

## We Are All the Same

Scripture: Joshua 2:1 – 13 and Acts 10:28, 34 - 48

2/5/23

In some ways we are all the same, but in many more ways we are all different.

A story to start: At a local fast food restaurant, a man entered with his four-year old nephew. The restaurant was crowded so the man surveyed all around the restaurant and found only one table free. The table was beside a group of tough looking men. They were loud and laughter was coming from their table. The man hesitated and re-surveyed the restaurant but there was no other table available so he walked with his nephew to that table! They sat down and minutes later, the men bowed their heads and prayed. They then brought out their Bibles and started to do a Bible study!

This discovery made the man feel a shame. He had seen the men at the table next to him as unsafe. But God showed him how prejudice he was toward the men.

This experience can make us think about the people God uses for his kingdom. God uses people who we often overlook. God uses people who we often are prejudice toward!

In our scripture reading from the Book of Joshua, we have such a person. We have Rehab! The two Israelite spies chose to hide in her house which is a surprising choice since Rehab is a prostitute. Given her occupation, this is a very surprising choice!

Yet, because of Rehab's faith in God she and her family were not destroyed with the people in her city who refused to obey God. Not only that, but the former prostitute from Canaan became an ancestor of Jesus himself.

Rehab's story reminds us that God sees people differently. In his eyes, we are all the same. We are all sinners in need of his grace. And when we respond in faith to God, he can use us for his glory, no matter what our past might be.

So, my friends, what prejudice might you have against others that is stifling us? And how can we change our thoughts and attitudes with God's help so that we can serve him better?

A Second story: A mother and her son had just returned from a vacation at the French seaside. The boy was eight years old and he declared to his father that he was prejudice against the French people. When his father asked why he felt that way. The little boy said – 'If I knew why, I would not be prejudice!'

The word 'prejudice' means an unreasonable preconception that is formed without knowledge. Are you prejudice?

Unfortunately we sometimes fall into the trap of having a negative opinion about others without full knowledge.

In our second scripture reading from Acts, the Jews viewed gentiles as unclean and lesser than themselves. However, God made it clear to Peter that this should not be the case. So Peter declared this message –

*'You know it is against our laws for a Jewish man to enter a Gentile's home like this or to associate with a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should no longer think of anyone as impure or unclean. God shows no favoritism!'*

In fact, that day the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles, too!

God wants all people to be part of his family. God wants us all to unity in Jesus Christ.

Let us set aside any prejudices. Let us set aside any preconceived notions we have about others and let us welcome all with a joyful hearts!

Last year our church grew by thirteen new members, how about this year? We all have many differences, but we are the same in our faith in Jesus Christ. And in this sameness, we can unite in service of Jesus Christ.

So, search yourself for your prejudices, and discard them so that may become an evangelist for Christ.

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father, please forgive us for the times we have been prejudiced against others. Please forgive us for judging others based upon our preconceptions. We pray this in Christ, name – AMEN.