

Glen Ellyn Bible Church's Statement on Racial Equality, Justice and Unity

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this paper is to affirm the biblical equality of all people, as well as call for continued work on issues of racial justice and unity. While we celebrate the meaningful strides that have been made on issues of race in America, we also believe there is important work still to be done and that the Church has a vital role to play in this work. We view humanity through the lens of the Gospel, both acknowledging the sobering truth of the wickedness of the human heart brought by the presence of sin, as well as the necessity and availability of God's grace shown towards us in Christ. We recognize there can be a temptation to look away from the sin of racism. We choose to look directly at it, embracing a biblical framework that will guide us toward a deeper understanding of God's desire for equality, justice, and unity among all image-bearers. We are called to this work as followers of Christ. This is Kingdom work.

The Image of God and the Sin of Racism

Scripture teaches that all people are made in the image of God ([Genesis 1:26-27](#)), and that the Kingdom of God will include "every nation, tribe, people and language" ([Revelation 7:9-10](#)). As a result, all people are inherently valuable and equally valued in God's sight, and those who are trusting in Christ for salvation are "one" ([Galatians 3:28](#)). As a response the church is to include all peoples. The multi-racial reality of the gospel was clearly seen in Jesus' efforts to make His ministry inclusive of Samaritans ([Luke 10:25-37](#), [John 4:7-10](#)), as well as the Canaanite woman ([Matthew 15:21-28](#)). This reality was also demonstrated in the early church where the Spirit was poured out on peoples from many nations ([Acts 2:8-12](#)), the prophets and teachers in Antioch were of different races ([Acts 13:1](#)). Paul later explained that reconciliation between people groups is a direct result of the gospel's ministry ([Ephesians 2:11-13](#)). Admittedly, not everything was perfect in the early church. They had racial issues to address as well. For example, Paul famously confronted Peter in Antioch for drawing back from fellowship with Gentiles, which was little more than a posture of racism on Peter's part, albeit expressed through Jewish ethnic food laws ([Galatians 2:11-13](#)).

Racism has often undermined unity within the American Church too. This began with slavery, but sadly did not end with the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment. Racism is any attitude or system of oppression based upon racial makeup (e.g., skin color). Racism is "prejudice plus power," which is aimed at discriminating against a person or group of people (The Color of Compromise, Tisby 16). When racism is present division always results. Even after the Civil War, many of our political, economic, social, and religious institutions, functioned with racist laws, ideologies, policies, and practices, which persisted for decades. Examples include, but are not limited to: 1) Jim Crow laws; 2) policies by local school boards designed to thwart desegregation and the U.S. Supreme Court's pronouncement that "separate is inherently unequal;" and 3) the practice of systematically excluding black Americans in some of America's most prominent institutions of higher education, religious organizations, social clubs, and even local facilities such as parks and local sports teams. Although discrimination based on race is illegal in America, the effects of these laws, policies and practices are still too often felt today by many Americans of color. Examples include, among other things, housing and zoning policies, lending practices, the availability of quality education, and aspects of the criminal justice system.

Much of the progress on issues of race has allowed society to see that racism is often more subtle and, in some cases, is even embedded within the normal day to day operations of cultural institutions. This leads to a “racialized society.” A racialized society is one that affords different economic, political, social, and even psychological rewards along racial lines. Often referred to as “systemic” racism, statistical evidence for racialization within American society is overwhelming and is seen in black-white inequalities in health, income, college graduation rates, home ownership, and incarceration rates. As a result, and often without realizing it, people of good faith can sustain a racialized society in some of the ordinary activities of our everyday lives.

As shepherds of GEBC, we write to respond to these tragic realities by denouncing racism and racialization in all forms and naming it as a sin against humanity and God. We write to lament the damage done by racism. We write to call the people of GEBC to repent of any and all racist beliefs, postures and/or practices, and to embrace Christ’s teaching to love our neighbor as ourselves ([Matthew 22:37-40](#)) and live in unity with one another ([Galatians 3:28](#), [Colossians 3:14](#)). Finally, we write to declare our commitment to pursue justice by actively addressing racism and working to strengthen unity within our church and the broader community, thereby empowering the people of GEBC to live as ambassadors of healing, justice, and reconciliation ([Micah 6:8](#), [2 Corinthians 5:18-20](#)).

