
  - 2. For example, we gazed upon the injustice levied upon George Floyd as he was slowly murdered under the knee of a police officer – we watched it and were horrified. There is rightly a universal cry for justice.
  - 3. But no one wants to talk about the injustice of burning down and looting the businesses of others, of allowing lawless mobs to run havoc and attack police officers. One African American businessman said he watched his life's savings go up in smoke. Where is the justice in this?
    - a. Instead of charges being levied against the lawless rioters and looters, charges are levied against the police for trying to stop them. Everything has been turned upside down.
    - b. Their solution is do away with law and order – to abolish the police. God brought a charge against Israel for such thinking: **Isaiah 5:20 NAU** - "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!"
- C. There is a universal problem with humanity – **Romans 3:10-18**
  - a. The ultimate problem is not economic, it is not educational, it is not environmental, it is not social.
  - b. The Bible states it clearly – it is sin.
  - c. Paul is quoting from the Psalms – "as it is written" - it is universal

## II. The Symptoms of the Problem – **Romans 3:10-18**

- A. We are given a summary of the human condition
1. There is none righteous – no one lives acceptably before God. No one is faultless. This is a humbling truth. Human beings are inclined to say, “I’m right and you’re wrong.” God says, “You’re all wrong.”
  2. No one understands or seeks after God. By nature, we hate God. We flee from His righteousness. All have turned aside.
  3. From our lips spew all manner of corruption. Our words reveal the perversion of our hearts. We lie and deceive by nature. Our lips spew the venom of our wicked hearts – hate consumes us.
  4. **Verse 15** - Their feet are swift to shed blood. We are murderous by nature. History is a display of death and destruction.
    - a. Remove the restraint and give the opportunity and we kill. We’ve seen this in the riots that followed the death of George Floyd. Remove the restraints and we kill. And we continually kick against the restraints. Remove the police and murders will rise.
    - b. Over 85 million died in WWII – about 3% of the world’s population. Hitler exterminated some 6 million Jews. He did it because he was able, and he enabled others to follow his perversion. The world had to rise up and put an end to his mayhem.
    - c. We hear “Black Lives Matter” and they surely do. All of human life is valuable—all created in the image of God. But over 1000 black babies are murdered daily through abortion. It is our modern holocaust. Remove the restraint and we kill. The Supreme Court allows people to kill and they kill.
  5. **Verse 16** – “Destruction and misery are in their paths” – given an opportunity to riot, we will riot. We destroy and create misery. Remove the restraints and this is what we do.
  6. **Verse 17** – “The path of peace they have not known” – Never has humanity known extended peace. There has always been conflict, hatred, racism, prejudice. Wars have characterized humanity.
  7. **Verse 18** describes the ultimate cause of it all. Behind it all is the complete lack of the fear of God. Without the fear of God human beings will increase in evil.
- B. This is the problem of humanity. It is sin! This is the Biblical truth.
1. The ultimate cause of racism is sin. Sin leads to selfishness and self-love. It leads to prideful self-importance and the dismissing of the importance of others.
  2. The ultimate cause of racism is sin, which fills the heart with hatred. In the presence of racism whites hate blacks and blacks hate whites. In the presence of sin hatred corrupts the hearts of all. This is why we need the Bible to instruct us. Sin is universal. Hate is universal.  
**Titus 3:3 NAU** - "For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another."

C. Not only does humanity not fear God – they openly and passionately deny Him. **Romans 1:18-22 NAU** - "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, <sup>19</sup> because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse."

**Romans 1:21-22 NAU** – "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. <sup>22</sup> Professing to be wise, they became fools"

**Romans 1:28-31 NAU** - "And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, <sup>29</sup> being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are* gossips, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;"

1. God "gave them over." This is true of our nation. God has given us over to the sins we love. Immorality becomes the norm. Sexuality becomes confused. Murder becomes acceptable. We have a political party that has made these things their platform.
2. Humanity without God is not in their right mind. They cannot think clearly. The things I am saying this morning all seem like foolishness to our generation. Some would call it hate speech.  
But I'm not simply expressing my personal opinion.  
I'm declaring what God has revealed in His Word. This is the truth.

### III. The Solution to the Problem – Restraint, Recognition, Resolve

A. Restraint – sinful human beings are unable to restrain themselves. God has provided us with his means of restraint.

1. The greatest restraint of the sinfulness of the human heart is the fear of God.

**Proverbs 16:6 NAU** - "By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for, And by the fear of the LORD one keeps away from evil."

a. Only through the Gospel of Christ can a heart be changed

- (1) The life of the Christian has been transformed. He has a hunger for righteousness.

**2 Corinthians 5:17 NAU** - "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

- (2) The Christian loves God and other Christians. He also strives to love his neighbor. We can't put an end to racism. Jesus has already accomplished this. We just need to walk in it.

