

# Non-prejudicial relationships

1 John 2: 3 – 11

## 1) Living as Jesus lived

- There are two ways that this scripture tells us to live as Jesus lived
  - Keep his commandments
  - Live as Jesus lived
  - The two are inseparable because Jesus never commanded anything that he didn't live out.
  - John 15: 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.
- Jesus expects our lives and our beliefs to be entwined. Our lives come out of our beliefs.
- How did Jesus demonstrate non-prejudicial relationships?
- He was a Jew and mingled with the Jews.
  - It is normal to mix with your own people and ethnicity.
- Jesus mixed with Samaritans, who the Jews didn't normally mix with.
  - He spoke to a Samaritan woman at the well and then went to stay in her village for two days
- Jesus was requested to go to the home of a Roman Centurion, who were the oppressors of His people.
  - His kingdom view superseded his political views. He also saw the person for who they were and not for the system they belonged to.
- Jesus mixed with sinners without partiality.
  - He allowed a prostitute to wash his feet with her tears and hair, he mixed with tax collectors and had a zealot as one of his disciples. He had a thief as his treasurer.
- Jesus always treated people with respect and dignity regardless of their ethnicity, race, nationality, language, religion, or anything else that made them different from him.
- Being God revealed in the flesh He demonstrated the truth of how God views people.
  - There is only one God of the Bible, who is the same God of the Old Testament and the New.
  - Too many people think that God was an aggressive God of law and without grace in the old Testament, and in the New Testament He became the God of love, grace and mercy.
  - This isn't true as He is the same God of both Testaments and showed the same impartiality in both.
- Both Israelite and foreigner in Israel had the same regulations to celebrate the Passover feast
  - Exodus 12: 48 – 49 A foreigner residing among you who wants to celebrate the Lord's Passover must have all the males in his household circumcised; then he may take part like one born in the land. No uncircumcised male may eat it. The same law applies both to the native-born and to the foreigner residing among you.
  - Deuteronomy 10: 17 – 19 For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.

## 2) A transition from the old to the new

- John almost seems to be contradicting himself when he says that he isn't writing anything new, but an old command, Then he goes on to say that he is writing a new command.
  - What's the difference then?
  - The difference is that now Christ commands us to do what he works in us by his grace and truth. The external law has now become new in that it has been internalised by the Spirit of God.
  - He now enables us to carry out his commands.
- There is always a transition from our old lives to the new.
  - Transformation of life and relationship takes time, grace and effort.
  - Jesus was perfect in every way and never had to go through this transformation.
  - We're imperfect and after we come to faith in the Lord we go through a process of changing to be like him.
- It is, however, essential that there is transformation in our relationships with one another, especially when our broken relationships were due to prejudices of some sort.
  - This is especially relevant in our society due to our past.
  - 1 John 2: 9 Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness.
  - Hatred can be active or passive and both are equally hurtful.

### 3) Non-prejudicial relationships

- We need to move on to be transformed into Christ-likeness in non-prejudicial relationships.
- Often we retain our prejudices in our blindness to the truth of who we are and who the other person is.
- Who is the Samaritan, Roman, tax collector, prostitute, thief, in your life that you need to get on with?
  - In other words who is the person of another race, ethnicity, religion, morality, that you need your prejudices removed from to see them how God sees them?
- Relational prejudice is often a matter of pride – an attitude of superiority.
  - Superiority can be personal, ethnic, racial, or national.
  - No matter what it is we need to deal with it, and move on from there to a love of people regardless of who they are.
- Even in ministry we see ethnocentricity
  - Missionaries often, intentional or unintentionally, see themselves as superior to the local people who they've gone to minister to.
  - Sometimes denominations have separate churches for different races and groups, such as castes in India.
  - James condemns favouritism shown to the rich against the poor in churches.
    - James 2: 1 – 4 My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favouritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?
- How do we move on to non-prejudicial relationships:
  - Recognise all people are created by God and bear the image of God, albeit in a fallen state.
  - God did not create one above the other. We need to recognise that we're all equal in his sight
  - Ask God to show us our own prejudices.
  - Be intentional to get to understand people who you have been prejudiced against.
  - Be honest where you are and if you're still struggling. This is walking in the light with yourself, God and others.
  - Visit them in their environment and learn to do things the way that they would do them.
- Let us love one another as Jesus loved us.