

One New Humanity (Part 1)

Pastor Steve Lee
June 28, 2020



Proverbs
3:8-9

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.



Sarah Shin

*(Beyond
Colorblind)*

Michael, a twenty-four-year-old black man, was sharing with his small group about some hurtful experiences with racism that he had endured in the past year.

An elderly white woman tried to respond to his sharing with grandmotherly kindness.

“Oh Michael, when I see you, I see you. I don’t see your color.”

Michael didn’t know what to say, so he said nothing. But internally he thought, *I’m a black*



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man from Los Angeles. If you don't see my color, you might as well not see me at all.

Using the paradigm of colorblindness, the woman was trying her best to affirm Michael's humanity and dignity. She was trying to say, "I'm not one of those racist people who thought color was a reason to degrade you."

But what Michael heard was invalidation: I don't see you.

Why did they miss each other?



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Colorblindness seems to deny the beautiful variations and cultural differences in our stories. How would you feel if you shared something that's part of your Chinese, black, Irish, or Colombian background, and someone replied, "I'm colorblind!"? Blind to what? The food, stories, and cultural values that make up the valid and wonderful parts of who we are?



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Colorblindness, though well intentioned, is inhospitable. Colorblindness assumes that we are similar enough and that we all only have good intentions, so we can avoid our differences. Given the ethnic tensions exposed by the 2016 election, we're seeing instead that our stories *are* different, and those differences cannot be avoided. Racially charged, ethnically divisive comments flood our social media outlets



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and news screens. Good intentions alone are ineffective medicine for such scars. The idea that we have transcended ethnic difference has been exposed as a mirage.

... We need something beyond colorblindness, something that both values beauty in our cultures and also addresses real problems that still exist in our society decades after the civil rights movement.

Ephesians
2:11-22

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)—remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in

Ephesians
2:11-22

Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity

Ephesians
2:11-22

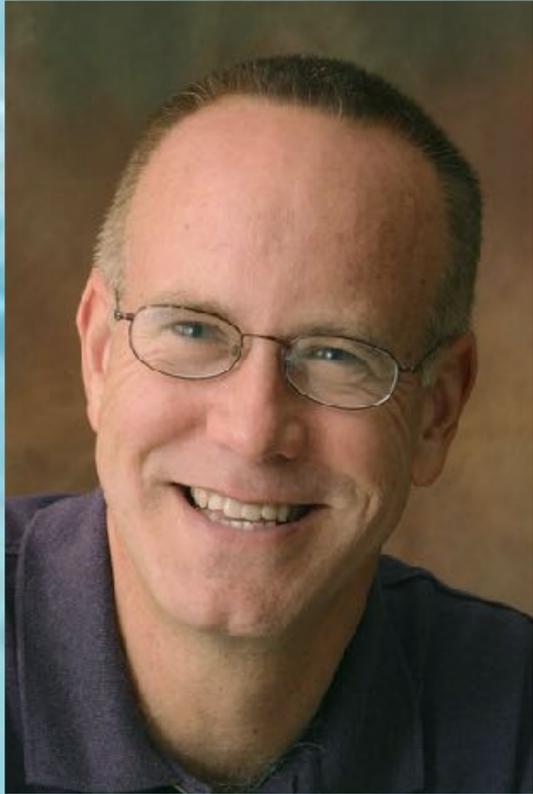
out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners

Ephesians
2:11-22

and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.





**Mark
Roberts**

Given the widespread divisions in our world, we can feel overwhelmed. We may ask: How can I hope to bring reconciliation to this world? ... Often God begins with us, helping us see the walls that we erect or to which we contribute. These walls might be obvious ones, like racial prejudice, ethnic hatred, greed, or unbridled nationalism.



**Mark
Roberts**

Yet the walls that keep us from experiencing reconciliation may be more hidden, such as physical and relational distance from people who are different from us, habits of self-centeredness, traditions that foster separatism, or just plain ignorance that breeds insensitivity.









Brené Brown

*(Braving the
Wilderness)*

We must never tolerate dehumanization—the primary instrument of violence that has been used in every genocide recorded throughout history. ... And if our faith asks us to find the face of God in everyone we meet, that should include the politicians, media, and strangers on Twitter with whom we most violently disagree. When we desecrate their divinity, we desecrate our own, and we betray our faith. ... An important example is the debate



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around Black Lives Matter, Blue Lives Matter, and All Lives Matter. Can you believe that black lives matter and also care deeply about the well-being of police officers? Of course. Can you care about the well-being of police officers and at the same time be concerned about abuses of power and systemic racism in law enforcement and the criminal justice system? Yes. I have relatives who are police officers—I can't tell you how deeply I care



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about their safety and well-being. I do almost all of my pro bono work with the military and public servants like the police—I care. And when we care, we should all want just systems that reflect the honor and dignity of the people who serve in those systems.

But then, if it's the case that we can care about citizens and the police, shouldn't the rallying cry just be All Lives Matter? No. Because the humanity wasn't stripped from



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all lives the way it was stripped from the lives of black citizens. In order for slavery to work, in order for us to buy, sell, beat, and trade people like animals, Americans had to completely dehumanize slaves. And whether we directly participated in that or were simply a member of a culture that at one time normalized that behavior, it shaped us. We can't undo that level of dehumanizing in one or two generations. I believe Black Lives



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Matter is a movement to rehumanize black citizens. All lives matter, but not all lives need to be pulled back into moral inclusion. Not all people were subjected to the psychological process of demonizing and being made less than human so we could justify the inhumane practice of slavery.

Ephesians
2:17-18

He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

SUMMARY

Through the cross of Christ God not only reconciled us to himself but also torn down the dividing wall of hostility enabling us to be reconciled with one another.