

727 Prejudice

James 2:1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.

Introduction:

1. Ills. - “If any Christian wants to know how to treat the colored people, read God’s explicit instruction to the Jews on that particular subject...“you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. ...They have always been cursed with a sense of fear, ignorance, superstition and an inferior complex...We have to admit that we have had some very well educated Negroes among us. Some who have made good in business and various trades. How do you account for that? Yes, all those Negroes who have a generous fertilization of white blood have invariably left the evidence of it behind them. But the genuine Negro article is just what he had always been.”

2. You might think that such a statement was made at an “Aryan Nation” rally or a “Clan” rally, but it was actually preached from one of our pulpits. (Sermon preached by W.A. Cameron to the Disston Ave. Church of Christ in St. Petersburg, FL, Sunday, August 15, 1954).

3. Racism, like any other moral issue confronts, not only our culture, but the church situated in that culture.

a. Note throughout history how the church is not immune to the negative impact from its immoral culture.

b. What is Prejudice

(1). A preformed opinion, usually an unfavorable one, based on insufficient knowledge, irrational feelings, or inaccurate stereotypes

(2). The holding of opinions that are formed beforehand on the basis of insufficient knowledge

(3). An unfounded hatred, fear, or mistrust of a person or group, especially one of a particular religion, ethnicity, nationality, or social status

4. The challenge of the church is to impact culture rather than be impacted by culture -Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

5. Let's discuss the issue of Prejudice/racism and what God's word says about this subject.

I. Manifestations of Racism/ Prejudice

A. Dehumanization.

1. Speaking of the black race, Edward Long in his "The History of Jamaica" said, "When we reflect on...their dissimilarity to the rest of mankind, must we not conclude that they are a different species of the same genus?"

2. A French author, in his work, Natural History of the Negro Race, said, "It is then impossible to deny that they form not only a race, but truly a species, distinct from all other races of men known on the globe." They belong to "the ape genus," and he placed them somewhere between orangutans and white human beings.

3. While not denying their humanity, Ulrich B. Phillips in his work, "American Negro Slavery" stated that Negroes were neither property nor animals, but children who could not be taken seriously as adults.

4. Charles Darwin- On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life.

5. Chambers in his classic Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation, about which Darwin said that without this book he might never have written The Origin of Species, concluded that the Negro was 'at the foot of' the Mongol, the Yellow race between, and Caucasians at the top. Chambers himself taught that the 'various races of mankind, are simply . . . stages in the development of the highest or Caucasian type. . . ' and that the

Blacks were the least developed, and the Caucasians were the highest, most evolved race.

B. Stereotypes.

1. Stereotyping is a lazy way of lumping together all of those who come from a certain class , race or even place-

2. Can anything good come out of Nazareth John 1:45 -46 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And Nathanael said to him, " Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

3. More often than not, these stereotypes are unkind and uncomplimentary. "Black are lazy, white men can't jump,

4. Statements which attempt to characterize a group of people by saying, "all such and such are..." is too broad and will unjustly misrepresent some individuals.

C. Prejudice.

1. Prejudice is the sentence of a closed mind without any desire or effort put forth to learn the facts.

2. Prejudice manifests itself in the use of crude descriptions of people that are offensive and demeaning. Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

D. Discrimination.

1. Racism often closes doors of opportunity due to the hatred.

2. Ills. - Black people not welcome in "white" churches and vice versa.

3. Irish Americans need not apply. We need a Vietnamese nail technician only hire ____.

II. What The Bible Says About Racism/ Prejudice

A. In New Testament times, the issue of racism was very relevant. Not from a black/white perspective, but a Jew/Gentile perspective. Probably in comparison, the black/white issue of today pales in comparison to the Jew/Gentile issue of the first century.

B. Jesus, himself suffered from racism John 4:9 Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

C. James 2:1 -9 (NKJV) My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called? If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

D. Acts 10:34- 35 Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.

E. Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

F. Acts 17:24-26 God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. "Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one

blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,.

III. THE NATURE OF OUR DIFFERENCES

A. THE DIFFERENCES IN A CHURCH CAN BE MANY.

1. Differences in "race" (white, oriental, African-American)
2. Differences in "nationalities" (American, Canadian, Mexican, etc.)
3. Differences in "political ideologies" (conservative, liberal, libertarian, etc.)
4. Differences in "economic status" (poor, wealthy)
5. Differences in "lifestyles" (simple, extravagant, etc.)
6. Differences in "secular interests" (sports, computing, hobbies)
7. Differences in "spiritual maturity" (weak in faith, strong in faith)

B. ALL THESE DIFFERENCES POSSESS POTENTIAL FOR DISRUPTION.

1. Prejudice or bigotry in any one area can destroy the unity (and fellowship) in a local congregation
2. Even on a more innocent level, "cliques" can develop among those who have things in common

IV. GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD "ACCEPTANCE"

A. GOD IS NOT ONE TO SHOW PARTIALITY.

1. He revealed Himself to Israel as One who shows no partiality - **Deut. 10:17 "For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.**

2. Paul wrote of God's impartial judgment to come – **Rom. 2:9-11** **tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.**

3. Peter also wrote of God's impartiality - **1 Pet. 1:17** **And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear;**

B. GOD IS WILLING TO ACCEPT ALL.

1. This was the purpose of the vision shown to Peter, and the Spirit falling upon the Gentile listeners - cf. **Acts 10:34-35** **Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. "But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.**

2. As Peter would relate later at the Jerusalem conference, God makes no distinction - **Acts 15:7-9** **And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.**

3. And in his last epistle, Peter wrote that the Lord desires all to come to repentance - **2 Pet. 3:9** **The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.**

C. GOD WANTS US TO BE ONE, AND ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER.

1. Even as Christ has received us, so we are to receive one another – **Rom. 15:7** **Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God**

2. Putting on Christ in baptism, our differences lose their significance as we contemplate our oneness made possible in Him - cf. **Gal. 3:27-28 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus**

Conclusion:

1. Racism is the sin of pride (Proverbs 6:16-17).
2. Race and so many of the times we differentiate makes no difference to God.
3. Instead of concerning ourselves with differences in the color of our skin, and so many of the other things we divide over maybe we would all be better served to concentrate on our similarities, namely we are all humans, made in the image of God, and in need of a Savior.