**The Sin of Prejudice**

**Introduction**

1. Prejudice – preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience. (New Oxford American Dictionary)
   1. Etymology – from Latin praejudicium, from prae ‘in advance’ + judicium ‘judgement’. (Ibid.)
   2. Making a judgment before and without any facts. Pre – judge.
   3. “preconceived judgment or opinion” (Webster)
   4. Often with a negative connotation – causing injury or damage.
2. Jesus attacked with prejudice – **John 7:24** – called evil for healing on the Sabbath, but He did good – they were prejudiced against Him.
   1. Their judgment was superficial, not thoughtful and rational.
   2. They did not truly consider the circumstances but jumped to unfair conclusions.
3. We need to heed the words of Jesus and make sure we are not judging in advance (prejudice) or unfairly in any way, but that we’re judging with righteous judgments.
4. The Sin of Prejudice
5. The Impartiality of God
   1. Prejudice is sinful for the simple fact that it is contrary to God’s nature.
   2. **John 3:16** – God was not prejudiced in sending His Son but sent Him for EVERYBODY.
   3. **Romans 2:11** – God shows no partiality – prejudice is a type of partiality.
   4. According to Jewish purity laws, and those twisted into a culture of hate by the Jews toward Gentiles, Jews were a people of prejudice:
      1. God showed Peter not to view Gentiles as such any longer – **Acts 10:28** (through the vision of the sheet-like object)
      2. God shows no partiality – **Acts 10:34-35** – WHOEVER.
6. The Failure of Love in Prejudice
   1. James addressed prejudice in James 2 with the topic of partiality – **James 2:1** – holding the faith with partiality. (Gospel – in proclamation and practice)
      1. Example – **(vv. 2-4)** – Rich man vs poor man – partiality show to the rich and against the poor in the difference of treatment.
         1. Judges with evil thoughts – might say prejudice, evil judgment, not righteous judgment.
      2. Judgment show to be false – **(vv. 5-7)** – in this instance their judgments of a negative nature were against the wrong people.
         1. Not that they should have shown partiality in any way.
         2. Poor and rich brethren addressed – **James 1:9-11** – both can be acceptable to God.
      3. In consideration of the ***“royal law”*** – the commandment only second to loving God – **James 2:8**
         1. Context – **James 1:22** – being doers of God’s word and not hearers only.
         2. Claim – I love my neighbor as myself.
         3. Evidence – **(v. 9)** you show partiality. (You are not really fulfilling that law.)
         4. Understand the nature of the law **(vv. 10-13)** – you must consistently apply it to be pleasing to God.
      4. **(vv. 12-13)** – conduct self with knowledge of being judged by that law, and therefore do not fail to keep it by transgressing the royal law through partiality.
   2. The observation of this command of love for neighbor will eradicate prejudice:
      1. ***“as yourself”*** – how would you want to be judged by another?
      2. We don’t like it when we’re the victims of prejudice. We need to think about that when forming opinions of others, and then taking action.
7. Types of Prejudice
8. Race
   1. Prejudice knows no minority or majority. Anyone can be guilty of racial prejudice.
   2. Racial prejudice is destroyed by the nature of God’s creation – **Acts 17:26-28** – one blood.
      1. Everyone has their beginning with Adam and Eve.
      2. The variations formed over time in the human race does not change the fact that it is still one blood.
      3. NOTE: “one, every, us, we” – collective nouns.
   3. We must overcome thoughts and habits of the past – BEING RAISED A CERTAIN WAY DOES NOT MAKE PRJUDICIAL THOUGHTS ANY LESS EGREGIOUS.
      1. EX: those who know one race is no better than another, but that the heart is what matter the most, but who still look down on interracial marriages. (Both being Christians is the most important.)
      2. Certainly, this country has come a long way, but racism is something we must constantly fight against.
9. Sex
   1. There has been a concerted effort in modern entertainment and media to reverse gender roles to the detriment of society.
      1. This is under the false notion that differing roles for gender implies inequality.
      2. This is false on a Biblical level.
   2. However, while matters have been taken too far, and damage has been caused in a failure to acknowledge God’s word, much good has been accomplished over the years in regard to the general estimation of women as equal to men.
