



## Life Group Sermon Study Notes

### “The Ministry of Reconciliation”

### Bishop Rice Broocks- July 12, 2020

#### Warm-Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- Do you love working from home, or would you rather be in the office? Is there a balance of both that you like best?
- What’s the best professional development book you’ve ever read?

#### Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at [www.bethelworld.org](http://www.bethelworld.org)

#### **2 Corinthians 5:16 – 20**

*<sup>16</sup> From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

**We are used to hearing the term “racism”, while differing on how to define it.** Dr. Broocks speaks about racism today compared to how scripture references race and gives practical ways to address it. The socially constructed idea of racism was popularized through Charles Darwin’s thoughts on natural selection. The original subtitle of his book, *Origin of Species* – included the statement *by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life*. He proposed that the diversity seen in animal and plant life could be connected to the claim that there was diversity within the beginnings of humanity.

Racism has distinctly manifested itself in America; but at the root, it’s the same issue we see time and time again throughout history. There is something in humanity that causes us to make a distinction and live separated lives because of it.

**Scripture addresses this proclivity by teaching that there is only one race –the human race made of different ethnicities that can be traced back to one man.** Furthermore, in our text, Paul encouraged believers to boast about their internal transformation, not on outward appearances. In their day, one primary discriminative practice was lived out through the distinctions between Jews and non-Jews. Jews thought they were to be separate from non-Jews and spoke of them as “less than”. Paul was telling them how they thought about humanity could no longer be the same. Jesus broke down the dividing wall of opposition between humanity. Through Christ, we are reconciled to God; our wrongdoings are forgiven, so now we are to forgive one another. In other words, we now have the ministry of bringing reconciliation to others. Dr. Rice uses the acronym G.R.A.C.E to give us practical ways of being proponents of reconciliation.

**Gospel:** We are to be a part of addressing the systematic nature of racism. Yet without a heart change, it will still be there and will adapt over time. Human nature is flawed; thus, we find ways to discriminate. It happens through class, socioeconomic, geographical location, ethnicity, and the list goes on. The radical transformation we need comes through the good news of Jesus Christ.

**Remember:** Don’t run from the past, remember it. Read and use technology to know the accounts from history and the various outcomes. Listen to all voices – even those who view it differently than you.

**Acknowledge:** Acknowledge the injustice and challenges for change. The apostle Peter needed visions from God to see that God didn’t distinguish between Jews and non-Jews. Paul also confronted Peter when he saw that he stopped eating with the Gentiles when he saw a group of Jews come around. Paul told him he was not living according to the implications of the gospel.

**Compassion:** Care enough to listen to people’s experiences. It’s significantly impactful for white Americans to care enough to listen to blacks’ stories of racism and discrimination.

**Engage:** We engage others by being aware of the issues. It’s powerful when different ethnicities reach out to one another. All true believers have the ministry of reconciliation.

### **Discussion (10-15 minutes)**

**Choose one of the points below, and discuss how the lesson applies to our lives.**

- When you have conversations with people about racism, does it include the biblical definition of only one race? How does that impact the conversation?
- What statement under the acronym G.R.A.C.E. stands out to you, and why?

### **Prayer (10-15 minutes)**

**Pray for any of the following, as well as other requests you may have.**

- Thank God that reconciliation to God and one another comes through Jesus Christ.
- Ask God for the conviction to engage those who don't look like you with the gospel.
- Ask God for grace to address racism.