

Introduction: Welcome to Engage360, Denver Seminary's podcast. Join us as we explore the redemptive power of the gospel and the life changing truth of Scripture at work in our culture today.

Dr. Don Payne: Hello friends, welcome again, to Engage360 from Denver Seminary, you have found us and we are glad you have. My name is Don Payne and it's our privilege, and sometimes our fun to have some really important conversations with you. So here are a couple of words for you. Woke, BLM. That's fascinating how certain words, certain phrases can acquire emotional capital across our culture, and then evoke really intense reactions that are across the spectrum. In recent years and months, the words or phrases like BLM and Woke have risen to just that level and Christians who have their lives anchored in a commitment to biblical authority. And the centrality of the gospel are not alone in often having visceral reactions of various types to those words and phrases and to what they represent or supposedly represent. Now, it's equally fascinating to me anyway, and very important that these simple words or phrases have often come to distill highly complex sets of ideas or systems of thought.

So not every word, not everyone uses these words to refer to the same thing or not. Everybody has a shared definition of them. And the emotional reactions to them may go in opposite directions because people pick up on very different aspects of the complex thought systems behind these words. So in our ongoing effort here at Denver Seminary and through Engage360, to provide you with conversational resources to help you look through the lens of the gospel at some of the toughest challenges we face, we're going to really get into the thicket today and try to gain some understanding of the core set of ideas. Behind those words. I mentioned like woke and BLM, and now that set of ideas is formally called critical race theory or sometimes referred to as CRT. So to help us along in this conversation we're glad to be joined again today by the ever insightful and articulate president Mark Young. Welcome Mark.

Dr. Mark Young: I'm sorry. You may have another Mark Young here today.

Dr. Don Payne: Well, there are lots of Mark Young's around, so I just chose one out of the phone book, you know, welcome back. We're also grateful to be joined by our friend, Pastor Brandon Washington from Embassy Church here in Denver. Brandon has degrees in political science from the University of North Texas and in theology from here at Denver Seminary. And I've never had a boring conversation with Brandon, whether those conversations range from watches, which I know he loves to politics to theology to culture. I am not sure what he knows about trucks and that may be in the queue for our next conversation, but we'll see where he can go with that.

Brandon Washington: Everything I know about trucks, you told me, so.

Dr. Don Payne: Well, that may be very little, but we'll see. Okay, but that's not what we're here to talk about trucks. I wish it were. I wish it were that benign, but we need to talk about this this concept, critical race theory that is currently and has for a

little while now created quite a stir within the Christian community again and across the spectrum and in very different directions. So first of all, what has prompted the need for this conversation? Either one of you?

Dr. Mark Young: Yeah. I think one thing that we wanted to be sure we thought about was a recent statement that was made by the Seminary presidents of the Southern Baptist convention. Essentially saying that critical race theory and the Baptist faith and message, the doctrinal standards of the convention really have nothing in common. There was a general statement made and then each of the six seminary presidents made their own supporting statement that got a lot of press on the Christian side of the equation and in the, in the broader popular press as well. And so I think that many of our listeners would be aware that critical race theory became a topic on the broader Christian, broader church conversation and the church in relationship to the broader culture conversation as a result of this statement that was issued, I believe back in December, if I'm not mistaken or somewhere in the late Fall.

Brandon Washington: Yeah. It came to a head when the SBC presidents made their voices heard on this but it became, it was an issue for me prior to that, I have a good friend who pastors a church in Houston. His name is Blake Wilson, and Blake did a survey of all of his black pastor friends. And his question was, how many of you referenced the works of Carl Marx or Black Lives Matter or critical race theory as you are preparing a sermon or any class you are going to be teaching? And unanimously, we all replied, none of us do that. You know, no one does that. And then he asked how many of you have been accused of being a critical race theorist in the last two years and unanimously? We all said that we had them. And so one, the reasons I had to become familiar with critical race theory is people were accusing me of it based on what I'm saying. So I had to acquaint myself with the teachings of CRT so I can know what I'm responding to or what the accusation is.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay. So I have in front of me here kind of a textbook definition of CRT, critical race theory, but before we get into the textbook stuff, tell us, what are we talking about? What is critical race theory? How would you define it?

