

Sunday, October 24, 2021  
The Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost  
Pastor Matt Duerr

## **Equity, Equality, the Church and You!**

Grace, Mercy and Peace be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen. I think we'd all agree that we are living in a most unique and yet very troubling time. The news is constantly reminding us of the pandemic struggles, and at the top of the list 700,000 or more have died from or with COVID. And restrictions have resulted in countless small businesses being closed, as well as the jobs that went with those businesses. And yet, there's 10 million job openings in our country and from what I understand, 5.4 million people who are out of work and yet we have all of these people not working. Why is that? Well, some of it is because there's more jobs than there are workers, and so potential workers are saying you have got to pay me more. Meanwhile, certain jobs are not being filled and that is resulting in a supply chain problem. Material isn't getting to the stores. Then we've got the controversies to mask, or not to mask? That is the question. Or, to Fauci or not Fauci? That is the question. To science or well to science? That is the question. When we look at it, if you disagree with each other, immediately you are considered to be ignorant, or a domestic terrorist because the other side doesn't want to talk to you. Why is that?

I would contend that the vast majority of it is because of politics and politicians. But when we look at the political landscape in our country, we see there is an extreme right there is an extreme left and there is precious little in between. What has happened within our political realm in the United States is there is a lack of respect for each other; and it has been replaced by literally contempt. And the way we do things has been dramatically changed. Consider the how a bill is made nowadays. A bill goes before Congress asking for trillions of dollars; when asked, 'what will that money be spent on?' The answer is basically we need to pass it first so that you know. The reason for that is because once that amount of money has been passed, then they are going to talk about how it is supposed to be exactly distributed. It's a game.

We see games in the voting process. Now where you can have a state like let's say Delaware, where the politicians of Delaware are accusing the people

in Texas of you know, going too far and limiting people's ability to vote; and it's terrible, it's rotten, this needs to be corrected. And yet, what the people in Texas are proposing; they look right back at the politicians in Delaware, and say, 'wait our polls are going to be open longer than yours. Our voting registration identification registration stuff is simpler than yours. And you're saying we're the ones that are causing a problem.'

And then you start on top of that inflation, depending on who you talk to, the Wall Street Journal says it's out of control and we're in trouble. We're on the precipice of economic catastrophe. And then you hear those that say, 'Oh no this is just a temporary little blip. Once we have the supply chain stuff taken care of, it's going to be fine.'

We hear about mandates. "The people gave us a mandate!" And yet when you look at our Senate there's 50 republican senators, 48 democratic senators, 2 independent senators; I would contend that none of them can say they have a mandate from the masses. But yet, what do we hear? I'm hearing consistently from people, and myself, just hearing 'lies, lies, lies, or obfuscation of the truth.' How did we get here? Very slowly. I know it seems like it's been very fast, it's really very slowly.

If you go back to the late 60s, the early 70s, back when I was in college. In philosophy classes, we were being taught what is called post modernism, which means after the modern movement. Postmodernism is built on two foundational principles. The first is the knowledge principle. The knowledge principle simply says there is no objective truth or knowledge. Truth or knowledge as we know it, is a construct of society. And you've probably heard that word construct used quite a bit lately in the news. Basically, the premise of postmodernism is that the rich and powerful construct the truth as society knows it. Which leads to the second principle which is the political principle, which says-society is a system of power, or hierarchies, levels of power, that decide what is truth, and how much truth can be known, and how the truth will be spread.

A perfect example that is used or was used by the postmodernist was the Catholic Church. You have the Pope at the top, he makes a decree, he tells the priest, the priest now have the decree from the Pope; and now they are told,

‘OK so we can tell the people this, and this is how will tell them. And we're going to limit it to this.’

The Reformation came along and well that changed it a little bit. That was the problem but maybe we got a problem out of the Reformation. Because now denominational presidents and councils say something, and the pastors are told it, and this is what we are going to tell the laity and how we are going to tell the laity and, in some cases, it sounds an awful lot like the same thing. Therefore, postmodernism is built around the word de-construct. We must get rid of these constructs and instead apply equity, equality, diversity, in the name of social justice. In reality, all of this is a new construct.

Now Postmodernism appeared to be dead as we went into the 80s and 90s in the early 2000s. Why? Science killed it, or at least, so we thought, because the scientific method was shown to produce objective truth. You see something, you explain how you think it works, that's called a hypothesis. What must you do then? Test it. So, you test it, and it appears to back up what you say, you now publish it in journals, and the other scientists who are greedy; they look and say, ‘hey we don't want that guy to get all the fanfare and all of this; we want to prove him wrong.’ And so they start testing, but if they're trying to prove them wrong, and their tests say he's right; at that point in time, it comes to be at the level of a theory. Which is a statement about how something works, that appears to be supported by testing.

