

Genesis 1: “26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27 So God created man in His Own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it;...”

James 1: “22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. 26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion is useless. 27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” 2:1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. 2 For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, 3 and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, “You sit here in a good place,” and say to the poor man, “You stand there,” or, “Sit here at my footstool,” 4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

Why Do Black Lives Matter?

Need I ask if anyone has heard the phrase ‘Black Lives Matter’ in the past year or so? Well, those who know our family can certainly understand why I would be able to say that Black Lives Matter!

- But you see with ALL the attention, all the signs, the protests, all of the funding that has been given, has anyone stepped back and asked no less answered the basic question of why do Black Lives Matter?

In order to answer that important question, we must properly understand our Christian foundation AND our Christian responsibility.

- In other words we must know why Black Lives Matter, or we are guilty of just mouthing empty slogans.
- AND we must act as if Black Lives Matter, or we are guilty of rank hypocrisy which James warns us against!

In a few weeks, we are going to dive back into our study of Ephesians where the Apostle Paul will focus on some very important basics of our faith: *[probably stepping on some toes along the way]*:

The importance of men & husbands!

The importance of women & wives!

The importance of marriage!

The importance of children!

And the importance of service.

- These are the basics we must get right as individuals & as a Church, if ANY lives are to really matter!

The case that I want to make this morning is that the Black Lives Matter movement, in contrast with the actual statement, is opposed to all of those Biblical principles and thus at bottom teaches us that Black Lives do not matter!

Our modern age moves quickly so BLM already has a place in Dictionary.com:

Noun: A political and social movement originating among African Americans, emphasizing basic human rights and racial equality for Black people and campaigning against various forms of racism.”

- **When seen in that light it is easy to understand why there has been so much support from so many quarters!**

However, just as one looking longingly at a Mormon family home evening program because it seems innocent enough, we should be very careful, BLM is not exactly what it appears to be...

From the BLM ‘about us’ page from last year we can read this: “We disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and “villages” that collectively care for one another, especially our children, to the degree that mothers, parents, and children are comfortable. We foster a queer-affirming network. When we gather, we do so with the intention of freeing ourselves from the tight grip of heteronormative thinking, or rather, the belief that all in the world are heterosexual (unless s/he or they disclose otherwise).”

- **Thus they want to disrupt the very things the Apostle Paul tells us are essential to right living!**
- **Here we must understand that at bottom, their goal is to destroy our Christian foundations!**
- **It is Christendom that they have a problem with and thus we must be prepared to defend it properly!**

Sadly, many today, on all sides of these debates make the grave error of confusing the advance of Christendom with whiteness, thinking that Western Civilization equals white supremacy.

[example of Swedish woman concerned about those raping and murdering]

- **Those who have forgotten such history do not remember that it was the Black and Brown Christians from Africa and the Middle East who first brought the Gospel to those white savages in Europe!**

At bottom, IF anyone thinks or argues that the advances of Western Civilization have come about ONLY because of whiteness, that is perhaps the most racist thing that could be said or argued.

Now we must ask why we have such confidence in our Christian foundations: Why should men be leaders? Why should women be respected and encouraged as homemakers? Why is marriage the proper way for men and women to relate and flourish? Why are children to be seen as a blessing and raised in a Godly manner within marriage? Why should we be industrious with the now politically incorrect concept of the protestant work ethic?

- **Because all of these are what God has revealed to us in the Bible.**

And here I trust that we listened to the lecture that I shared this week from Pastor Voddie Baucham, because the world will simply say in response that believing the Bible is fine for you, but you cannot impose what it teaches on everyone else!

Pastor Baucham reminded us, We choose to believe the Bible because it is a reliable collection of historical documents written by eye witnesses during the lifetime of other eyewitnesses reporting supernatural events that took place as a fulfilment of specific prophecies and claim their writings are divine rather than human in origin.” *[our kids should memorize!]*

- **You have heard me argue for years that there is no more important place to remember those great truths than with the Book of Beginnings. IF we do not get things right in Genesis, there will be problems throughout the rest of the Bible!**

And yes, this is where we find that real answer to why Black Lives Matter!

Genesis 1: “26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27 So God created man in His Own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

- **That IS the only basis upon which we can establish the worth of Black Lives or any lives! ALL men and women are made in the image of God.**
- **Any evolutionary or secular alternative leaves us with only tribalism, or might makes right.**

All made in the image of God and all born under the Fall of Adam.

- **ALL with the hope of the Gospel, which is what should be shared with those in need.**

Think back to BLM's opposition to the traditional family and marriage.

What kind of role models for men & husbands do they produce?

Where are the role models for women or wives? How about just basic respect for women?

And in opposing the protestant work ethic, thinking it is somehow racist, today we see little success with basic education and no good work ethics, no less an entrepreneurial spirit.

However, even with the powerful message of the Gospel & these Biblical truths we have to share, James reminds us that we cannot just tell someone in need to be warm and well fed and not offer the help that they need!

So, next we turn to our text from James for our lesson about what we are to do if we understand why Black Lives Matter: We hear a LOT today about virtue signaling and as usual James is pretty brutal in reminding us about how empty such actions can be!