Brandon Washington: So, critical race theory has two or three central tenants. It almost depends on who you're speaking to, but it has two or three central tenants. And the one that is a bigger issue for most would be the first one. And that is that racism is a fundamental aspect of American culture. And not just when I was just talking about the relationship between black and whites during slavery or during Jim Crow or the Civil Rights era, while those are significant points. But the argument is that that the hierarchy or cast system that comprises a racial and ethnic rift in the country is fundamental to an American identity. So the argument would be that America's not merely a capitalistic society. It's that capitalism is itself racialized. And that tends to inform not just the things that we think of. So when we often think of racism in America, we're thinking of people in hoods with burning crosses, but they're applying this division, this racist chasm that exists

to the way finances are managed and the economic condition and education, it's a big deal.

It's a very big deal in the academic world and the business world and the way, and housing development that they're saying that there's no aspect of our experienced, no aspect of our identity as a country where this does not occur. And it did not occur accidentally. That's the primary stumbling block here. One of the problems that many of my opposing friends have is they tend to conceive the existence of racism, but they're willing to discuss it only as an individual problem. The idea of that being systemic a corporate condition is the stumbling block and the argument being made from the CRT campus. If we're only going to visit this from the perspective of the individual, then the systemic brokenness will never find itself confronted. And so things like policing will be in the same condition because we're focused on the individual police officer who committed a particular atrocity instead of asking that they commit the atrocity out of a racist policing system. That's a prime example.

Dr. Mark Young: Yeah, I think it's important to note Brandon and Don, that a lot of people would say that critical race theory finds its first expression among legal scholars, as they begin to investigate how the legal system created different experiences for black and for white people. The system worked for the benefit of some and worked often to the disadvantage of others. And the system itself was used to continue those structures of inequality. Now there's debate as to whether that is the actual beginning of the terminology, but a lot of people would say that at least its early iterations were expressed in the framework of law schools and discussions about law and legal systems.

Dr. Don Payne: Right. That's consistent with what I've come across that its origins were in maybe the early 1970s as a matter of legal discourse, legal research. And then over some period of time, it sort of moved into numerous other arenas as an overall framework for analysis, a framework for all kinds of discourse. Particularly it seems it's moved into the realm of sociology, this kind of framework for analyzing everything that goes on in society and seeing it through that lens is that here.

Dr. Mark Young: Yeah. I think that obviously once you created a framework for how the world works, then the application of that framework can be targeted in different dimensions of society. But if you think back to the legal system and how there was in it built in inequities and that the legal system supported those think of voting rights, we don't have the voting rights act until the 1960s. And so for generations in the United States, the law upheld a distinctly inequitable unjust system of voting that prohibited black people African-Americans from being able to express their will at the polls and through the political system. So I think the experience of oppression caused scholars to help scholars to ask what's going on here and create a theoretical framework and give language to it. And then, then from that basis begin to apply it to other dimensions of life. I don't want to make it sound like it's linear, but at least in terms of the way I've what I've read historically, it was in the legal system that it began to be used.

Brandon Washington: That's my understanding as well, Derek Bell was an attorney who taught at both. He's often associated with caudifying, even if he's not identified as the founder of the movement, he's the one most associated with codifying it. And he taught at both Harvard and NYU law school.

Dr. Don Payne: So what Brandon, you've kind of hinted at this, in your comments already, but why is it that CRT, why is it that it evokes such reactions, even in different parts of the Christian community? White community, non-white community? Why is this so provocative?

Brandon Washington: So, if I want to avoid being anecdotal as best I can, but in my experience, my observation has been that we prefer because of the poor, the atrocious, the divisive history of our country and its founding, we prefer approaching ethical discussions historically, we don't want anything that predates the moment we're in to have a significant influence on the discussion that we're presently having. So one of the problems you'll run into is the idea of engaging an ethnic rift, the racism that we encountered today, it's the attempt is to address it as an isolated event that happened on a specific day and nothing that proceeds that moment led to that moment. And that's a troubling thing because it lets those who identify with the offending party off the hook, because it's just them who did this. History had nothing to do with this. It's not a part of our cultures, our nation's ethos, not a cultural value of ours. It lets the non-actors off the hook. So you can blame those who are guilty of the present atrocity, was a stumbling block for people of color.