      1. A common offense in the past was the degradation of women.
      2. If one was a woman, they were deemed less important, and considered on an unequal plane from men.
      3. There is not even a hint of this attitude in the Bible, MUCH TO THE CONTRARY – **1 Peter 3:7** – fellow heirs, giving honor, etc.
      4. NOTE: Jokes which subscribe to sexual prejudice are wrong and should not be entertained by Christians.
      5. MEN SHOULD HONOR THEIR WOMEN, AND WOMEN THEIR MEN.
   3. **1 Corinthians 11:11-12** – God has created man and woman in such a way where sexual prejudice is inexcusable – codependency in general.
10. Age
    1. Ageism is a matter which must be combatted as individuals throughout the span of our lives.
       1. There will always be those significantly older than us or significantly younger than us.
       2. We must not pre-judge them based on their age, or the generation/generational culture of which they are a part.
    2. EX – The youth may look down on the aged due to their struggles with technology. Their struggles in this area do not mean they’re in any way inferior.
    3. EX – The aged look down on the youth due to the changes in matters of technology, etc. Especially with those who were a part of a generation highly lauded in history may have the tendency to look on younger generations with prejudice.
    4. Either way – THERE MUST BE RESPECT, AND ANY JUDGMENTS MUST BE BASED ON SHOWN CHARACTER, NOT AGE.
    5. **Leviticus 19:32** – respect shown the aged.
    6. **1 Timothy 4:12** – implied that despising the youth is wrong.
11. Nationality
    1. National prejudice is especially a problem in our country.
       1. It is okay to have national pride, and even okay to maintain the opinion that America is the best country in the world.
       2. However, it is inexcusable to have an elitist mindset when it comes to national pride.
       3. Christians especially are to understand this in regard to the universality of Christ’s kingdom.
    2. The Jews had national pride which led to a prejudicial mindset toward all others – **Ephesians 2:11, 14-18** – God broke down the barrier of nationalism when Christ was nailed to the cross.
12. Economic Status
    1. In every society there has been prejudice concerning wealth and poverty.
       1. The value of a man has been ascribed to his bank account.
       2. This is wrong.
    2. **James 1:9-11; 2:1-4** – the poor and the rich should not be treated differently.
    3. No matter how much money one has he cannot take it with him – **1 Timothy 6:7**
    4. As money buys things, the economic status of any person will affect what kind of material possessions they amass – amount, newness, quality, etc.
       1. We cannot make rash judgments based on these things.
13. Many others – culture, education, politics, hobbies, etc.
14. Are you prejudiced?
15. The obvious answer anyone would give is “no!” However, consider:
16. Your thoughts?
    1. What is within is that which defiles a man – **Matthew 15:19-20**
    2. **James 2:4** – the treatment of the poor and rich were mere manifestations of evil within – evil thoughts.
    3. **John 7:24** – Jesus exposed their evil thoughts.
       1. A judgment is a matter of thought.
       2. This leads to action but is wrong from the start.
17. Your speech?
    1. Some claim they are not prejudiced, but then they open their mouths.
       1. Us/Them dialogue; cultural biases; national, ethnic, economic pride.
       2. Jokes are often those things which manifest prejudice.
    2. Does our speech betray us? – **Matthew 26:69-75** – the speech of Peter was evidence of association with Jesus. (Galilean dialect.)
18. Your faith?
    1. Ultimately, the two prior stages of this sin of prejudice amount to the most heinous manifestation of all – holding the faith with partiality.
    2. **James 2:1** – in giving deferential treatment to the rich over the poor the Christians James addressed were being impartial with the faith.
       1. The gospel is for all – **Romans 1:16**
       2. Its proclamation and application must not be with prejudice.
19. Consider: if Jesus appeared to us today as He did 2,000+ years ago would we receive Him, or treat Him prejudicially?
    1. Poor, without form or comeliness, uneducated in an official sense, different culture, etc.

**Conclusion**

1. What God has done in Jesus, especially for the mind of the Christian who has submitted to Him, should dispel all forms of prejudice – **Galatians 3:28**
2. We live in a prejudicial world. Such will always be the case.
3. God calls us to fair judgments of others – **John 7:24** – righteous judgment.
4. We must avoid the sin of prejudice.