

Speaking the truth about ‘racism’

Christians have the opportunity to be salt and light in this world as evidence and accusations of ‘racism’ spread from the U.S. to Europe, but only as we think and act according to God’s Word. Speaking the truth about ‘racism’ will require clear definitions, but most of all a biblical understanding of how we speak and where we find truth. Only then (in later sermons) can we rightly consider causes and right responses.

1. *How should we speak the truth about ‘racism’?*

- a. *Do the loving work to know what words mean* (cf. Ephesians 4:15, 25).
‘Racism’ as being used in the media today, has moved from meaning prejudice, to the structural results of prejudice, to any “system of advantage.” Therefore, you must be careful that you are talking about the same ‘racism’. For us, it is simpler to discuss prejudice, injustice, and oppression.
- b. *Strive to be godly in how you communicate.*
 - Work at being a good listener, seeking to understand before you speak (Proverbs 18:2, 13, 17).
 - When you speak, don’t be quarrelsome, but be kind, patient when wronged, and gentle. Trust God to change hearts. (2 Timothy 2:24–26)

2. *Where do you find the truth about prejudice, injustice, oppression and such evils?*

- a. *You will not find what you can trust by listening to the world.*
 - The world is under the power of Satan (Acts 26:18; 1 John 5:19; John 14:30).
 - Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44) and a deceiver along with his servants (2 Corinthians 11:14–15).
 - The consequence for unbelievers is spiritual blindness and subjection to deceitful philosophies (2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:8; 1 Timothy 4:1–3).
- b. *Only God is a source of reliable truth, because God is truth* (Isaiah 65:16; 1 John 4:6; John 14:6).
- c. *God has revealed in His written Word all that we need to know to be right with Him and to live a life pleasing to Him.*
 - God’s Word is true (Proverbs 30:5; John 17:17; 2 Timothy 2:15).
 - God’s Word, the Bible, not only reveals the way of salvation, it equips the believer for every good work which includes analyzing and responding to prejudice, injustice, oppression, and all the evils of this world (2 Timothy 3:14–17).
- d. *God, “He is there and he is not silent”* (Psalm 19).
 - God’s creation declares His existence and His glory (Ps 19:1–6).
 - God speaks to us clearly by His written Word (19:7–10). When responding to prejudice, injustice and oppression we have an eternal standard that does not change, brings our very being back in align with what God wants, gives wisdom, insight for living, and joy.
 - God speaks corrective truth to our own hearts (19:11–14). It warns, reveals our hearts (cf. Hebrews 4:12), and, when rooted in our hearts, makes our thoughts and speech acceptable to the Lord.

But it is necessary that the LORD be your Rock and your Redeemer (Ps 19:14b). The Rock is a Refuge (cf. Ps 18:2; 31:2; 71:3). The only safe refuge from God’s wrath on sin is the Lord Himself, Jesus Christ. He is your Refuge when He is your Redeemer, the One who paid the penalty of sin. Jesus died for our sins, paying sin’s penalty of death, so that you might have life – a life guaranteed in His resurrection. When you trust Him for that (and trust nothing else), then He is your Redeemer and your Rock of refuge. Then His Word becomes sweeter than honey. We then can speak truth about ‘racism’, about prejudice, injustice, and oppression, having submitted to the Way, the Truth, and the Life, to Jesus Christ, and having embraced His Word as true and a sufficient answer for every good work.

Questions for further thought and discussion:

- How would you rate yourself as a listener according to Proverbs 18:2, 13, 17? How would others rate you? Will you ask someone, like your spouse, child, close friend?
- How does the manner of speech (choice of words, tone, amount of talking) indicate or imply whether the person speaking is trusting themselves or God to change a person’s heart? How does trusting God help you to be gentle and patient in your speech?
- On what basis have you formed your opinions about the presence and appropriate response to prejudice, injustice and oppression? Compare the relative influence that media has had on your opinions with that which Scripture has had. Do you need to modify that?