

Wisdom for Woke Movement, Critical Race Theory

The Oppression Question, Part 2

James 3-5

Pastor/Elder Phil Layton, GCBC, June 20, 2021

Please turn in God's Word to James chapter 3 and we'll pick up where we left off last week. This will be part 2 on the oppression question: God's image, race and grace. We'll be looking at James 3 and part of James 4.

Look at James 3:7, this will be the wording of the NASB that I learned it in:

*For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by **the human race**.⁸ But **no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison**.⁹ With it we bless our Lord and Father, and **with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God**;¹⁰ from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.¹¹ Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water?¹² Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.¹³ Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, **do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth**.¹⁵ This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.¹⁷ But **the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy**.¹⁸ And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is **sown in peace by those who make peace**.*

Then ch 4 has more on conflict and quarrels and the grace we need in it

A tongue has the potential for peace or poison. We live in a country that's bitterly divided by selfish ambition and restless evil. We turn on the news and see disorder and every evil thing. Instead of gentleness we see jealousy, hostility and lack of humility. We see arrogant "experts" who lie against the truth. Some lies sound wise, but they're not from above, they're from below - lies from the pit in v. 15. There's a wisdom that's worldly or earthly and from the enemy. The natural mind doesn't receive heavenly wisdom. Who among the politicians and media is truly wise and a good peacemaker? But this text isn't just about hypocrisy outside the church, it's also inconsistency inside it and inside our mouths. It says in v. 9 we bless God, but then the same tongue speaks against God's image bearers. Brothers, this can't be.

There's one human race, v. 7, all in God's image/likeness, v. 9

Last week we came to **the subject of oppression** in the book of James and I felt I couldn't just move on and ignore the oppression question of our times.

James 3 is all about wisdom we need in our times. When oppression comes up in the text (ch 2 & 5) and in our cultural context (all the time now) we need to address it. Last Sunday I talked about wisdom for oppression, last Monday it came up on the news in **an interview that picks up this subject** where we left off.

It's a **story of a woman delivered from great oppression:**

Those who think they're woke to oppression need to hear her voice

Her mom told her (her words): “**the most dangerous thing that I had in my body was my tongue...** I knew how dangerous it was to say wrong things.”

Her country originally said “let’s make the most equal society in the world.” But now her country has **50 different classes of people based on your status**, based on what your great-great-great grandfather did. Not North America, **her country is North Korea**, and her name is **Yeonmi Park**.



She defected to the U.S. but was shocked to hear Americans also classifying people’s status based on what great-great-great grandparents did before the Civil War.¹ She said “I saw so many similarities to what I saw in North Korea that I started worrying...[she saw people] give their rights and power to the government. This is what scares me the most.” She felt her Ivy League university was full of anti-American propaganda that reminded her of school in N. Korea. Collective guilt of Westerners and whites sounded like Korean communism.

Tuesday’s headline: North Korea Defector... Slams ‘Woke’ U.S. Schools²

At her U.S. university she was **scolded by a woke teacher** for reading **books by Jane Austen**. Why her? “a colonial mindset. They were racists and bigots and are subconsciously brainwashing you.” But Yeonmi felt her professor had lost sense and sensibility!

Preferred pronouns were also a struggle for her. “English is my third language, I learned it as an adult. I still sometimes say ‘he’ or ‘she’ by mistake and now they are going to ask me to call them ‘they’? ... kids keep saying how they’re oppressed, how much injustice they’ve

experienced. They don’t know how hard it is to be free [she had literally **been a slave by human trafficking**] ... I literally crossed through the middle of the Gobi desert to be free ... **I have seen oppression**, I know what it looks like” (as a girl she saw some drop dead of starvation). “Here, while having everything, people choose to be brainwashed. And they deny it.”³

That’s a North Korean woman warning us - this is a big deal for our attention

In James 2 & 5 the oppression was over riches, **today it’s new definitions by whoever feels oppressed**. It’s now ‘oppressive’ to say marriage is between a man and a woman (or that you *can’t choose if you’ll be a man or a woman*).

