

CAN'T WE ALL JUST GET ALONG

Bits of Hope from May 4, 2008

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Ephesians 2:11-18

Every one of us has been affected one way or another by the current campaign for Presidency happening right before our eyes; compliments of the media. The first African American candidate and the first woman candidate competing for the democratic seat are “slinging mud” at each other. They are trying to judge Barack Obama negatively because of his former preacher’s views causing him to denounce Rev. Jeremiah Wright. What do Rev. Wright and the church where Obama found the Lord and got married have to do with his campaign? All of this points out the glaring conflicts in our world today. It shows that race does matter. Barack Obama is not running against Rev. Jeremiah Wright. In this campaign, we see how politics will try to drive a wedge between families and people of the same faith.

The African American race is diverse within itself. Our skin reflects diversity from ebony to ivory. Our hair can be any length. Our lips vary in size. However, it does not matter what color you are, we are all in this mess together. There is mess and controversy in our world. Together we stand and divided we fall. Controversy is not new. That is what Paul was referring to in the text. Paul gives us hope that we can overcome the controversy. He said that God is peace. There were deep rifts between the Jews and the Gentiles. The Jews had a unique covenant relationship with God; and the Gentiles did not. This deep seated difference created a sense of superiority on the part of the Jews and hostility on the part of the Gentiles. Though the black race is diverse, we have racism among ourselves. Blacks with a lighter shade skin discriminate against blacks with darker skin and vice versa. Every one of us has allowed perceived differences to separate ourselves from other people.

The whole race issue in America is about being different. Different does not mean deficient. We have all been created in the image of God and deserve to be treated with dignity. There were some differences among the Jews that made them deficient. The real differences in our world are spiritual. The Gentiles were considered aliens. The Gentiles did not have a promise of the Messiah to set them free. They were excluded from citizenship with Israel. The Gentiles were treated like the undocumented immigrants that come to this country for a better life. Can you imagine what it would be like to have no promise in Christ? Some of us remember a time when we didn’t have a covenant relationship with God. Others act as if we have always had one. The Jews viewed Gentiles as pagans because they worshiped gods with no power, which gave them no hope. When you don’t have hope you become desperate. Desperate people do desperate things like taking out road rage on other people or killing your family and yourself. We wonder why these things are happening in our world. It is because people do not have

Christ. Those who are oppressed and without hope often hate and hurt others. Oppressed people oppress people.

In our society, races look down on other races. The Gentiles' dilemma is the world's dilemma. Being without God is the root of sexism, racism, and class-ism. It is God's spirit that provokes us to love. **John 3:16** Sin is the great separator. The sins of arrogance, superiority, pride, and unwillingness to ask for forgiveness, are the great separators. However, God is our peace. The reason why the Jews were blessed in the first place was to bless the Gentiles and bring them to God. We were blessed to bring others to God. It doesn't matter who they are. They are all God's people and they have the potential to be saved. Jesus ripped the barrier down by his death. He did away with the reason for the hostility between them.

Matthew 5:7 Christ abolished the Jewish ceremonial law because it included rules and regulations that excluded others. We are like crabs in a barrel; one person advances and we pull them back down. We use qualifications that we make up along the way to shut out others. No one can claim special privilege. We are all sinners saved by grace. Both Jew and Gentile had to come to Christ to be saved. Christ created a third race. When you became saved, you did not lose your ethnicity. God didn't want you to lose your uniqueness. However, He wants you to understand that we are reconciled in Christ. We are one body. We have access to one God. We are brothers and sisters. We are here to show the world one-ness. We don't have to always agree but we have the same purpose and the same goal. We are called to transform this nation into a new kingdom. America has been broken for a long time. God called us to bring about His kingdom on earth. The world is not going to change just because we get a new president. It will change when the people of God stand up and put aside our petty differences.

Peace

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