I will speak specifically for the black people, with whom I've interacted. We are unable to make the separation from the present event from maybe we cannot separate, the present event from the previous occurrences that may have been the runway for the moment that we are in. I think that that's the reason, frankly, I am often accused of being a critical race theorist. I need to say this every time critical race theory comes up and I'm involved in the conversation. I'd have to say this adamantly. I am not a critical race theorist. I am not. There are a few reasons. I cannot be a critical race theorist. I think CRT has a poor anthropology. The doctrine of humanity and the doctrine of sin are both not, they both violate what I understand Scripture to see on the issue. And because of that, because of those two issues, they have no doctrine of redemption. And as a preacher of the gospel, I'm a big fan of what Christ has done his death and resurrection is redemptive. And because of that, I can't be a critical race theorist.

I need to say that very clearly because I'm going to get emails. So, but having said that critical race theory is very shares a historical hermeneutic with the black church. So usually when I'm being accused of being a critical race theorist it's because I am reading history in the same way that CRT reads history. And because of that independent of one another, we came to a common conclusion about our present condition. And instead of recognizing that the commonality between us is our historical hermeneutics. It's lead our perspective on the series of events that resulted in where we are now, instead of recognizing that as the

thing we have in common, I'm treated as a whole cloth embracer of critical race theory. It's better to describe my relationship with critical race theory as I, and I steal, this is not my phrase. I stole this from Francis Schaffer. Critical race theory and the black church are Co-belligerents. There are so many things that the two institutions disagree on, but the one thing they cannot ignore is that history lends itself to believing that there is not merely an individual, the individual expressions of racism, but there's corporate sin.

There is systemic sin. There is innate brokenness. And the difference between, I would say from my position, the difference between how a critical race theorist sees that and how I see it is I believe that by the power of the gospel conceding, the brokenness, I believe that brokenness can be redeemed. It can be repaired. It can experience restoration. Whereas every friend I have who is a critical race theorist will argue because it is broken and the nature of his brokenness makes restoration impossible. So the appropriate response is to see it as what it is, and then destroy it and ideally replace it with something much more ideal.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. And that's what I've seen in the descriptions of CRT is that it is intolerant or maybe just fatigued with the sort of incremental progress idea and wants to scrape the parking lot as it were, and just start over. And of course, that's understandably unsettling to many but it's curious, isn't it? That, that kind of response grows out of this type of historical analysis, because I hear you Brandon going in a different direction with the same historical analysis.

Brandon Washington: Yeah. It's slightly different. It's just where we are just a skew of one another. But you know, when you're just a skew at one inch, by the time you get out to a hundred miles, you're going to be far apart. I think that's what you're noticing. I do not believe they are wrong with how frustrating the incremental progress can be. I also would think that we need to pay attention to their observation of how the progress occurred. So going to the 1954 Brown vs board decision, which was supposed to be the death knell of Jim Crow, it should've ended separate but equal, but it didn't. We did not get, we had to, we had to have a 1964, a full decade later, 1964, Civil Rights Act. We had to have Dr. Young mentioned this early. We had to have a Voting rights Act in 1965 in spite of having an amendment in place already that should have upheld a right to vote. And they had to have a voting rights act that defended the assertion of the amendment. And then in 1968, a fair housing act. Now I mentioned that because I'm old enough, I was not born in 1968, but that's only a few years before I was born. And the fruit that should be born from those acts had not come to fruition on my birth date in 1975. So we're not going back to 1865.