When **our world redefines ‘oppressors’** to be **white straight Bible-believers**, we need to be like v. 13, ‘*wise and understanding*.’ Jesus said the wise have understanding to interpret the times we live in.⁴ v. 14 says don’t give in to lies against the truth. In v. 17 wisdom is peaceful, gentle, reasonable, etc., But the end of v. 17 adds we’re also to be unwavering. We can’t waver on truth and agree we’re oppressors because of our skin or by what we call sin.

We’re also **labeled oppressors** for being the male gender, or **if we say God makes genders at birth**, and you can’t re-make gender. Christian men, don’t surrender. Sisters, all, **speak the truth in love, the truth will set you free**. We need to **wake up to the woke movement**. We need critical thinking about critical theory in our schools, society, and even ministries that are accepting it uncritically. This new movement is the wrong tree. It has bad roots and bad fruit. James 3 says salt water can’t produce fresh, don’t drink, it’s bitter.

It's toxic to relationships within families in our church and the education of our kids. We need to hear about this in the church, and not just in the world or its worldly wisdom like v. 15. When people at our church who grew up in communist countries warn us they're seeing the same indoctrination here, we need to listen up. We need the wisdom from above our world like v. 17.

Last week: We need God's wisdom
We need to reject all partiality

Today:

1. **We need to see God's image (James 3:9-10)**
2. **We need to see one race (3:7)**
3. **We need grace for the problem inside us (4:1-10)**

#1. we need to see God's image. (James 3:9-10)

We started this service reading Gen 1:

*God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness [image and likeness are synonyms] ... So **God created man in his own image**, in the image of God he created him; **male and female he created them** (v. 26-27).*

Day one this is what God wants us to see and speak to others in light of this.

Jas 3:9 *With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been **made in the likeness of God**; ¹⁰ from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.*

It's wrong to speak ill of others, in racism or sexism, because **we're made in the likeness of God**. GCBC Statement of Faith: 'We teach God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female, and these two distinct, complementary sexes/genders together reflect the image and nature of God, and this biblical and biological design is not to be rejected (Gen. 1:26-27) ... the aged, the physically or mentally challenged ... every person as created in God's image must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity, and we teach that abuse, hate or harassment of individuals is to be repudiated as contrary to Scripture (Jas. 3:9-10, 2:8-9).'¹⁵

All people are in God's likeness. Believers are to speak in Christlikeness.

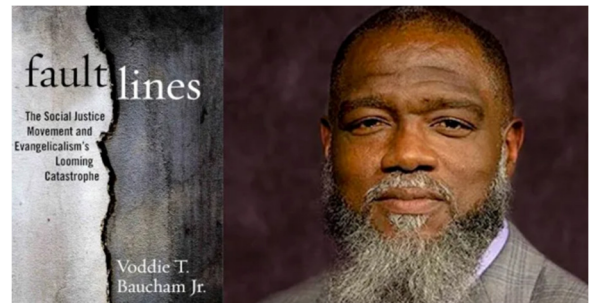
God's image matters, that's why all lives do, it matters how we treat people.

Our world sees blackness or whiteness, we need to see all in God's likeness.

Sometimes **people ask me how long it took me to write a sermon**. I think the answer for **this one is about a year**. This last year I've been slow to speak and trying to be quick to listen (**countless hours hearing black Christians**).

I just finished reading a book by our brother **Voddie Baucham, *Fault Lines***. He's concerned about lines being drawn making all things the fault of race.

He's also writing about the battle of the sexes and battle lines over sexuality and finding our identity in our culture, instead of the image of our Creator. Whatever we like to be called (gender/pronoun) we're made in His likeness, v. 9 says. We don't create self in our likeness, to our liking. Voddie warns about the 1 human race being divided by critical theories of race and gender and justice and he's especially concerned of a fault line dividing the church.



People used to worry about an earthquake splitting CA in two, but in some ways there's already a catastrophic break forming (title of book *Fault Line*). Like the 1906 SF earthquake that was felt in other states, he talks about the ground-shaking events of last year that caused far-reaching damage. Cracks in the unity of believers have widened and the plates keep on moving apart. 2020 saw 8,000 protests over 4 months and we saw how shaky things were. Voddie's book came out 2 months ago and it talks about people standing on both sides of a major fault line opening up so they're now on opposite sides.

