



# OUTSIDE IN

## OUTSIDE-IN: ACTS

SCRIPTURE: Acts 17:26 - God's Solution to Racism.

### Opening:

This morning's topic is going to be a little difficult, but as we look into the Bible today we will see that God has a plan for this, and that we have the opportunity to let God use us to be the solution.

This morning, I am going to do my dead level best to present a Biblical view of God's Solution to Racism.

Let's be honest, as humans, we are having a hard time solving the issue.

Before we completely dive in, I want to say this upfront:

Let's read Acts 17:26 -

Acts 17:26 - 26 From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.

## 1. Racism is not of God.

If racism is not something of God, then why didn't He just create us all the same? That would remove all the barriers WE create as dividing lines. In God's divine plan, he purposely made each individual different, and intentionally and artistically created. And God celebrated that that (Gen. 1:31, everything was good, but after man was made, it was VERY GOOD)

Let's turn to Genesis 9:18-19, 22-27

### **Genesis 9: 18-19**

18 The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) 19 These were the three sons of Noah, and from them came the people who were scattered over the whole earth.

After the flood, Noah's family, re-populated the earth. And it says that they scattered over the earth. They didn't stay all together in one place. They dispersed and made a life for themselves and their families. We see in a little further down in the chapter, that because of Ham's sin, there was division. Ham was separated from his brothers.

### **Genesis 11: 4; 6-9**

4 Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth."

6 The Lord said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. 7 Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."

8 So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. 9 That is why it was called Babel[c] –because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

From this point we now are starting to see diversity. People having their own languages. From there, as they move out and flourish, they begin creating their own culture.

Just from this, we see a couple of things that were apart of God's design, and something that was a result of sin.

## **1. Dispersion is good**

God has never commanded his creation to stay and hang out. It has always been go, be fruitful, multiply, use the gifts and talents I've created you with. The last thing that Jesus said on earth was telling his disciples to go and spread the gospel.

## **2. Diversity is good**

Being different is what makes this world great. It's where new ideas come from. Diversity allows humans to share in thoughts and ideas to make things better, or work better, or learn to be better people.

Diversity is what allows us to celebrate other cultures and learn about this differences. Without diversity, we wouldn't have falafels, or dim sum, or street tacos, or creole, or pizza. Our dinners would be so boring!!!

**Dispersion is good, and diversity is good, but division is not.**

If you look back on the account of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham and Japeth, we see that because of the sin of Ham, there was separation. And that separation will eventually bring about hate, jealousy, and eventually war.

So where does the issue of racism come from? IF we are all made in the image of God. And His plan and purpose was for us to spread out and be different, then rather than allowing differences be our division, it should be our celebration.

**Our racism problem is not because of our eyes, and mind, it's because of our heart.**

Racism is a heart issue.

### **Hebrews 3:12 - 13**

12 See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. 13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

I want to look at the life of a man, who from the outside looked the part, played the part, yet he harbored hate in

his heart, and because of it, it greatly effected the coarse of his life.

## **Jonah 1:1-2 -**

The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: **2** "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me."

## **Story of Jonah -**

He makes a plan to escape to Tarshish, rather than obeying God. (Tarshish is a wealthy shipping port and is a beautiful place to be)

God gets his attention by creating a storm, and when his boat taxi drivers find out, he basically says, throw me overboard.

Why? Maybe because Jonah didn't want to go to Ninevah, and would have rather been dead than go to those people.

What does God do? He rescues Jonah (in a very funny way, if you think about it) so Jonah's mode of transportation has gone from a boat taxi to a fish taxi.

When he arrives in Nineveh he, proclaims God's message to the people. When the king hears about it, the Bible records; " When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. "

This was a sign of repentance, and then decreed that the whole town do this, including animals. And because of this, God relented, and forgave them.

Jonah's response is not, well hopefully not, what you or I would do. Jonah gets angry with God for not destroying Nenevah!

I want to read the last part of Jonah:

5 Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. 6 Then the Lord God provided a leafy plant[a] and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. 7 But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. 8 When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."