Biblical Foundations of Racial Equality, Justice and Unity

Biblically, we know that God does not show favoritism toward anyone ([Deuteronomy 10:17](#), [Acts 10:34-35](#), [Romans 2:11](#), [Ephesians 6:9](#)) and that we are not to discriminate against anyone for any reason ([James 2:1-4](#)). Unfortunately, some have confused God’s “choosing” Israel and requiring them to live separated from other nations as an affirmation of racism. However, God’s selection of Israel was based not upon any physical attribute or cultural heritage of a people group, but was rather the calling of a singular man, Abram, through whom God decided to bless all peoples of the world ([Genesis 12:3](#), [Genesis 18:18](#)).

From our New Testament perspective, we know that God’s purposes in keeping Israel separate from other nations was not an affirmation of Israel’s racial superiority but was rather a means to ensure that his redemptive work of blessing all peoples would be accomplished through Israel ([Romans 9:3-5](#)). Unfortunately, Israel failed to keep the Law of God and their sin created hostility with other nations. If the Law had been kept by Israel, a law which included loving God and all their neighbors ([Deuteronomy 6:5](#), [Leviticus 19:18](#), [33-34](#)), then Israel would have maintained communion with God as well as a good standing with all other people groups.

One implication of the good news of the Gospel is that the dividing wall of hostility that grew between Jews and Gentiles was destroyed through Jesus’ ministry ([Ephesians 2:14](#)). Part of God’s plan in redemptive history was to create one new humanity ([Ephesians 2:15-16](#)). This means that all forms of racism are affronts to the work of Christ on the cross, antithetical to the gospel, and contrary to God’s work in the world. In fact, all those who have faith in Christ have been given a ministry of reconciliation in which we are to reach out and invite all people into the fellowship of the church ([2 Corinthians 5:18-20](#)). This means that it is incumbent on Christians to expose the evil deeds of darkness and call people to embrace the multiethnic reality of Heaven ([Ephesians 5:11](#), [Revelation 5:9-10](#), [22:1-5](#)).

Racism is Sin and the Gospel is Unity

Race is a socio-cultural construct, which is to say that it is people and not God who have elevated certain physical attributes and discriminated against one another based upon those prejudices. While the Bible never speaks against racism directly, there are many vice lists in the New Testament which clearly identify racism as contrary to the character and purposes of God. For example, Paul lists “discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy” as works of the flesh ([Galatians 5:19-21](#)), all of which are involved in racist attitudes and actions. Racism at its core is sinful in its prideful posture, exalting one people group over another, while denigrating or altogether denying the image-bearing capacity of certain groups ([Genesis 1:26-27](#)).

Finally, racism is sinful because it opposes the command to love our neighbor as we love ourselves ([Matthew 22:37-40](#)). Although racism is a part of the sinfulness that has corrupted our relationships with each other, through faith in Jesus Christ’s sinless life, sacrificial death and victorious resurrection, we who were once divided by our sin are now brought into the one family of God, the one body of Christ, and the one community of God’s people ([Ephesians 2:14-16](#)). Through our mutual faith in Jesus’ victory over sin, we not only have peace with God, but we also have peace with one another.

GEBC is committed to treating all individuals as image-bearers of God and to loving all people. We pursue the great multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language with the good news of Jesus’ victory over sin. We believe that making a commitment to racial and ethnic diversity and unity within our congregation, as well as making a commitment to advocating for justice, is central to fulfilling the Great Commission and keeping the Greatest Commandments. We strive to cultivate a community in which all people are loved, respected, and helped in following after Jesus ([Matthew 22:37-40](#), [28:19-20](#); [Revelation 7:9-10](#)).

Confession, Repentance and Commitments

We confess that our priorities at GEBC specifically and within the larger Church of America generally, have not always demonstrated God’s commitment to racial equality, justice, and unity. In this, both individuals within the community and the community as a whole have sinned by committing overt acts of racism in attitudes and actions of discrimination and prejudice, as well as passive acts of racism by failing to advocate for those who were being sinned against. We confess the sin of not only active attitudes and actions of racism, but also passive silence and inaction in the face of racial discrimination, prejudices, and injustice.