He writes "the divide is happening already. Churches are splitting over this issue. Major ministries are losing donors, staff and leaders... Denominations are in turmoil. Seminary faculties are divided with some professors being fired or 'asked to leave.' Families are at odds... This is the main fault line at the root of the current debate--the **epicenter of the Big One... Critical Social Justice view...** assumes that the world is divided between the oppressors and the oppressed... The **other [view]** I will refer to as... **biblical justice**"⁶

In other words, there's **critical theory** about justice and **biblical truth** about justice. The Bible is against oppression of women and minorities and the vulnerable, but the Bible isn't for dividing people into oppressor / oppressed based on skin color or sex. How we treat and speak to women or anyone is important, but why? **It's not about their category, it's about their Creator, v. 9.** Critical theory categorizes as either oppressors or oppressed. Biblical categories are *humanity* in v. 7 and *God's family* in v. 10 ('my brothers').

James 2:4 says we're not to make distinctions by class, or to judge as evil.

Ch 2 says **it's a sin to judge by externals**, but critical theory judges who's an oppressor by externals, and white skin makes you an oppressor in that new view

Oppression used to mean "sin of a person", now it's "systems of power"

James is concerned about **biblical justice and oppression**, but not as identity. He's **concerned for women**, he even mentions a poor 'sister in need of daily bread' in ch 2 and says we should meet her needs. James cares about needs widows (1:27). He cares about **the oppressed**, and 2:6 even uses that very word.

He writes to 1st century Jews who had been **enslaved by Gentiles** hundreds of years, but that's not his focus. A Gentile man oppressing a poor Jewish widow in the present needs repentance of his own sin (us for any sin against God's image). But their and **our identity** isn't in our status, it **is in our Savior**

#1. We need to see God's Image,

#2. We Need to See We're One Race (James 3:7)

Look at James 3:7, it ends with '*the human race*' (NAS, others '*mankind*').

In contrast to species of animals, no sub-species of humanity

John Perkins was born on a Mississippi cotton plantation in 1930. He knew oppression in the South as God's image-bearers cursed him over skin color.

"As a civil rights activist, I was jailed and beaten nearly to death by police. They tortured me without mercy, stuck a fork up my nose and down my throat, then made me mop up my own blood. I have known injustice. It would have been the easiest thing in the world for me to answer hate with hate. But God had another plan for my life, a redemptive plan. Jesus

saved me. He saved me from my sin [and] from what could have easily become a life of hatred and resentment... Through my sixty years of working for justice, I offer

four admonishments to the next generation of justice-seekers:

“First, **start with God** [James 3:9 says we’re made in His likeness]

... Second, **be one in Christ!**

... Third, **preach the gospel**... That’s where we all find real human dignity

... Fourth and finally, **teach truth**...healing, unifying biblical truth!... not our feelings...popular opinion...not what presidents or politicians say... trying harder to align with the rising opinions of our day...

“We are in the midst of a great upheaval. There is much confusion, much anger, and much injustice. Sadly, many Christian brothers and sisters are trying to fight this fight with man-made solutions [that] promise justice but deliver division... Don’t get swept along into false answers that lead only to more injustice [like James 3:15 worldly wisdom/ways of world]... If we replace the gospel with this or that man-made political agenda, then we ain’t doing biblical justice... **In the blood of Jesus**, we are able to truly **see ourselves as one race**, one blood. We’ve got to **stop playing the race game**. Christ alone can break down the barriers of hate we all struggle with...”⁷



Perkins wrote a book **One Blood** (from Acts 17 KJV we’re all from one blood). In Acts 17 Paul spoke at Mars Hill in Athens, the heart of Greek supremacy:

From one man [God] made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him... [he went on] **now he commands all people everywhere to repent.**

*For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by **the man he has appointed**. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.*⁸

We’re all one race from one man, one blood – **our hope** is in **another man and His blood**. He’s **the man Christ Jesus**, the mediator between God and men. There’s only one race and **one color** that matters: **red, the color of the one blood** we all share. Jesus shed blood just like ours, to bring **‘redeeming grace to Adam’s race.’** We’re not different races, we’re all sons of Adam and daughters of Eve. He put us in **different nations and places** and people groups so we would seek Him. For all concerned with **justice**, He will judge the world with justice, but there’s **mercy** if you obey His command: **repent**.