So, at some point in time, somebody jumped up in the air and they came back down and said, hey, ‘I think there's something, we're going to call it gravity, and gravity pulls you to the ground whenever you jump up.’ It's been tested a whole lot. No one's ever found that to be not true in the entire world, and that is now become a law. And so, the scientific method produced objective truth.

But yet, while that is what was being focused on by society, in the backrooms of higher academics, maybe boardrooms, four critical points from postmodernism continued on. They were the four points of de-construction. The first was blur the boundaries. New theories now are no longer coming out of the scientific method. These theories are fluid. They are non-defined. They're what we call, you've probably heard this in the arguments at school board meetings, the critical race theory. Or maybe you've heard of the queer

theory, or the post-colonial theory. There's over 100 such theories today. Is there scientific evidence for them? Absolutely not. No, these are in the mind of academics, who think this is true. But there's no real way to test it. But they are the experts.

The second is cultural relativism. You've probably heard this too. All those old ways are no longer relative. We're younger, and what's important today is what shapes the truth. Don't tell me about the past.

And the third comes out of that, a loss of individuality. What you experienced in the past, that's just you. It's no big deal, because *we* are going this way, because *we* know better. And what better way to do that than to change the language?

Which is the 4th principle. Change the language so that people are arguing about the words, the linguistics, and not the substance. And so, you'll find people arguing about that to the word theory. No, it's not a theory. Yes, it is a theory. This guy says it's true and he's an expert. Yeah, but this, there's no testing to back it up. Oh well that's it. It goes off and it's kind of like the way the bills are done now. Like I said before, pass it and then we'll figure out the guts of it.

But a fifth component was added it's called Cancel Culture. If someone disagrees with you, immediately attack them, get them out of their job because they are out of touch. They are radical. They are uneducated. They are an idiot, and they are a cultural terrorist.

I'd like to take just a little bit more time in setting the stage here, because unless we know what is being taught and what let's versus our children are being taught in the language they're being taught; what we talked with them about is going to be gibberish to them or culturally irrelevant.

So, let's focus on some words. Equality: probably for all of us here, equality we would say is that all people have the same opportunity. All equals equality. Equity: equity basically can be summed up with the spirit of the law, versus the letter of the law. If you have a curb that is painted red and someone pulls over because their child is in the back seat throwing up; and you pull over and mom gets out and is pulling the child out, and a police officer pulls up;

they're probably not going to pull up and write a ticket and put it on your windshield. They're going to say, what's going on? Oh, the child is sick? Oh, is he OK? Can I help? Meanwhile if behind that car there's another car parked in the red zone that has a ticket on it, well five tickets on it from the last five days; it's probably going to ticket that person too instead of the person who's sick. That's the spirit of the law. Diversity: well diversity Ephesians 4, speaks about it. Some are given the gift of preaching, some of the gift of teaching, some of the gift of prophecy, some of the gift of healing. But how does Paul say it? "But we're all a part of the body of Christ each one individually members of it and we all work together for the common good or for the glory of God."

Now what has become of those words? Well, equality is no longer what we see in the Bible that all were created in the image of God or what we read in the Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal. Equality now is and I quote, "social engineering so that those who experience a perceived injustice have a mandated position." So, someone perceives that their race or their gender is not getting into engineering. We would look at society and say OK well 14% of the people are this race or this gender therefore from now on the colleges will turn out 14% of the engineers who come from those areas it's social engineering.

Equity, I think Kamala Harris our vice president said it very clearly on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020. She said, I quote, "Equitable treatment means we all end up at the same place." In other words, equal outcomes for everyone. The only way you get that is if everybody has the same pay, the same savings, the same benefits, the same house, that everybody at the end has to be equal.

And diversity is very similar to part of the equality; but this now is in everything there must be equal representation of all races, of all genders, and that is the deciding factor in hiring or in placement. No longer do you look at who has the best experience or who is the most qualified from the knowledge or experience standpoint; but to what color skin do you have or what is your gender? We see some of that in the political realm where a lot of people were put into positions because they were the first of this, or the first of this, but they have no knowledge of what they're supposed to be overseeing.