We're going back to a time when many of those who are saying that everything is okay in 1975, many of the people who are critical of the assertions of CRT, they were adults. So they know it wasn't okay in 1975. And I think that, that read, that understanding of history through the lens of a critical race theorist is the kind of thing that should not be set aside so quickly. The incremental progress is a frustrating one, and it can also be self-serving. One of the things that, that Derrick Bell argues is the 1954 Brown vs board decision was not out of

some type of ethical magnanimous perspective on it. It's because the world was watching. And you're about to have these international trade and arrangements with countries. And it makes for a better presentation for you to be a country that is able to set aside segregation. So the Brown decision was not influenced by the recognition of the rights of black people. It was so that the country could look good to other countries and have better trade exchanges with those nations. So even those moments of progress were self-serving from a national perspective, Bell makes a pretty strong argument. He made. He just passed away, but he made a pretty strong argument of things of that sort. So it's not only incremental, but sometimes it's not as ethically grounded as we would like the viewers to believe. It's true.

Dr. Mark Young: Let me make a comment too Don. If I may, you talked about burning it down, right. Tearing or scraping the parking lot and how unsettling that is. Well, it's profoundly unsettling for those, for whom the system works, Those for whom the system has created wealth and privilege. And I know as soon as I say privilege, that just creates all types of alarm bells and fire shoots out of people's eye sockets. But the fundamental concept of privilege is that the system works for you. And then who those for whom it doesn't work well, yeah. Tearing the system down may be a good idea because it doesn't work. It continues to create disadvantage for some and advantage significant advantage for others. That is absolutely contrary to the basic tenants in our declaration of independence. The system is to work for all the, systems of government, the systems of representation, the systems of law, and ultimately the economic structures that those systems have created a foundation for. They're supposed to work for all, but they didn't. And they still don't

Dr. Don Payne: Let's think about this in terms of the gospel, because in a lot of conversations among Christians, more particularly you know, biblically anchored, biblically committed Christians, CRT, and its corollary movements or out, or the iterations of CRT are often viewed in terms of the gospel or through the lens of the gospel. And I hear it frequently polarized against the gospel, and Brandon, you, you made some references in this direction that there are traits of CRT. There are emphases of CRT that seemed fundamentally opposed to the gospel, the doctrine of sin, the doctrine of humanity, personhood anthropology, but almost to take to nuance those lenses a bit and see both where and how CRT contrasts to the gospel and where there might be at least impulses or occurrence within some aspects of CRT that are congruent compatible with the gospel. If there are, let's look at that in both directions, if we can. How do we look fully at CRT through the lens of the gospel?

Brandon Washington: I do not believe that when they're, when CRT is being drafted, I don't believe that the details of the gospel were first and foremost on the minds of the drafters. Okay. But I, but I think that inevitably, if you're having a conversation regarding an objective demonstrably, a defensible view of justice, inevitably, you're going to have a backdoor entrance to what the gospel is. I think that one of the huge mistakes we're making, and this is a doctrinal issue from within the church, I think that we have treated the gospel as the means by which humanity

is eternally saved. And that's what we're saying. It is only, it's just that, and we're treating the world like it is a sinking ship. And our responsibility as messengers of the gospel is to get people off the ship before it sinks.

Dr. Don Payne: So if you only take that sort of limited view of the gospel, which is not incorrect, but it just is what it is. But you only take that, start there, go with that. It's easy to utterly polarized CRT with the gospel in every respect.

Brandon Washington: Absolutely. And I here's what blesses me though. Here's what blesses me. I was reading I was reading Carl Henry a few weeks, a few days ago. And Carl Henry said that that understanding of the gospel is truncated. I thought I came up with that idea on my own. I was being brilliant. And Carl Henry, he wrote it down 80 years ago. He says that understanding of the gospel is a truncation. He actually used that word. He said, any understanding of the gospel that is not attentive, and I'm quoting him here. I need to be careful to say this I'm quoting him. Any other side of the gospel that is not attentive to social justice is not a whole gospel message. And he said that 80 years ago, and he was not a black man when he said it. And so I, and I say that because that does in many regards align with the language and the hopes of CRT, when it comes to discussions regarding justice, they may not have the means of doing it because they don't have a redemptive message, but their assessment of the broken circumstances align with the bad news introduction to a gospel message.