T4G in 2008 – many there not together for the gospel anymore, **9Marks** authors

SBC this past week, past couple years, Mohler & SBC seminary presidents

CRT = Critical Race Theory – history, systemic racism emphasis, white guilt, 2021 school debates.

Woke – awakened to social injustice and systemic racism, parallels BLM

A sister sent me this yesterday, let’s teach this **HRT = Human Race Truth**

Can systems oppress ethnic groups? Yes, Egypt, Roman-Jew taxation and , Acts 6. In the church Hellenist women felt partiality in the system of food, and church leaders resolved with help of Hellenists. U.S. system of slavery, segregation, Jim Crow, etc. But ad this week on voter ID law = Jim Crow 2.0

Former redlining in real estate, resumes with ethnic names called back less, there are issues minorities see we may not. Any laws or policies that are unjust, let's change but don't blame systems, policemen or all Caucasians.

Today's anti-racists are also anti-MLK's dream of character over color

RACISM - did you know racism wasn't a word 100-some years ago? 1828 Merriam Webster has no entry for racism, racial, or races as defined today

- 1900s is when racism started being used (James 2 term is partiality)
- Original definition was actions or attitudes against a people group based on prejudice (pre-judging). Bible examples would be Jonah towards Assyrians, James and John towards Samaritans, Peter to the uncircumcised, Colossian church with barbarian, Sycthians, etc.

CRT def. of racism – not sin of a person, a system of power group (whites).

CRT def. **racism = prejudice + power** (power of oppressor, or not racism).

Illustration: **TNT discussion** on **Luka Doncic** being called ****white boy**. This was during playoffs with **NBA players jersey logo's** all about equality

- **Stephen A. Smith** said Luka is European so he's not white, he didn't grow up in this country (it changes if his ancestors not in America)
- **Kenny Smith** said the "white boy" slur was **prejudice but not racism** because the black player doesn't have power, racism is prejudice plus power, so **it's wrong, it's just not racism**. That's **classic CRT**
- **Charles Barkley** (he's black) said that's a double standard, **reverse racism**, but the others didn't even let him finish, spoke over him

2014 movie Dear White People: "racism describes a system of disadvantage ... Black people can't be racist since we don't stand to benefit from such a system." Or same title sold as a book you could buy at Target this year, with prayer 'Dear God Help Me to Hate White People.' Sound racist? It's not by CRT redefinition⁹

I reject CRT because I reject partiality and prejudice biblically

CRT using 'racism' is like what **Inigo Montoya** said of 'inconceivable.'¹⁰ They keep using the word but I do not think it means what they think it means.

Voddie Baucham's book *Fault Lines* is must reading to understand it more.

Darrell Harrison: "use the world's terms and you're playing on the world's turf"

Let's stop using the world's term 'races.' It's not scriptural or "scientific":

Scientific American, 2016: '**Race Is a Social Construct... to be phased out** ...the mainstream belief among scientists is that race is...without biological meaning.'¹¹

National Geographic, 2018: '**the 21st-century understanding of human genetics tells us that the whole idea of race is a human invention... Modern science confirms "visible differences...are not racial differences.**'¹²

Human Genome Project also recently **confirms we're just 1 race** "the genetic research confirms the commonality of all humans"¹³. HRT.

#3. Closing application: **We need grace for the problem inside us** (4:1-10)

4:1-2 - thinking external or others are cause of conflict, not our own hearts.

Focusing on systemic problem instead of sin problem God has solution for.

Note in **v. 4** friendship with world's ways can be enmity toward God.

v. 6-7, Repentance vs. reparation. Looking to past rather than present grace

v. 11-12 Don't judge each other, or slander (how both sides can)

7
CLOSE WITH **MONIQUE DUSON'S STORY**, in Williams ¹⁴

*"I am adopted. **My family is white. I am African American.** I spent my formative years in South Los Angeles. "Never trust white people!" was a running theme of my upbringing, and I carried those skin-deep judgments with me everywhere. As a sociology major, I found a label for the framework I had learned growing up. My professors espoused **Critical Race Theory** (or **CRT**), which validated my biases. My belief that only people who looked like me would be able to understand my experience was sealed when my class read **Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?** by Beverly Tatum. This book confirmed my tribalism.*



