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Critical Theory and Its Incompatibility with Christianity, II; 1 Peter 2:13-25

GPBC

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Introduction – Last week we looked at a couple of passages, one in Isaiah and one in James, to see the Bible teaches we as believers are to seek justice and to correct oppression. We are to protect those who cannot protect themselves, speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, extend mercy, be gracious, expose injustice, demand accountability, shine light on truth. In other words, we are to love our neighbor. We are to do unto others as we would want others to do to us.

But how are we as believers to respond to governing authorities and institutions that mistreat us? What are we to do when the system is corrupt and is causing us to suffer? Are we to tear it down? Are we to call for revolution? Are we to resist and disrupt and dismantle? Let's look at 1 Peter 2:13-25.

The two places in the NT where we are instructed to obey and submit to our governing authorities, here and in Romans, both letters were written to Christians who were undergoing heavy, brutal, government led persecution.

The Bible instructs us as believers when we find ourselves suffering unjustly to suffer well. God is working in our suffering for His glory, our good, and the advance of the gospel. We are to trust God. He is keeping a tight ledger of every single abuse that has ever taken place, and He will right every wrong.

To recap last week. Let's just briefly remind ourselves what is critical theory. Critical theory is a political theory, a view of life, that has its roots all the way back into the 18<sup>th</sup> C. It first appeared as Classical Marxism in the early 19<sup>th</sup> C. Then it was revamped into Cultural Marxism in the 20<sup>th</sup> C. And now it has been revamped again as Critical Theory in the 21<sup>st</sup> C.

Critical Theory is a worldview that views everything through the lens of power. Every individual either has power or is without power, meaning you are

either an oppressor or you are oppressed. Those who hold the power structure the institutions and systems of a society in such a way as to remain in power and continue oppressing the masses. This is called hegemony, or hegemonic power. Therefore, the only way to liberate the masses is for those in power to divest themselves of their power, and those who are oppressed must gain power by tearing down the corrupt system. The call is for a moral and cultural revolution that will upend the current system in order to establish a new one.

In our cultural setting, those who hold the power and must be removed from power are one or more of these categories; white, male, heterosexual, cisgender, native-born, able-bodied, conservative evangelical. These people represent the hegemony. They are the problem. They are the cause of racism and every other form of oppression.

I. How Widespread is It?

- a. Just weeks ago the City of Seattle held a training session for their white staffers instructing them on “undoing your own whiteness.” One handout read “racism is not our fault but we are responsible.” Another read that white staffers must give up “the land” and their “guaranteed physical safety” in order to be an “accomplice” for racial justice. Christopher Rufo, who exposed this training session, urged ““This new racial orthodoxy is now sweeping through local government, schools, and corporate HR departments, and threatens to undermine the American idea of equality under the law. The City of Seattle should immediately launch an investigation into this practice, change its policy on race-segregated training sessions, and abandon the cult-like ideology of 'critical race theory.'”
- b. An article on “whiteness” that appears on the Smithsonian Institute website reads, “Since white people in America hold most of the political, institutional, and economic power, they receive advantages that nonwhite groups do not.” This is called “white privilege.” Examples of “white culture” in America include: rugged individualism, the nuclear family, objective, rational linear thinking, the primacy of Western and Judeo-Christian tradition, a Protestant work ethic, Christianity is the norm, no deviation from single god concept, holidays based on Christian religions, and majority rules

(when Whites have power). Are these examples of white culture or biblical principles? The solution then is if you identify as white, you must acknowledge your privileges as a crucial step to end racism. Facing your whiteness is difficult. This is called “white fragility.” A term coined by Robin Diangelo, who wrote the book, “White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism.” Staying stuck in your white privilege supports white supremacy and hurts the process of creating a more equitable society.

- c. Resolution 9 at the 2019 SBC was titled “On Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality.” The statement as a whole does affirm that Scripture is our primary source, it does acknowledge that these ideas are secular ideologies, and it does state that what Scripture calls sin is sin. However, it also states these should be employed as analytical tools and helpful information can be gleaned from these tools to address social dynamics. (baptistcourier.com) Do we really need an anti-biblical tool to arrive at the conclusion that people mistreat other people?
  - i. The resolution in its original form presented to the resolutions committee by a pastor from California was written to denounce CRT/I and hold accountable anyone espousing them in SBC institutions.
  - ii. An amendment was suggested from the floor that would not change any wording of the resolution but would only add that the Bible is our source of truth to understand humanity and that these ideologies are not biblical. That amendment was rejected by the committee.
- d. Last month, JD Greear, current president of our convention, issued a statement on Baptist Press News that it is time to retire the Broadus gavel. The Broadus gavel has been used to open the convention since 1872. John Broadus was born in 1889. Converted at age 16. Second president of the SBC. One of the founders of the first SBC seminary, Southern Seminary. Was widely popular as a preacher and pastor. Turned down many influential and monetarily advantageous positions because he loved training students. He even baptized Lottie Moon. But living in the South during the days of the Civil War, he had a horrible blind spot in his theology. He defended white superiority and he owned slaves. Greear acknowledged that his views seem to

have changed later in life and this retiring of the gavel was a symbolic gesture to show that we are a convention of all people, made in the image of God, and who matter to God. And even though at the 150 year anniversary of the SBC, we openly confessed and repented of any racism in our history, just like the monuments, no matter the good he also accomplished, no matter that he too was created in the image of God, if he was wrong on this one point, he must be removed.