James 1: "22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was."

[remind them about the spinach]

So, an example here would be a person who attends a BLM rally or puts up a sign without seeing what has really happened to the Black communities under the very programs and philosophies pushed by the Marxists and secular folks behind BLM.

When I was born in 1950 just over 15% of Black children were born out of wedlock. That at a time when discrimination was the law of the land and where poverty & racial prejudice ruled the day.

Today, after all of our civil rights advances and billions spent on the war on poverty, the number of Black children born out of wedlock now exceeds 70%.

- **Another troubling indication that we are not serious about Black lives is the fact that more Black infants died at the hands of abortionists than were born in New York City in 2019.**

So yes, the person who puts up the sign or attends a march and ignores the reality of what is being done to the Black communities, as well as our broader nation, are like those who see the spinach on their front teeth and just go back to visiting their friends without doing anything about it!

And what is the alternative? To learn what the Apostle Paul is going to stress in Ephesians and work only in ways that advance those truths, or as James continued in our text...

25 "But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does."

- **So what does all this mean for us?**

Well first and foremost, we are all called to be good examples!

- **Our men must be leaders and hard workers!**
- **Our women must be respected and not treated as sex objects or worker bees, but as loving wives & homemakers who are building the Kingdom!**

We are to welcome children and resist the anti-child mentality of our age [mention the eco-nuts that think the earth can only sustain 500 million]

- And yes, there will be some practical steps that we can all make as the Lord leads us.

Many are taking that stand about abortion, calling mothers to choose life over death at the clinics!

Again, James is pretty brutal in his call to action...

27 “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”

Again, just as we must do with BLM, this is not handing out a dollar to someone at the freeway exit with a homeless sign or even serving meals at homeless camps. Those are feel good things that in the end only continue the suffering of those in need.

- This is why we as a church support the Union Gospel Mission and others who understand how to minister to the whole man.

And finally in our text James reminds us that even here at church we are to practice our understanding that ALL men and women are made in the image of God!

2:1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. 2 For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, 3 and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, “You sit here in a good place,” and say to the poor man, “You stand there,” or, “Sit here at my footstool,” 4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

So whether our distinctions are rich & poor, Jew or Gentile, men or women, young or old or any of the racial divides that trouble our nation today we, as Christians are to follow the examples given to us in the Scriptures and this challenge from James.!

- It is easy to let the circumstances that we see around us muddle the Truths that God has revealed to us.
- Sadly, we live in a nation where the Christians often lead the way in the school of pessimism.

Such should not be the case, but alas we are all human and it could be easy to say that today we are hopelessly divided along racial and political lines!

When all of this gets us down, we must simply do better by trusting the promises that God has given...

AND remembering the important lesson that Asaph teaches us in Psalm 73: *Asaph begins where some may be today:*

“Truly God is good to Israel, To such as are pure in heart.

2 But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; My steps had nearly slipped.”

- Asaph knew the promises of God were good & that God loved His people...
- But the circumstances around him were just overwhelming...

3 “For I was envious of the boastful, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked. 4 For there are no pangs in their death, But their strength is firm. 5 They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like other men. 6 Therefore pride serves as their necklace; Violence covers them like a garment.

- Think about all the riots in the streets last year or the deaths at Planned Parenthood and it is easy to see how Asaph could be downcast!

7 “Their eyes bulge with abundance; They have more than heart could wish. 8 They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression; They speak loftily.”

- Think about the BILLIONS the tech giants and privileged companies like Amazon made last year while small business and churches were declared to be non-essential!

9 “They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth. 10 Therefore his people return here, And waters of a full cup are drained by them. 11 And they say, “How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?” 12 Behold, these are the ungodly, Who are always at ease; They increase in riches

[think Bill Gates, Warren Buffett or George Soares].

- It appears to Asaph that the secular story is the story that is winning *and maybe to us as well* ☹
- God’s truth and God’s people seem to be completely overrun and those who reject God are the ones who prosper & seem to be winning!

16 “When I thought how to understand this, It was too painful for me-- 17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end.”

- Asaph enters the sanctuary, as we do in worship and our study of God’s Word & he is reminded about whose story is really being told, and we should know the end of that story!

18 “Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. 19 Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment!” They are utterly consumed with terrors.”

- Asaph concludes this Psalm by reflecting on how foolish he had been, a foolishness that we will share IF we do not remember whose story is really being told!

21 “Thus my heart was grieved, And I was vexed in my mind.

22 I was so foolish and ignorant; I was like a beast before You. 23 Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand. 24 You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory. 25 Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. 26 My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. 27 For indeed, those who are far from You shall perish; You have destroyed all those who desert You for harlotry.

28 But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord God, That I may declare all Your works.”

- We are to know God’s Truth and we are to proclaim God’s truth!

We must confidently remind people about why Black Lives Matter...

- AND we must act like Black Lives Matter, even if it means begin attacked by those who are actually working to destroy not only Black lives, but all lives!

Communion Meditation:

Colossians 1: “18 “And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”