9 But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

"It is," he said. "And I'm so angry I wish I were dead."

10 But the Lord said, "You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. 11 And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?"

## **Jonah was only for himself and people like him**

If we want to be honest, Jonah was a nationalist, and a racist. He believed that the Israelites were the dominate, superior people group, and only they had the right to receive Gods grace and favor.

## **Jonah wanted nothing to do with unity**

He was just happy being with his people, and sharing God's message with his people. He had placed **VALUE** on a people group based only on who they were and where they were from, and that value was not the same worth as his own or his people.



He didn't want unity so much, that three times its recorded that he would have rather been dead than to share God's message.

## **Jonah's heart was hard**

Even though God showed him grace, mercy, and gave him forgiveness, Jonah's heart never changed.

Where Jonah are all these things, God is the exact opposite.

## **God is for everyone:**

### **John 3:16-17**

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

God wasn't just trying to save Israel, He was trying to save the whole world through that nation. From the very beginning God has been for the whole world. And if we claim to be for God, then we too must be for the redemption of the whole world.

A friend of mine put it like this:

*For Jesus to call us to the ministry of reconciliation ultimately means that there is something to reconcile. We need to be humble enough to admit when we are wrong and to actively seek to reconcile the broken spaces of our lives and culture.*

So if God is for every then we should be also!

## **We have to have a change of heart**

All of us, if you choose to admit it, will meet people with preconceived ideas based upon their outward appearance, where they are from, what they believe, or their world view.

If we don't begin to change our heart, then we will never be able to change how we see, or think about people that are different than you or I, or them!

So how do we, as the church, make a change

## **We need to have a heart for God**

To have a heart for God, we have to do know what God has a heart for...

- Love, Compassion, Unity, Care, Redemption.

God's heart is for His creation. Like an artist and His master piece, God has a great affection for those things He has created and purposed.

### Colossians 3:11-13

11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

God's heart is for all. In Him there is no disunity. There is no division. We are all one. Our value does not come from where we came from, or what we can do, our humanistic value, our intrinsic value, comes only from the one who made us. And He calls us his children, and we are holy, and dearly loved. So if God has a heart for us, we should have a heart for him and also .....

We need to have a **heart for People**

A great example of having a heart for people, no matter where they come from, is the account of the Good Samaritan.

## Luke 10: 25- 27

25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus.

"Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal

life?" 26 "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you

read it?" 27 He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your

heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all

your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

From here Jesus goes on to tell the story of a person who was looked down on in society, who helped a person who was in a desperate situation. And the person who he helped, was one of those people who looked down on him.

He helped him get well, made sure he had a place to rest.

This Samaritan had a heart for people. He saw past who this man was. He saw past his past, his present, his beliefs, his racism, and saw him as a person that God created.

When we see people the way that God sees them, it changes how we treat people. It changes how we speak to them. It changes how we think about them.

## Romans 12: 9-16

9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is

good. 10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another

above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your

spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in

affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with the Lord's people who

are in need. Practice hospitality.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

We need to have a heart for others, before ourselves.

We need to have a **Heart for the Gospel**

### **Matthew 16:**

14 Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen. 15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Go into all world and preach the gospel to ALL CREATION. The final thing Jesus said. Tell EVERYONE that there is reconciliation. Through Jesus we have been reconciled back to God, and

through him we can be reconciled to one another.

### **Romans 10: 14-15**

14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

It is the churches responsibility.

**The good news for Christians is that Jesus is our banner, if we'll focus on him, we will inevitably be brought together. This is precisely why only the church of Jesus Christ will our culture find racial reconciliation. There's simply no other**

**banner large enough to encompass our  
diversity. - mark moore**

# Small Group questions:

1. What are some of your favorite things that you have experienced from other cultures?
2. Why do you believe racism is such a big issue in our world today?
3. What are some causes for racial divide in our culture?
4. To have the heart of God, we have to understand God's heart. What are some things, other than what was mentioned in the message that God is for?
5. What are some ways that you can begin overcoming some of the prejudices in your life?
6. How can we as a church bring about peace and reconciliation in our community?