- b. Through Christ we learn compassion and sympathy towards one another  
 Our brother may have experienced difficulties in life that we can never fully know or understand. We need to listen and learn. We need to pray to comprehend his trials and share in his pain. This is true as black and white brothers dwell together. What is it like for a black man to grow up in white America?  
**James 1:19 NAU** - "*This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;*"  
**Isaiah 1:16-17 NAU** - "*Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, <sup>17</sup> Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow.*"
- c. This is the nature of empathy – learning to enter into the suffering of someone else.  
**Romans 12:15 NAU** - "*Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.*"
- d. The Samaritans were despised by the Jews.  
**John 4:9 NAU** - "*Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)*"  
 Jesus entered into the life of the Samaritan woman. We must do the same. Racial prejudices must be abandoned.
- e. We need God's life-changing grace made possible through Christ.
2. Another form of restraint is our conscience. Our conscience is a God given restraint, but our conscience must be rightly informed.
- a. The Bible must be our standard of righteousness. Without a constant application of the Word of God our consciences grow harder and harder. It is the effect of sin. We move further and further from God.
- b. Our nation has rejected God's standard and has established its own. Evil is called good and the conscience is perverted.
- c. Our nation must have moral and ethical standards. If the consciences of our citizens are not rightly informed, we will fall into ever increasing conflict and chaos.  
 Every form of immorality will be justified. Every form of injustice will be the norm. We see this daily.
3. The family is another God given restraint. The Fifth Commandment presumes the importance of the family in shaping the lives of children. "Honor thy father and thy mother."  
 A strong family is essential to maintaining social and cultural stability. Children need fathers and mothers.
- a. The family has been progressively weakened in the US. Marriage and family are weakened by homosexuality, sex out of wedlock, divorce, and single parent homes.

- b. Most children today are born without the benefit of a stable home. It has long been known that single parent homes can have a negative impact upon the life of the child. The family is the chief place where young consciences are shaped. Young men especially need the benefit of a father – a strong masculine role model.  
According to [Childtrends.org](http://Childtrends.org) –  
“Children born to unmarried mothers are more likely to grow up in a single-parent household, experience unstable living arrangements, live in poverty, and have socio-emotional problems. As these children reach adolescence, they are more likely to have low educational attainment, engage in sex at a younger age, and have a birth outside of marriage. As young adults, children born outside of marriage are more likely to be idle (neither in school nor employed), have lower occupational status and income, and have more troubled marriages and more divorces than those born to married parents.”
  - c. This is reflective of the decline in morality across every segment of our society. Few today would call unmarried sex a sin. But God calls it sin.
4. God has ordered that sinful human beings need civil government.  
**Romans 13:1-4 NAU** - "Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. <sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. <sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; <sup>4</sup> for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil."
- a. Law enforcement helps maintain an ordered society.  
The “defund the police” movement is simply sinful human beings seeking to take themselves out from under restraint. They are ultimately seeking to bring themselves out from under the rule of God.  
“Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.”  
Sinful human beings without restraint will always increase in lawlessness.
  - b. Our legislatures pass laws, our police enforce the laws, and our judicial system punishes the offenders. This is a God given system.

- c. We must work hard to ensure that justice and equity prevail across every branch of government. We must work to solve problems. The black man must not receive a different justice from the white man. We must work towards solving inequities. Our current public defender system needs an overhaul. A person who hires an attorney will almost always receive better legal counsel than a person who is forced to use a public defender. And our current system of plea bargains guarantees that people will sometime pay for crimes they did not commit.
- d. Police officers are not immune from the demands and penalties of the law. They must not abuse their authority.
  - (1) When they break the law, they must bear the full penalty of our judicial system.  
Derick Chauvin will stand trial and bear responsibility for his actions against George Floyd.
  - (2) Because policemen are also sinners, they need oversight. The current situation will most certainly lead to measures to provide better oversight and accountability. They don't need to be defunded so that they receive less training. They need more training.
  - (3) We must not presume that the sinful actions of one policeman automatically calls into question the actions of every other police officer. We need to follow the Biblical pattern of justice.

## B. Recognition

- 1. Racial healing demands honest soul searching of us all. We must all recognize the problem of sin in our lives.  
"There is none righteous, not even one."  
"There is none who does good, not even one."  
"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
- 2. There is a presumption that every white person is a racist and bears the guilt of racism. This paints with far too broad a brush.
  - a. There are some white people who are racist. We cannot presume that all are. Every white man needs to honestly examine his heart.
  - b. There are also some blacks who hate white people. They are racist. But we cannot presume all are. The black man must also examine his own heart.
  - c. We need to recognize that sin puts us all in danger. This is not to deny that we need to work on our system. In the presence of racial prejudice, the minority always suffers the greater pain. We need to labor towards racial equality.

## C. Resolve – we need reconciliation

- 1. We need to resolve to recognize and fix inequities in our society. We need to resolve to listen to others. We need to resolve to love one another.

2. The Biblical model of reconciliation demands confession, repentance, and forgiveness.  
There aren't many today who would deny that slavery was a sinful and vile institution in our nation's history. Like all sin, it has left behind a terrible stain. We all wish we could go back and redo history.
3. Although there is no one today who has ever owned a slave, we can all weep over the impact the institution had in the past and the lasting impact segregation, inequality, and injustice has had.  
It is a shame the black man had to fight to share a seat on a bus or a sit in a diner with a white man or have his kids attend the same schools.
4. No one has the ability to change the past. Nor is it possible for one man to repent of sins committed by another.  
But we can express sorrow, and all of us can strive to guard carefully against the prejudices and hatred that has fostered the racism that has so impacted the lives of the black community.
5. Reconciliation also demands forgiveness. The black person has suffered injustice and inequality for many years. We must continue to strive toward justice and equity. But there must be a point where the grace of forgiveness must prevail as we look to the future? This is particularly true in the church, where love and mercy transcends all.
6. We have entered into a dangerous season in our nation's history where bitterness can consume us. In an effort to correct past wrongs we can become even more divided. Like the McCarthyism of the 1950's where thousands were accused of being Communists and blacklisted, we are in danger of accusing everyone of being a racist. We need to pray that grace will prevail.