

Repairing the Breach Part 2 Disc 2

By Dr. Tony Campolo

Dr. Campolo:

Because we cannot play this game anymore. We need a view of human nature that's different.

My view of human nature comes from two places first, Genesis 2:7, where God Himself comes down and breathes into every human being His own breath and makes every human being a living soul. The thing that makes you a human being is not that you're white, it's not that you're black, it's that the Holy Spirit has poured Himself into your life. The breath of God in you. But there's something more. Of all the passages in Scripture that have hit me over the years, none has hit me more than this. The 25th chapter of Matthew, where Jesus describes Judgment Day, and in the end makes the judgment in these terms, "Whatever you do to the least of these, my brothers and sisters, you do to Me." Now let me just say what that means. Somebody says, well, a particular religious leader was a wonderful person. He just didn't have any time for race, for race relations. He-He just didn't have any time for black people. I got news for you. You can't accept Jesus Christ over here and reject black people over here. Why? Because the Jesus over here says, "I'm not over here. I'm in your black brother." And when you reject your black brother, guess who you're rejecting?

And that cuts both ways. If you folks reject me, you're rejecting Jesus, for Jesus chooses to present Himself to you through me, just as He presents Himself to me through you. You cannot reject a person of the opposite race without simultaneously rejecting Jesus. When somebody says, "I love God, but I can't stand black people," this is what the Bible says. "If any man says 'I

love God' and doesn't love his brother," I got news for you! I mean, I want to be kind to racists, but there's not much room for it.

[Audience laughs]

Dr. Campolo:

First John says, "Anybody that says I love God but doesn't love his brother is a--"

[Audio cuts out]

Dr. Campolo:

Did I say that? This Bible is inerrant, amen? And it means what it says and it says what it means. And if you got a race problem, you got something deeper than an attitude problem. You need to be saved.

[Audience applauds]

Dr. Campolo:

This is not sin. It's deeper than sin. To reject your brother is to reject Jesus Christ, for He says, "Whatever you do to the least of these, you do to Me." Please don't think I've accepted Jesus, but I've got an attitude problem over here with--." You don't have an attitude problem over here. You've got a spiritual problem over here, because you cannot love Jesus, for the Jesus you claim to love chooses to wrap Himself up in the last and in the least of the brothers and sisters and says, "If you can't love Me here, you can't love Me at all." See, for a long time, I used to think that-that 25th chapter of Matthew reeked of work salvation, on Judgment Day, we get judged in terms of-of how well we treated poor people. Oh, no, it's deeper than that. On Judgement Day,

there will only be one question asked. Did you accept and love Jesus Christ? That's the only question. But the problem is that we have defined loving and accepting Jesus Christ as accepting a doctrinal belief. If you believe certain propositions then--oh, no, Jesus is a person that waits to be loved in the least of the brothers that presents himself to you, the least of the sisters that presents herself to you. And He says, "Come love me here."

We have to have a deeper understanding, not only of who God is. That God is the God who comes to us in Jesus Christ, and is revealed in Scripture, and challenges all our cultural definitions and social inventions. And we need a biblical understanding of who we are, that each of us becomes a person through whom God presents Himself to the other to be loved. And then last of all, we need a biblical understanding of the church. Ephesians, the second chapter, Paul is writing to the Ephesian Christians and talking about the church, and he says this, "In times past, the temple kept you apart." In the Jewish temple, as you know, there were areas. There was the holy place where the Jewish circumcised men could be. Then there was the outer court where gentiles and women could be. And here's what it says. Listen, "When Jesus died on the cross," says the apostle Paul in Ephesians, the second chapter, that wall, that partition in the temple that separated Jews, the elite, from Gentiles, the dogs, from women, the accursed, that wall that separated them, says the scripture in the second chapter of Ephesians, was torn down. There was an earthquake when Jesus hung on the cross and the wall that separated them was done away with, for in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, [unintelligible] nor barbarian, male nor female. The wall that differentiated us is no more.

My friend Clarence Jardin, Koinonia Farms, went to preach a revival in the early 50's. '55, to be exact, in the hills of South Carolina. To his surprise, when he came out on the rostrum to speak, the congregation, about 500 people packed to the doors. The congregation was racially mixed, about 50/50 black and white. He was amazed that in the hills of South Carolina, where redneckism is supposed to be so severe, there was this integrated congregation. When he was over, [unintelligible], he went to the pastor. He said, "How'd you get like this?" Pastor said, "Like, what?" He said, "Black and white people together, integrated? Has this come about since the decision?" Well the other preacher said, "What-what decision?" He said, "The Supreme Court decision." He said, "A Supreme Court, what's that got to do with Christians?" Good question. Maybe the world out there needs some legal directives as to who they should associate with. But the Christian church shouldn't have such directives. Clarence said, "Now, come on, you're putting me on. You know you got an unusual church." He said, "Well, down here when you're knee high in a grasshopper, you're told there's a difference between white folks and black folks. But all of that changes. You see, the pastor of his church died. We had about twenty members in the church in those days."