But now you're probably saying, 'Amen pastor Matt, amen. I'm agreeing with you 100% so it's time to rock your boat in it. So, what will some of these

people that are believing this tell you? It's biblical! Consider our gospel this morning from Matthew. There are workers in the vineyard, some are hired early, some mid-day, or the very end of the day. They all got equal pay. Notice the equity? Their outcomes were the same. It didn't matter how much each person worked and since God is love, that is an example of true love. And since Jesus said it, do any of you want to argue that point with me? Uh huh, now some of you might say, 'well, yeah, pastor, because hold on a second, in Bible study you have said multiple times, "context is everything." And that is absolutely correct. You can pull just about any scripture out that you want, to make a point that you want.

When we look at the context of our gospel today, we find that a young rich man had come to Jesus and said good teacher what must I do to inherit the Kingdom of heaven? And Jesus came back by saying, "why do you call me good? Only God is good. But you know the commandments; do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not lie; basically, love your neighbor. Jesus quoted the second table of the law. Do these. And the man said, 'I have kept all of these from my youth.' To which Jesus came back with, 'good, here's the first table of the law. Now go sell everything you have, give it to the poor and come follow me.'" Because the first table of the law is all about love God. And when he had to choose between his riches and God, he walked away dejected. He really didn't love God.

That's what led Jesus to say, 'it is more difficult for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to inherit the Kingdom of heaven.' And that led the disciples to say, 'who then can be saved?' Because they were taught a prosperity form of religion. God rewards those who do well; so, if you're rich, obviously you've been doing everything right, God is rewarded you. And when they ask, 'who then can be saved?' God says, with God all things are possible." Then Peter says, 'look we've left everything, we followed you, what will we have?' Jesus comes back and says, 'anyone who has left everything, (and then he gets very personal) father, mother, brother, sister, spouse, children,) for me; they will have eternal life. Now that really makes it hard because how many of you would give up your family for eternal life? And that is when Jesus says, 'many who are first will be last and the last will be first.'

And then He gives this parable, a parable that says some who have been Christians all along. They are going to get to heaven and some who are

Christians at the very end, they're going to get to heaven. It's all about faith in Christ. Both are going to heaven, because it's a gift of God, not what they have done. The modern version would be, 'let's change. Let's change equality to diversify and achieve equity so that all are saved. So, we would change the scriptures, which is exactly what's being done in anybody who recounts this parable as a reason for equity.

The reality is there is equality. It is biblical. We are all created in the image of God all of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. God desires all to be saved so He sent His Son to pay the price of sin; death for us on the cross. Those who reject that plan of salvation will be condemned. It is their choice. They have that freedom of choice. When you look at it the word equity is never used in the New Testament. It is used in the Old Testament we heard it this morning in the responsive reading, speaking about kings and about God. That a good king is one who exercises justice and equity. So, they look at as James says in James 2:1. They see the widow who has lost her husband in a patriarchal society, and they have mercy on them. They don't have to pay the full tax or there's help for you here. Or the orphan, the same sort of thing.

But God is the one who shows us equity. Equity first in the law, of all things. Consider, if you sinned in the Old Testament, you had transgressed God's law. Atonement needed to be made. You went to the temple; you offered a sacrifice of atonement. You had to have a goat for that or a lamb. At Passover, of course, it was a lamb. What if you didn't have the goat or the lamb? Well, the gospel gives us equity, the spirit of the law. Something has to pay the price. He can't afford that? That's fine two turtledoves or two pigeons would be fine. Wait you can't afford two turtle doves or two pigeons, that's what Mary and Joseph brought; a cup of flour or an ephah of flour will do. The message is, there's equity, the spirit of the law; payment for sin must be made. But the spirit of the law is you can do this you, can do this you can do this. In fact, it's because God is equitable that the psalmist writes, "let the nations be glad and sing for joy. For you judge the peoples with equity."

Which takes us back to true equality. All are created in God's image. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. All deserve death because the law shows us our sin. But at the same time, the law shows us the need of our Savior. That it is the Savior who brings forgiveness. There is equity! None of

us deserve it, but God gives it to us anyways because He is just. He is equitable. And it's in the spirit of the law, and yet the spirit of love.

Which leads us to true diversity. God desires all to be saved. Christ died for all, and we best not throw up any stupid human roadblocks. James the brother of Jesus said, “my brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.” Dear brothers and sisters, may we walk into this world; and may we share with our neighbors, with our children, with our grandchildren, biblical equality, biblical equity and biblical diversity. Because heaven is our home through Jesus Christ and we would sure like to see all of our family, all of our neighbors, a very diversified group there. In our Saviors Name, Amen.