- i. Again, Broadus did not have a gavel named after him because he was a slaveowner but because he was such an influence in the founding of the SBC and the Southern Seminary.

## II. How is It Incompatible with Christianity?

- a. Critical theory is a worldview that seeks to answer the big questions of life and fails miserably. Who we are. Where did we come from? What is our biggest problem? How do solve it?
  - i. Critical theory says our problem is that we are either in a dominant group or an oppressed group. The solution is to either divest yourself of your power or gain power by overthrowing the system.
  - ii. Christianity says we are all created in the image of God. But we have all fallen and are now sinful, rebellious creatures deserving of the judgment of God. From grace, He sent His Son to reconcile us to Himself by His atoning death. We can be free if we will repent and believe. And then we simply love God and love our neighbor. Our problem is not oppression or oppressing. Our problem is sin and the answer is the gospel.
- b. Some of what critical theory calls privilege that must be divested, the Bible calls blessings that must be shared with the less fortunate and used to further the gospel. Psalm 67. Eph 4:28. On the other hand, if I do not have to face hardships that non-whites constantly face simply because my skin is white, we have to seek to change that – seek justice, correct oppression.
- c. Critical theory fails to see the sovereign hand of God in creation. God makes us who we are. God makes us when we are and where we are. Acts 17:26. God makes some rich and some poor. God makes us all, red, yellow, black, and white. God doesn't make this one less and this

one more. Sin does that. A black man should not be overlooked because he's black, and a white man should not feel guilty because he's white. God made us who we are, and wherever we are in life, whatever we have or don't have, God means to use us right where we are to show His worth!

- d. Critical theory promotes an arrogant pride in self while eliminating grace towards others.
  - i. We are removing statutes and denouncing historical figures left and right over slavery as if we ourselves have no sin that needs repentance.
  - ii. Critical theory fits right in with our cancel culture. If you do not line up with everything I believe and everything I do, I will boycott you, I will take to social media and discredit you, I will not forgive you even if you apologize. Apology is not enough. You must be removed. Cancelled. (We do that to each other too, btw!)
  - iii. Wait a minute, didn't Jesus call us to forgive one another 70 x 7? Don't we all have sins? Can't we acknowledge the wrong and celebrate the good? Martin Luther King had over 40 affairs, but I realize when we celebrate him we're not celebrating his affairs, we're celebrating his fight for civil rights. Can't we do the same with a gavel?
  - iv. If we cancel people over one wrong in their life, what are we to do with every person in the Bible? What are we going to do with David? He was an adulterer. He was a murderer. He was King, so he had servants.
  - v. The list of Jesus' genealogy is filled with sinners. The list of the heroes of the faith in Heb 11 is filled with sinners.
- e. Critical theory neglects the greatest need of the individual.
  - i. Critical theory teaches those who are walking away from God to be who they want to be, that's true liberation. Christianity teaches us to repent and be saved and reconciled to God, that is life, that is freedom, that is liberation. Gal. 5:1
- f. Critical theory's answer is no answer.
  - i. Critical theory's answer is to tear down the system and start with a new one. It either doesn't know what the new one will be or it argues for socialism, which has failed everywhere it has

appeared! CT only replaces sinners with sinners and broken systems with broken systems.

- ii. Christianity says love God and love others. The gospel changes the person. The gospel transforms the system. Revival, not revolution, is the answer.
- g. Critical Theory inevitably divides rather than unites.
  - i. CT can only stand if you keep dividing people into groups. But as long as our identity is wrapped up in our horizontal relationships with one another and not our vertical relationship with God, we will never have unity and harmony.
  - ii. In Christ there is neither slave nor free, male nor female. The gospel takes all our diversity and makes us one in Christ!
- h. Critical Theory inevitably leads to racism rather than resolving it.
  - i. If you look at or treat a man differently because he is black, that is racism. But CT looks at and treats a man differently because he is white. It's just racism in reverse.
  - ii. We need something transcendent. We need something above our skin color. We need God and the gospel. Gal 3:26-29

### III. So what are we to do?

- a. Pray. Love Others. Treat others the way you want to be treated. Stand for truth. Seek justice. Correct oppression. Suffer well. Treasure Christ. Share Christ. Live humbly. Be a peacemaker. Live out in real life all that the Bible instructs us to as believers.
- b. Repent of our own racism. If your daughter or granddaughter brings home a young, black man, created in the image of God, who loves the Lord, is growing in his faith, and treats your daughter with respect, and the only reason you don't approve is the color of his skin, you need to repent! Well, the Bible says races shouldn't mix. No it doesn't. In the OT God forbade Israel from marrying into other nations because their religion would take Israel away from God. In the NT when Paul says do not be unequally yoked, he's speaking of believers marrying unbelievers. That's it. In the OT and NT, race has nothing to do with it. Believers are to marry believers. That's the point. If he loves the Lord, that's what matters most.