

Question: Just when I thought we had finally come beyond the problem of racial prejudice, I hear news of police using excessive force against young black men. How would Jesus respond to this news?

The recent police shootings of young black men is indeed disturbing. Part of the problem is the use of excessive force when unnecessary. However, at the root of these incidents does seem to be racial profiling based on racial prejudice. In view of what the Bible teaches, we can confidently say that Jesus would not approve of this.

Instead of favoring one race over another, Jesus came into this world and died for all people of all nations, races and colors? John 3:16 says, “For God so loved *the world* that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life” [Italics mine for emphasis]. Because Jesus shed his blood for our sins, the invitation of the Spirit and the bride at the end of the Bible said: “Come! Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life” (Rev 22:17 NIV). We are all created in the same image of God, and we are all—red, yellow, black and white—descendants of Adam.

But racial conflict is not something new. A great cultural, religious and social wall stood between Jews and Gentiles in the first Christian century. Envy and hatred existed between Samaritans and Jews. Jesus came to break down those racial walls. He talked with a Samaritan woman (John 4:7ff). He told of a Samaritan who showed kindness to a man that had been beaten and robbed while a Jewish priest and a Levite passed on by the man (Luke 10:30-37). A vision from heaven told the apostle Peter to go to the house of Cornelius, a Gentile. When he arrived, Peter said, “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism, but accepts men from every nation” (Acts 10:34-35). Thus, the Bible declares, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).

While we do need reforms in many of our law-enforcement methods, I believe the ultimate solution to the current problem is to be found only through transformation in the hearts of people of our nation by the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, the most segregated hour of the week in America is the

Sunday morning worship hour. The church really should be a model for the world to see how people of all races can come together to glorify God and lovingly embrace, encourage and bless one another in a sweet spirit of fellowship. The church should be a place where people are accepted as people and cared for as people rather than as Caucasian-Americans or African-Americans.

To illustrate the importance of acceptance and respect, an inner-city teacher talked with her second graders about how the differences between people did not make them either good or bad. One child said, “But teacher, you are different from us.” The children began to guess what color she was. Some said pink. Others guessed white, peach, creamy, yellow or shiny. She left the room to allow them to decide for themselves. When she returned, they said they knew. The answer they gave was “Teacher, you are clear.” Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could all just see one another as “clear,” no matter the color. I believe that’s what Jesus would have us do.

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