Dr. Mark Young: That's a good point, Brandon. And of course, let's remember Carl FH. Henry is writing in this area in reaction to fundamentalism. So the early 20th century, which basically said, all we got to do is get people saved. And certainly before the rapture, and then the world will take care of itself. It's doomed, it's going downhill anyway. So let's just get people rescued, right? So when he carves out, I use the words specifically when he is one of those founders that carves out a new identity that we know is evangelicalism that understanding of the creating real change in the lives of people now, as well as in society. And that structures are a part of how people experience now, and they need to be changed as well. That was dramatically. That was dramatically a part of our founding. Unfortunately, our history is so given to a revivalist understanding of the gospel going way back in early colonial period and continuing to a certain degree. And I want to be careful here up through the Billy Graham era because Dr. Graham made some very strong statements toward the end of his life.

Because that's the case, this whole idea of individualized salvation and what I call a siloed salvation, which is just in the silo between me and God, that is in fact, a truncated gospel. That's true to the unto degree, but the gospel of what I call the gospel of the kingdom, which Jesus announces in his early ministry is a gospel that says all of those who have found redemption in Christ create a way of life that is radically different than any life that the world can create. So I think one of the points of contact that we can talk about positively is in the justice arena. We're really talking about that life, that everyone is created to live a life that allows them to find satisfaction in the things that are created, and that structures have inhibited them from finding. So those structures have to be

done away with so that the fullness of the gospel in this world can be fully experienced as well.

Dr. Don Payne:

And, you know, it occurs to me that one piece of history that many of us need to own a little better, or at least acknowledge is that that mid 20th century American evangelicalism in which Carl F H Henry was located and carving out that niche, that evangelicalism was in a highly reactionary mode against that early 20th century, mainline Protestant what they called modernism at the time, don't denote it quite that same way these days, but that modernism that had advocated for themes like social justice, but seemingly at the expense of the historic gospel and, and the, the, the evangelical church was clamped down so hard in reaction against that, that for a long time, it seems anything that smelled like that kind of emphasis seemed to compromise, or it seemed to threaten the historic gospel. And now, we're looking at saying no, we got to recapture that because that is implied in the gospel, that is inherent the character of all that God has to redeem and wants to redeem. But that reaction is profound and Brandon, you and I have had many conversations about that. How are illogical emphases are the contours of our theology are profoundly shaped by what, by whatever we're reacting against.

Brandon Washington:

Yes. Reactions are key. I do want to touch on something that is going to be a, it has been a theme. I think we'll be going, going forward. And that is, I think that one of the bigger issues, and this may be beginning ahead, Dr. Payne and young, let me know. But I think one of the bigger issues is black people. And I'm going to narrow this down to one example of an ethic rift, but black people and white people do not read history in precisely the same way. And this goes to a point that Dr. Young said earlier that he mentioned the potential for privilege. I think that without realizing it, many of my friends evaluate history through privileged lens. So I had a conversation with an associate, an acquaintance who graduated from seminary with me. And he was telling me about the trajectory. The ethical trajectory of the country has always been toward justice, Liberty and freedom. And his argument by the way, was because of that, then much of the protests should stop.

And we should just wait for it to unfold because the good end is inevitable. And that's why most of the King had to write an essay entitled why we can't wait. It's easy to say, wait, when you're not the one enduring, I want to point that out. So that, it fascinated me. He was saying that to me, but the bigger fascination was his read of history was justice. Righteousness. Deliverance was always going to happen because it's innate to the American ethos. And my question is what history book are you reading? Because even the progress that occurred, and I don't deny the existence of progress, but even that progress occurred with the nation being dragged along, kicking and screaming in many regards against their will. So whenever someone tells me, you know, 1865 comes to comes and we have the end of a civil war, and then we have a 13th amendment. And for some reason, the emancipation proclamation gets mentioned, but contextual, that's not a relevant document. And then, but you get to the 13th amendment and slavery has come to an end. No, it didn't. No, it didn't.