Well, now they were over a thousand members in the church. "Had about 20 members in those days. And they couldn't get a new preacher to come here no how. So after about three months, I told the deacons, and said, 'if they can't get a preacher I'll preach.' So they let me preach. And I opened the Bible, I put my finger down, and it landed on that verse. In Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female. All have become one in Christ Jesus. And I preached to the people, Hell--Jesus makes people one. And after the service is over, the deacons

called me in the back room and they told me they didn't want to hear that kind of preaching no more." Clarence said, "What did you do?" Old hillbilly preacher said, "I fired them deacons!"

[Audience applauds]

Dr. Campolo:

But you know, if a deacon is not going to deac, he ought to be fired.

[Audience laughs]

Dr. Campolo:

He said, "Once I found out what bothered them people," he said, "I gave it to them every week."

[Audience laughs]

Dr. Campolo:

There are preachers like that, you know, once they know where it hurts, they put the knife in the same place.

[Audience laughs]

Dr. Campolo:

[Unintelligible]. Clarence said, "Well did they put up with it?" He said, "I preached that church down to four!" Wouldn't go over too well at Fuller, with their church growth beliefs.

[Audience laughs]

Dr. Campolo:

But sometimes revival begins, not when you grow a church, but when you get some people out of the church, because the Bible says that the Holy Spirit couldn't do much to Jesus when He got to His home town Nazareth because of the way the people were. John Wesley went to preach in Northern Ireland. When he got back, his brother Charles said, "Was there a revival?" John said, "A great revival." Charles said, "Were there many additions to the church?" He said, "No. There was a host of blessed subtractions." Sometimes those who-who--I think that one of the problems of the church is that we put up with crap in the church that we shouldn't put up with. We-we-we say so-and-so has got a race problem. If you're going to put a homosexual out of the church, why not put a racist out? Or are there two kinds of sin? We all, oh, we have these guys who are ready to throw every homo out of the place. "Did you know he committed a homosexual act? I think we have to 'regretfully' expel him." Well if are you going to expel him, why not expel the racist? No, I'm serious. We've got some very interesting values out there.

He said, "I preached that church down to four." "Four?" He said, "Yeah. And then after that, we only let Christians into the church." He said, "How did you know they were Christians? I said-he said, "I'll tell you how we knew we were Christians, because down here, as I was telling you, you're taught that there's a difference between black people and white people. But when you really come to know Jesus, you forget all of that. And that's how we got to where we are today." That night, Clarence rode to stay overnight at the home of a professor from the University of South Carolina who drove 70 miles each Sunday to attend that church. And as he rode home to stay overnight with this young, sophisticated member of the intelligentsia, he said, "Why do you go to that church? I mean, that man can't speak a sentence of the English language without mispronouncing words or using grammatical errors. Why do you go to that church?" He was just

kind of testing this sophisticated man, and this brilliant intellectual said, "Sir, I go to that church because that man preaches the gospel." And that is the gospel, isn't it? That is the gospel.

The evangelical church, according to the last meeting of the black ministerial of Philadelphia, which I'm a part because I'm an associate pastor of a black church, had a serious discussion as to whether or not the black community could survive evangelicalism, because this is what's happening. We got a problem in the school system of this country. The evangelical answer has been what? Vouchers. You know what that's going to mean? It's going to mean that people will get a couple of thousand dollars from the government. And if they got enough money, they can put another couple of thousand dollars to it and send their kids to church schools, please, I think the Christian schools are wonderful, but we cannot build up Christian schools at the expense of the public school system for the simple reason that that's where the black folk go. And when you introduce the voucher system, what you are basically doing in the city of Philadelphia, is you're taking money away from black kids and giving it to middle class kids, and the poor will suffer. You will end up with a two-tier system.

Secondly, I-I really resent it when I hear everybody dump on public school teachers, the NAE, NEA, rather, the National Education Association, in its latest report said that 72 percent of all schoolteachers in America are members of churches. And of the 72 percent that are members of churches, 50 percent are born again Christians. Know why I say that? Because I'm tired of hearing the public-school system described as a citadel of secular humanism, because it isn't. As a matter of fact, I teach college. When they arrive to-from the public-school system, they haven't a clue as to what secular humanism is all about. They know about evolution, but that's about it. I

think it's about time that we stand up and cheer for those Christian people who are willing to go into the public-school system and tough it out in one of the worst and most difficult mission fields that there is in America today.

[Audience applauds]

Dr. Campolo:

And that public-school system, whether you want to admit it or not, is going to be where most black kids go. And if you destroy that system, you destroy the hope of black kids. It's about time we face up to what the problems are. You can't have kids watch television for eight hours a day, raised in single parent homes, nurtured on a drug culture, live in a community of violence, and say, "I think that the problem is the public-school system." This school does its best, not when it creates a Christian enclave from which it rescues people from that bad, bad world, but when Biola University, like Eastern College where I teach, trains up a generation of young people who will go into the tough places, into all the world, and preach the gospel, and to rescue, and to redeem, and to set things right.

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