



APPNOTES

Date: June 08-12 , 2020

Series: James: Faith That Works

Galatians 3:28 Prejudice. Racism. Bias. Judgment. None of these are new concepts, they've been around since the beginning of time. We see the early Christians were dealing with it in our passage. Since Galatians, which was a letter written by Paul, was sent to a Jewish church in Galatia, Paul clarifies that God's salvation wasn't only for them. The phrase 'neither Jew nor Greek' is essentially saying, neither Jew nor those who were not Jewish. Paul addresses the divide between socio-economic factors (slave or free), leveling the playing field. Lastly, Paul teaches this strongly patriarchal society that God doesn't elevate male over female either. Christ came and brought salvation for everyone. No one is more worthy than anyone else, and there should be no issues in our way keeping us from showing God's love to everyone. We are all one in Christ Jesus.

Romans 2:11 After yet another example of police brutality toward a black man, George Floyd, the anguish of people long oppressed has erupted nationwide. Our country has seen far too many instances of hatred, violence, and torment towards people whom some hold in lower regard for any number of reasons. Romans tells us quite clearly that God shows no partiality or favoritism, and no person is more important than another. A quick web search revealed that there are approximately 100 verses addressing racism. Since God is so concrete about His lack of partiality, and profusely adamant that we should love one another, which He has told us 66 times in the New Testament alone, our view towards injustice should be abundantly clear. We are to love too, not with passivity and silence, but with the same active, demonstrative, sacrificial love He gave us. Our love for people can help them find the way back to God.

Acts 10:34 There will always be people you or I disagree with. Handling issues and responding to folks in our community that think differently than we do can be a sticky subject within Christianity. I think Peter could relate. Peter was a Jew's Jew; he was very in-tune with the traditions of his ancestors, the politics of his day, and the needs of his people. Due to rigid Jewish Law, there were places he wouldn't go and things he wouldn't

eat. In the verses previous to the one we read today, God swept all those prejudices away and told Peter that God is not one who shows partiality. I think this speaks to how we are to respond to, minister to, and love on those who come from a background different from our own or who support causes that we, as Christians, cannot. Even if we disagree with other people, we can love them, because Christ loves them.

Colossians 3:11 In Christ, we're all equal. What a beautiful gift! Paul, the inspired author of Colossians, writes out so clearly that there's no room for prejudice in the Kingdom of God. The church at Colossae consisted of Greek believers, not Jews. They were the recipients of prejudice – a group of Jewish believers was insisting they follow Jewish law in order to be saved. Paul wanted them to know they – and we – are accepted because of what Jesus did, not because of who we are or what we do. But let's break down a few of the comparisons Paul made. "Gentile (anyone who wasn't a Jew) or Jew" addressed heritage or race. "Circumcised or uncircumcised" addressed religion. "Barbarian", which was anyone who wasn't a Roman, addressed nationality. "Scythian" addressed culture. "Slave or free" addressed socio-economic class. To God, none of these things matter. When it comes to a relationship with God, the only thing that matters is the cross of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 7:9 Do words sometimes take your breath away? I'm a total word nerd, so this verse did it for me. Can you imagine the scene described here? People, too many to count, dressed in white robes, standing before the throne of Christ. But look more closely and you'll notice just how diverse they are! Men and women, representing every nation on Earth. You would see skin colors in every hue. You would hear every language speaking, all proclaiming Christ is Lord. No one is elevated over another because of where they were born. No one is treated less because of the color of their skin. No one is excluded because of the language they speak. Christ accepts, loves, and redeems them all. This is a vision we can carry with us today. We have the ability to give out a tiny piece of it now by loving, accepting, and offering the truth of Christ to everyone.

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