We repent of these sins, turning away from both the active and passive sins of racism. We celebrate God’s mercy and grace shown toward us in Christ. We celebrate Christ’s reconciling death on the cross, and we dedicate ourselves to creating an environment where all people know we are Christ-followers by the way we love one another ([Mark 3:24-26](#); [John 13:34-35](#); [Ephesians 2:11-16](#); [1 John 1:7-10](#)). Toward that end, Glen Ellyn Bible Church makes the following commitments:

Racial Diversity: We commit to pursue and welcome all people as image-bearers of God who are uniquely, fearfully, and wonderfully made by and for his glory ([Psalm 139:14](#), [Colossians 1:15-17](#)).

Racial Inclusion: We commit to include people of all races as full participants within the church as respected, valued, and supported ambassadors of Christ ([2 Corinthians 5:18-20](#)). We commit to expose and work to transform attitudes and actions of racism, inequality, and division, while at the same time cultivating hospitable attitudes and actions ([Galatians 2:11-13](#); [Galatians 3:28](#)). We commit to nurture the unique talents, experiences, cultural expressions of faith, and perspectives of all peoples in an effort to enjoy the varied reflections of the family of God ([Romans 12:3-8](#); [1 Corinthians 12:12-13](#)).

Racial Justice: We commit to act for what is right, equitable, and fair in our church body, as well as the broader communities in which our church is located ([Psalm 89:14](#); [Micah 6:8](#); [Matthew 23:23](#); [Luke 10:25-37](#)). We commit to fight the good fight of faith, advocating for the marginalized and oppressed ([Psalm 146:7-9](#); [Proverbs 17:15](#); [Mark 10:42-45](#); [Acts 6:1-7](#)).

Lament for the Sin of Racism: We commit to mourn with those who mourn, continuing in repentance over the sins of racism committed within our country. While we are not all equally guilty of the sins of racism, we raise our voices to repent as members of a nation that is guilty, recognizing our responsibility for bringing change. Just as Ezra had not been personally culpable for the sins he confessed, he nonetheless accepted responsibility for the sins that his community had committed ([Ezra 9:5-7](#)). And just as Daniel confessed the sins of his nation, although he was not personally guilty of committing the sins he named, we too confess and repent of the sins we have collectively committed ([Daniel 9:8](#)). In confession, Nehemiah went so far as to not only acknowledge the sins of the community, but to personally identify with sins committed by the broader community of Israel ([Nehemiah 1:4-7](#)).

Pray: We commit to pray “against the spiritual forces of evil,” which are at work in the sinful activities of racism ([Ephesians 6:12](#)). We commit to pray for both the healing and full restoration of the victims of racism, as well as for the forgiveness of racists, asking that God grant them the gift of repentance. It’s our prayer that “godly sorrow” will lead to repentance in our lives and healing in our nation ([2 Corinthians 7:10](#)). We ask that God make us one in faith, affection, and goals by the Holy Spirit ([Psalm 133:1-3](#); [John 17:20-23](#), [1 Corinthians 1:10](#); [Ephesians 4:11-13](#)).

Conclusion

Finally, Glen Ellyn Bible Church stands with and for those who are and have been the target of racism, believing that it is incumbent on the followers of Christ to stand up and defend the rights of the oppressed. We are also calling for change. Change in the hearts and minds of citizens and leaders to strengthen the work of justice and put an end to all forms of racism. Realizing that inaction in the face of racism is participation in evil, we want to act. Christians are to love their neighbor in word and deed, even as they love themselves ([Mark 12:31](#)).

Suggested Reading List

White Awake: An Honest Look At What It Means To Be White, by Daniel Hill.

- The Elders of GEBC read and discussed this book together and would highly recommend it for those wanting a pastoral reflection on issues of race. Pastor Hill lays out a framework for understanding cultural identity and the needed growth toward racial unity within the American church.

Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation, by Latasha Morrison

- The Elders of GEBC read and discussed this book together and would highly recommend it for those wanting an honest reflection on black experience within the white church. Morrison offers a personal reflection on racism in the American church as well as providing a call to unity and offering practical steps in that journey.

Building A Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church, by Mark DeYmaz

- Several of the GEBC staff read and discussed this book together and would recommend it for anyone wanting to help take strategic steps in diversifying the church worship experience. With Sunday morning worship continuing to be the most racially segregated experience in America, DeYmaz outlines the multi-ethnic realities of the Kingdom of God and identifies seven commitments to becoming a multi-ethnic church.

The Color of Compromise: The Truth About the American Church's Complicity in Racism, by Jemar Tisby.