It fascinates me to have to bring this to their attention. No, it didn't. Did you have reconstruction for about a dozen years? Yes. But in response to reconstruction attempts to re-enslave, the liberated occurred. That's why you have an exception in the 13th amendment. Those who can be arrested can be enslaved again. So you can be arrested for a misdemeanor like vagrancy. You can be unemployed, which is a crime be arrested for being unemployed, and then be enslaved because you were arrested for being unemployed. And think about this for a moment who is going to be unemployed in droves, in the immediate aftermath of emancipation, former slaves, that was not an accident. And then you move from that to sharecropping. And sharecropping is a means of putting workers in crippling debt. And therefore they are enslaved to you for the rest of their lives. And you move from that to Jim Crow, which creates not only an ethnic hierarchy, but sustains a socioeconomic division that follows the same lines as the ethnic hierarchy.

The way that we tend to read history is we will look at dots on a timeline and say, this happened on this day. And after this day, this problem was gone, but that's not the way black people read history because they know what both preceded that moment and proceeds from that moment because it directly affected them. There's a book written by Paul Cohen and I'm reading it for some, some research I'm doing for some writing I'm having to get done. And he wrote a great book, entitled *History In Three Keys*. And the three keys are event, experience, and then myth. And he's not using the word myth in a negative sense. You're not using the negative connotation. It's the narrative, the record of the event, as it was passed through the experience of the record keepers. Well, if you think about this for a moment, if two different people or two different people groups, experienced any event differently than the narrative they have for that moment is not going to be the same. That's why black people who were speaking from the perspective of the marginalized.

They look at the 20th century and they see something different from their white counterpart, which is why my father, who will be 75 years old in August when he hears the phrase, Make America Great Again, his question was, okay, wait a minute. When, when are we going to? That's what he wants to know. When you say again, what time are you referring to? Cause he's from Natchez, Mississippi. And he cannot think of a time, his consistent comment on is says, if you invent a time machine, I'm going to tear the part of it that goes into the past out, because there's no point in the past to which I can go that it's better than a moment I am. So it's terrifying to hear Make America Great Again, because this question is, when was it great? And he can ask that question only because he doesn't have a historical perspective that's inline with his contemporaries of the white ethnic group.

Dr. Don Payne:

You know, Mark, you have mentioned to me that your, the years you spent in Eastern Europe under various Marxist regimes has given you some lenses on all of this, because I know CRT is sometimes accused of being rather wholesale Marxist. I'd love to hear some of those reflections from your experience with Marxist countries.

Dr. Mark Young:

Glad to do it. I certainly don't consider myself an expert in Marx's theory. I would say, however, that Mark's built his understanding of the world on his interpretation of history. And just as Brandon pointed out, there are people who interpret history through the lens of being oppressed or through the lens of not benefiting, while others benefit from the systems that are in place. That's what Mark saw. And so as Brandon also pointed out Mark's solution wasn't necessarily that there's individual responsibility, but that there are systems of oppression that have kept people from being able to find and achieve that life that's possible for them. And so Marxism was birthed out of that kind of an idealistic vision. However, his anthropology was so deficient because those who then took on power to create that Adonic vision abuse, that power, right? So I saw the bad side of Marxism, a Marxism that created futility of Marxism. That created an absolute sense that no matter how hard I work, nothing is going to change in my life. Now, Brandon compare that to the experience of those in the Jim Crow era and also in the time of reconstruction, right?

It wasn't, it's not an individual matter of laziness or an individual matter of a lack of talent. You just can't make any progress. And that bred an incredible sense of futility in Eastern Europe, where I lived. What I found interesting is as those countries transitioned, we were living in Poland at the time from a Marxist system that was grounded in futility. You had this period of intense hope, but as the society began to develop around more free market strategies very quickly, there were those who benefited significantly and those who suffered significantly. And so in many of those countries, you ended up with something like a social democracy, which created structures of government that will continue to provide the needs of those who are disadvantaged by the system. And yet more freedom and opportunity for those who are able to take advantage of the system. So for me, I agree there are tremendous philosophical differences between Marxism and between Christianity. But I do think there is something to be seen and learned from the way Mark's interpreted history and came to the conclusion that there are winners and losers in history that power is not allocated or utilized proportionately. It's always disproportionate social power, economic power, and some people lose.