*I spent the next two decades preaching CRT. My family and I disagreed on issues of systemic racism. Why couldn't they see America as it really is? My sociology professor was right—white Christians hide behind Jesus to disregard everyone not like them. That night **I prayed, "God, open my family's eyes to their privilege and how people of color live under nonstop oppression in America."***

*The **answer to my prayer** came as a deep shock to my system. "Monique, **you need to repent** of your views on social justice." The Holy Spirit spoke this clearly to my heart shortly after I prayed for my family to "receive" the social justice gospel. I pouted and protested. I was convinced the Lord would never say something like that. But he did.*

*I have begun the painful **process of untangling my faith from CRT**... The first step in that journey was taking a serious look at the roots of my faith. I discovered the **deep conflict between a Christian worldview and CRT**. With CRT's constant focus on evil systems, I had become oblivious to the evil in my own heart. I couldn't see aspects of my own privilege. I had become blind to my own prejudices. CRT encouraged my tribal favoritism that kept me from taking white voices seriously in conversations about justice. I wasn't just a victim of America's racist systems; I also perpetuated the racism I claimed to hate.*

*According to historic Christianity, salvation is **the good news** of Jesus's life, death, and resurrection so **sinners of all colors can be saved** by a **free act of divine grace**. CRT had pulled me away from that good news into a social justice gospel in which the finished work of Jesus wasn't enough. Activism to end "oppression" as redefined by CRT became a gospel essential. Scripture consistently defines us as brothers and sisters. CRT splits us into intersectional tribes. In God's eyes, humanity's fundamental problem is that we are all sinners in need of grace. According to CRT, humanity's fundamental problems are whiteness and oppression. The beliefs of CRT weren't "part of the gospel;" they formed a different gospel altogether.*

***The book of James is clear:** we should not show favoritism or speak evil over each other. But with my black Christian friends, speaking of whites in derogatory ways was perfectly acceptable. I spoke words over whites that Christ would never speak over me. CRT made it nearly impossible to see white people as beloved image-bearers whom Christ died to redeem. This hampered my ability to treat people with the love and compassion that Christ has for me.*

*My family and I are still learning. They are becoming more aware of certain injustices they didn't see before. I am learning that God has a much better way to bring justice and unity than I do. And **there's grace for all of us.***

—Monique Duson

Yes, there's grace for all of us at the foot of the cross.

The gospel broke down Jew-Gentile tensions, but not racial reconciliation, you can't reconcile races. God reconciled people in the one human race.

I can't reconcile races – there's only one – but **people can be reconciled in Christ.**

Ephesians 2:14-16 *'For he [Christ] himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility...to create in himself **one new man** out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body **to reconcile both** of them to God through the cross, by which **he put to death their hostility.**'¹⁵*

ENDNOTES:

¹ Hannity interview on FoxNews.

² <https://www.ibtimes.sg/yeonmi-park-north-korean-defector-says-even-north-korea-isnt-this-nuts-she-slams-woke-58171>

³ Video link?

⁴ Luke 12:56.

⁵ <https://www.gcb.church/distinctives>

⁶ Voddie Baucham, *Fault Lines*, 5-6.

⁷ John Perkins, foreword to *Confronting Injustice without Compromising Truth: 12 Questions Christians Should Ask About Social Justice*, by Thaddeus Williams (Baker Academic, 2020). John Perkins is author of *One Blood*.

⁸ v. 26-31 NIV.

⁹ Thaddeus Williams, 180.

¹⁰ Voddie Baucham, "Defining Social Justice," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFNOP2IqwoY>

¹¹ <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/race-is-a-social-construct-scientists-argue/>

¹² <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2018/04/race-genetics-science-africa/>

¹³ Journal Of New Zealand Te Puna Whakaaro > Issue 36 August 2009 > Who are we?: The Human Genome Project, Race and Ethnicity, Conclusion. p.73

¹⁴ "Monique Duson's Story" in Thaddeus J. Williams, *Confronting Injustice without Compromising Truth: 12 Questions Christians Should Ask about Social Justice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 107–108.

¹⁵ v. 14-16 NIV.