

God's Remedy for Racial Prejudice

Intro:

1. There's prejudicial attitudes fostered all over the world.
 - a. In Africa it's skin color.
 1. **ILL: South Africa's apartheid.**
 2. **ILL: Attitudes in the US making the Civil Rights Movement necessary.**
 - b. In the Middle East its religious faith.
 1. **ILL: Jews & Islam.**
 2. **ILL: World wide Islamic terrorism.**
 - c. In Germany it was the supremacy of the Arian race.
 1. **ILL: Hitler & the attitude of the 3rd Reich.**
 2. Even when we were there (in the 80's), there was an attitude of the superiority of European whites.
 - d. In Korea distrust of others, particularly other Asians.
 1. **ILL: History of Japanese occupation.**
 2. **ILL: What the Chinese & Soviet Union influence with North Korea.**
2. So - what's the answer? How do we stop divisive attitudes that foster hatred & bitterness?

Ephesians 2:11-22

I. v11-12 - Sin Separates

- A. What are the phases of separation?
 1. Separation from God: Adam & Eve had to leave God's presence (**Gen 3:24**).
 2. Separation of man from himself: Adam was ashamed of his nakedness (**Gen 3:10**).
 3. Separation from nature: the earth would no longer yield a harvest without toil (**Gen 3:17**).
 4. Separation from life: Adam lived 930 years, but then he died (**Gen 3:3; 5:5**).
 5. Separation from animals: fear - man & animals kill & eat one another (**Gen 9:1-3**).
 6. Separation from his fellow man.
 - a. Adam blamed Eve: the seedbed for marital strife & divorce (**Gen 3:12**).
 - b. Cain killed Abel: the beginning of homicide & war (**Gen 4:8**).
 - c. The confusion of languages at Babel (**Gen 11:1-9**).
 - d. Abraham left Ur: the separation of Jews from Gentiles (non Jews) (**Gen 12:1-4**).
- B. Where is the racial prejudice in this passage?
 1. Separated by attitude.
 - a. One influential rabbi of that time said, "Gentiles are fuel for the fires of hell".
 - b. Jews were forbidden to help a Gentile mother in childbirth.
 - c. If a Jew & a Gentile married, there would be a funeral service in the Jewish family for their child.
 2. **v11** - Separated by circumcision.
 3. **v14** - Separated by "the dividing wall of hostility".
 - a. **ILL: the wall between the Court of the Gentiles & the Court of the Women.**
 - b. In 1871 one of the signs from this wall was discovered which read, "Let no one of any other nation come within the fence around the holy place or he will be responsible for his own death".
 - c. Paul's arrest in Jerusalem was because of this attitude (**Act 21:28-29**).
 4. **v15** - Separation by obedience to the Law of Moses.

II. v13-18 - Lord Jesus Reconciles & Unites

A. What did the Lord do to reconcile & unite us?

1. **v13** - He **brought** you **near** (ἐγενήθητε ἐγγύς) = a technical phrase referring to the process a Gentile goes through to accept the Jewish faith. **ILL: Proselyte Baptism.**
2. **v14** - He destroyed **the dividing wall of hostility** - the barrier at the Temple.
3. **v15a** - He **abolished** (καταργέω) = rendered inoperative - the commands & regulations of the Law of Moses.

B. **v15b** - What are the results? He created **one new man out of two.**

1. **New** (καινός) = not “new” in time - but “new” of a different type!
2. You & I are a new creation! **II Cor 5:17 - Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.**
3. Hostility is replaced with peace.
4. **v18** - Each of us are given the same Spirit to approach the Father with.

III. v19-22 - We Can Now Grow in Christ Together

A. How can we do this?

1. **v19a** - Binding together as fellow citizens in God’s holy nation.
2. **v19b** - Appreciating our family relationship in God’s divine household.
3. **v20-22** - You & I are fellow bricks in God’s Temple - together a dwelling place for God’s Holy Spirit.

B. The church needs to be like a symphony concert.

1. When we have **disunity** - it’s like the orchestra warming up. It sounds awful!
2. When we have **unity** - it’s like the start of the concert.

**All of us are created in the image of God!
Let’s band together as God intended His church to be
to encourage & build one another up in faith.
Let’s present to God a concert!**