- Several of the GEBC staff and Elders have read this book and would recommend it to anyone wanting a detailed historical description of racism in the churches of American. Tisby begins in the Colonial era churches and traces the racist policies, practices and postures that have undermined the gospel's witness in America.

Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion And The Problem of Race in America, by Michael Emerson and Christian Smith

- This work is a considered essential reading by many. The authors focus on both historic forces within the Evangelical church that have fueled racism, as well as cultural values, norms and organizational features that perpetuate racism.

From Every People and Nation: A Biblical Theology of Race, by Daniel J. Hays

- This is an academic work that offers a biblical survey of the multi-ethnic dimensions of the Kingdom of God. This is highly recommended for those wanting to know what Scripture says about God's love for all races.

Rediscipling the White Church: From Cheap Diversity to True Solidarity, by David Swanson

- Swanson is a white pastor serving in a multi-cultural church in Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood. Believing that racism is ultimately a failure to fully disciple followers of Christ, he outlines a strategy for congregational discipleship that aims at diversity.

Scripture References

Genesis 1:26-27 (NIV): Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Genesis 12:3 (NIV): I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Genesis 18:18 (NIV): Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him.

Leviticus 19:18 (NIV): 'Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

Leviticus 19:33-34 (NIV): When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 6:5 (NIV): Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Deuteronomy 10:17 (NIV): For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes.

Ezra 9:5-7 (NIV): Then, at the evening sacrifice, I rose from my self-abasement, with my tunic and cloak torn, and fell on my knees with my hands spread out to the LORD my God and prayed: "I am too ashamed and disgraced, my God, to lift up my face to you, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens. ⁷From the days of our ancestors until now, our guilt has been great. Because of our sins, we and our kings and our priests have been subjected to the sword and captivity, to pillage and humiliation at the hand of foreign kings, as it is today.

Nehemiah 1:4-7 (NIV): When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. Then I said: "LORD, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's family, have committed against you. We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

Psalms 89:14 (NIV): Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you.

Psalms 133:1-3 (NIV): How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down on the collar of his robe. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.

Psalms 139:14 (NIV): I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Psalms 146:7-9 (NIV): He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free, the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous. The LORD watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

Proverbs 17:15 (NIV): Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent—the LORD detests them both.

Daniel 9:8 (NIV): We and our kings, our princes and our ancestors are covered with shame, LORD, because we have sinned against you.

Jonah 4:1-4 (NIV): But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. He prayed to the LORD, “Isn’t this what I said, LORD, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. Now, LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.”⁴ But the LORD replied, “Is it right for you to be angry?”

Micah 6:8 (NIV): He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Matthew 15:21-28 (NIV): Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.” Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.” He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.” The woman came and knelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she said. He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.” “Yes it is, Lord,” she said. “Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.” Then Jesus said to her, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed at that moment.

Matthew 22:37-40 (NIV): Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Matthew 23:23 (NIV): “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV): Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Mark 3:24-26 (NIV): If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come.

Mark 10:42-45 (NIV): Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Mark 12:31 (NIV): The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

Luke 10:25-37 (NIV): On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?” He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

John 4:7-10 (NIV): When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

John 13:34-35 (NIV): “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

John 17:20-23 (NIV): My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Acts 2:8-12 (NIV): Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

Acts 6:1-7 (NIV): In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews^[a] among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.” This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

Acts 10:34-35 (NIV): Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.

Acts 13:1 (NIV): Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul.

Romans 2:11 (NIV): For God does not show favoritism.

Romans 9:3-5 (NIV): For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.

Romans 12:3-8 (NIV): For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

1 Corinthians 1:10 (NIV): I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 (NIV): Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by^[c] one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 (NIV): All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 7:10 (NIV): Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

Galatians 2:11-13 (NIV): When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

Galatians 3:28 (NIV): There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 5:19-21 (NIV): The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Ephesians 2:11-13 (NIV): 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 Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Ephesians 2:14-16 (NIV): 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 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.

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NIV): So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 5:11 (NIV): Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.

Ephesians 6:9 (NIV): And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

Ephesians 6:12 (NIV): For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Colossians 1:15-17 (NIV): The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Colossians 3:14 (NIV): And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

James 2:1-4 (NIV): My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

1 John 1:7-10 (NIV): But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all^b sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

Revelation 5:9-10 (NIV): And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

Revelation 7:9-10 (NIV): After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

Revelation 22:1-5 (NIV): Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.