

1. (I don't know if you noticed as we honored our adoptive/foster families, but they really offer a snapshot of the kingdom of God—a beautiful, refreshing God-designed picture of what his kingdom is supposed to be; described in Scripture as consisting of) Every Nation, Tribe and Language (let's read that description together)
2. Revelation 5:9-10—see also Isaiah 2:1-3; Revelation 7:9 (In the OT the idea of God's kingdom as a place eventually welcoming and made up of all people is consistent. This truth was embedded in the idea of the new community of Christ in the NT. The church was to be the next step—move from beyond the Jewish community to take the gospel to the rest of the world. Paul was specifically called upon to accomplish this ministry of reconciliation. It was to be a beautiful reflection of heaven—a place on earth where barriers, prejudices, ethnic suspensions and divisions were eradicated in Christ Jesus.)
3. (Paul put it this way) Colossians 3:9-11; see also Galatians 3:28 (and indeed this was accomplished, but as glimpsed in this text—it did not happen perfectly and neither was the transition easy. All kinds of vast differences between Greek, Jew, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free that had to be worked out—but it could and did happen. How?)
4. Christ—The All-in-All (only way it could happen—by totally surrendering their person, will, being, and identity to Jesus—hence their primary way of self-identifying changed. Just as Paul said—NO LONGER—Jew, Greek, etc. Instead Jesus defined who they were and reoriented their entire life. But nobody said it was easy! This folks hated each other; had sometimes completely different values; customs; different nations, tribes and languages—work to do here and Jesus did it through his DBR, destroying the dividing wall of hostility—enabling and empowering us to get over ourselves & truly embrace the diversity of the kingdom—Rome had never seen anything like a place where slave, free, barbarian, Jew, noble, poor, women and children all were equally valued—except in the church. It was transformational; it was beautiful; it was to God's glory. **Quote**)
5. It is Why the Bride is So Radiant—Ephesians 5:27; Revelation 19:7-8; 21:2 (the bride which is the church is reflecting the will of God—that is all people, nations and tribes have been found salvation in the blood of the Lamb and together as one people they honor and worship the God who made it all happen. That is the ideal; that is the heavenly vision and goal. That is what we are called to participate in. But that is also why it is not easy—which brings us right back to)
6. Unashamed—Romans 1:16 (and the story of the book of Romans—the stubbornness of prejudices; the difficulty of true transformation; the human, fleshly resistance to fully embrace the unashamed life that would allow us to completely embrace the kingdom model and totally—without holding back—buy into and practice being unashamed. They resisted in Rome and we resist now. And while we are working on it—these foster/adoptive families demonstrate that—we have work to do to fully be:)
 - a. Unashamed of the gospel
 - b. Unashamed of each other
 - c. Unashamed to proclaim it all
7. How to Get There? (That is the big question which Romans answers. It involves a surrender—surrendering of self, identity, will—only to be given a new identity in Christ; it involves a new way of thinking and ordering of life around the new community, the church, which integrates what we do here—in worship—into every aspect of our life; it involves a new way of thinking about each other—an acceptance based on Jesus and nothing else. It is story of the book of Romans—the goal of which is to realize that glorious bride in all her beauty and to actually see all nations gather as one—we will explore that over the next few weeks—but right now here is shorter course on how to)
8. Colossians 3:12-14 (contextually right after the earlier vs we referenced—how can Greeks, Jews, barbarians, Scythians, free and slave, black, white, Hispanic make it happen—here it is. No one said it would be easy, but when it happens—praise be to God and watch out—we can turn the world upside down!)