Dr. Don Payne:

Yeah. As we as we wrap this up, I'd love to hear from each of you one or two key takeaways that will help us help us from a gospel vantage point, find some better ways forward, some better ways through the impasse of the futility and the hopelessness and the illusion of incremental progress or over individualized understandings of the gospel. How does the gospel in a couple of key ways push us forward through all of this?

Dr. Mark Young:

Well, there is no real gospel in the New Testament that doesn't seek life in its fullness for every person, everyone created in the image of God equally loved by God and equally provided for in the redemption of Christ on the cross. So the gospel has to have a vision that each and every person can experience life, as God created it to be lived through the power of the gospel and the community of those who are committed to it. As they address the ways in which an

unredeemed society continues to oppress and take, take advantage of some, for the benefit of others.

Brandon Washington: I cannot change. I cannot amend that much. I will tell you that I think that one of my, I have to be transparent here. So one of my consistent refrains is we have to preach a whole gospel. And I think our eternal condition is set. We are justified and Dr. Payne, we are already sanctified. We, I think that is set because of the death and resurrection of our King. I believe that our temporal wholeness is as available to us. It's set because of the same death and resurrection. That's Ephesians 2 in its entirety. We should not stop at verse 10. We should read the whole chapter. I think that the same work of Christ accomplished both temporal and eternal wholeness. And I'm realizing day by day that I may be preaching a gospel message that is akin to, but not identical to my white evangelical siblings. And that has resulted probably the most heartbreaking depressing year I have experienced in my entire life. I am right now experiencing what it is for dear friends of mine who are leaders in the black church.

I feel like I'm standing in a burning house and I have friends who are outside the house, who are for my safety, for my own wellbeing. They're calling me out of the house and they're not asking me to leave orthodoxy. They're not asking me to walk away from the faith, but the idea that evangelicalism is a theological movement, which is a view that I have espoused, since I first heard the word with each moment, I'm realizing that, that may not be true. It may be a cultural movement that has theological language. And that cultural aspect of it may be doing me harm and undermining my mission to be a messenger of a whole gospel and our friends who are saying to me, that's, what's happening to you come out of the house. And I say to them, I need to stay here to redeem the movement. I'm the voice of redemption. But while I'm in the house, which is burning down around me, I have people inside the house who are offended by my attempts to redeem because the consistent question is why would you redeem that which is not in need of redemption?

So, they're pushing me out of the house. It's creating this loneliness because I'm saying to those who are lovingly calling me out, I have to stay here. And while I'm doing it, I feel like I'm being pushed out by those. I'm trying to, I'm trying to help. I'm trying to pour into them. And my only hope is that Christ died and he resurrected. And that brings wholeness, not just eternally, but temporarily. And I have to lean into him because when I was younger, when I was new to the faith, I could look to the church and get a glimpse of what I thought Christ looked like. And with each passing day, I can't do it anymore. I can't do it. I have to look to Christ directly because of those who bear his name and claim to be the purveyors of his message, do not seem to reflect the kingdom over which he reigns. And I'm struggling with that, with every given moment,

Dr. Mark Young: Brandon, let's build a new house. Let's carve out the next evangelicalism, whether, whether we want to retain the title or not, that maintains that orthodoxy that you and I hold dear and around which we've organized our lives and calls the church to a whole gospel at the same time. I think there are those

in the white community and the movement who share the concerns that you have and who also in some ways are glad the house is burning down because it needs to be burned down. And another house needs to be built in its place. One that is truly gospel centered. So let's do it. Let's build it together. Denver Seminary is ready to be with you in that.

Lord, help us, Lord have mercy. I want to thank you, Pastor Brandon Washington, Dr. Mark Young. So great to be with you again. Friends, thanks for joining us here on Engage360. We're grateful to you. Love to hear from you. Email us at podcast@denverseminary.edu. Let's keep this conversation going. We'll talk to you again soon. Take care.