





I love the church. You know I do. I have a VERY HIGH view of the church. BUT I also recognize that the church is messy. Today we are going to hear about some of that messiness.

- Today we are talking about human prejudice. Oppression and injustice on the basis of a sinful bias. Why? Because with all of the rhetoric around us in the last few months, we need to be reminded to stand in the sole sufficiency of Christ and his word.
- I have a concern. You can hear the words prejudice and injustice today and say - oh no, not again. Particularly when you hear it concerning the history of slavery and segregation in this country. These words prejudice, and injustice, are two of the most explosive words in the church right now. Many of us have even drawn our lines allegiance on the basis of these words. I follow Paul, I follow Apollos, I follow Cephas, or Tom Ascol, Thabiti Anabwile, John MacArthur, Jemar Tisby, Phil Johnson, Jonathon Leeman, Voddie Baucham. And I want to say that something that has suffered most in this whole debate is the pulpit of the LOCAL church that has actual elders who are assigned the responsibility by God for teaching and caring for your souls. Some of you have had time to listen to countless sermons from these men during the week but not have time pray with your own church on Tuesday nights or sit under the ministry of the word in this church on Wednesday nights. I hope you get the point. God has appointed the elders in THIS church to shepherd your soul under Christ. And we love you and want to.
  - Allergic reaction... Many popular teachers have heard the words, "justice and prejudice" and immediately reacted in coming out in attack mode.... Don't get me wrong, some of that teaching has been really helpful, but there has also been a lot of flavor producing fear and fear mongering among us. They're reacting to some wrong teaching that has sought to integrate some of the humanistic ideas from social critical theory and other philosophies into the church.
  - On the other side are many people in our culture who are looking for injustice and prejudice under every rock and causing others to walk around feeling falsely accused.
  - Brothers and sisters, we do not want to have the language of the fear mongerer or the false accuser. We want to point to Christ and his word to highlight the fact that we have all we need in Scripture. We don't want to make American or church history a dirty subject. We'd rather teach you how to interpret that history through the lens of Scripture. When we learn to interpret history through the lens of Scripture it helps us to interpret everything through the lens of Scripture. The truth of the Word of God is an unchanging reality. Many of us have been allergic to talking about aspects of history because of the reactions of the pendulum swings around us.
  - So what I am asking us to do for now is to cancel out all the noise and consider history in light of God's Word so that we might put the past in it's place and live to the glory of God in the present.
  - WE LEARN from 2000 years of church history and world history and every time a Christian does that we open up God's word and assess it through that lens and it helps us to consider how similar issues would be considered today.

One last thing.... Even though I am going to use American examples today, the world, not just America, has a horrible history of sinning against each other. Hate and human prejudice existed prior to the Tower of Babel. Just read from Genesis 4 to Genesis 9. After Babel we have seen horrific sins against humanity on the basis of ethnicity. It has been no more prevalent than in the 20th century. Just go and google

human genocide in the 20th century and see what kind of list you are able to read through. It's horrifying. Well, we are a church in America. Human prejudice in America is no more explicitly seen than in the slave trade and segregation of the past. But I am being very specific this morning. We are going to look at that history specifically in the church and use Scripture to teach us how OUR CHURCH can lead the way in acting together against sinful prejudice in a way that pleases Christ. I hope you are with me on this.

**SUBJECTIVITY LEADS TO  
COMPLICITY**



In this series I have been making a consistent statement. Subjectivity leads to complicity. That is, when we consider humanity on our own subjective standards rather than the objective propositional truth found in Scripture alone, we make grievous mistakes and it leads to being complicity in sins against humanity as defined in the Scriptures. You see, humanity is defined by God, sin is defined by God and our response to humans and human sin is defined by God. If we do not get every detail of this from the Scriptures, we are likely to be complicit in human sin either in perpetration of the sin or in the church not dealing with sin before us. I also want to say that this relates to ANY sin.

**GENOCIDE, ABORTION,  
EUGENICS, RACISM,  
EUTHANASIA, SUICIDE, HUMAN  
TRAFFICKING, INJUSTICE**

I am hoping that we can at least agree, that we as HPBC sitting and listening to this in August 2020 do not want to be complicit in any of the words that are on this list. As sins on this list have happened through the ages and as the church has lived in the midst of them, the church has had a responsibility to uphold the word of God and be shining beacons of his truth and holiness as we point sinners to Christ. This is my focus this morning. How does the church protect holiness and be an effective witness in the world as we live in the face of grievous sins against humanity.

## 1 Timothy 3:15

if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.\*

- People should be able to walk into a local Christian church and see people who are committed to upholding and protecting the truth of Scripture and living and behaving in step with that truth.... So how should that look when it comes to the idea of human prejudice? I put to you if the church applied one verse of Scripture in the bible consistently, we would never be complicit in prejudicial sins against humanity.

## PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others..”

- The clear teaching for the church is that we are to be a humble people willing to give up our own pursuits and preferences for the sake of others. We are to see others and hold their interests as more significant than our own. If the church truly lived out this one command in Philippians we would eradicate prejudice from among us. It would not be in our church, in our homes, in our marriages, in the way we approach our work or anywhere else.

## MATTHEW 15:19

For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

- Last week we looked at racism. One form of human prejudice. So like any other human problem we have ever talked about in our church. Racism is not the problem, our HEART is the problem. We cannot trust our heart. That is why we can't be even 1% subjective in this matter. (Don't hear what I am not saying. I am not saying that racism is not a problem in and of itself. I am saying that racism always, like every human sin, stems from a sinful heart). There is not one demographic in this country or the entire world, not in any so-called ethnic group, that is immune to having a sinfully prejudicial heart. The word Prejudice has many factors to it - It centers in a bias, a selective preference that can hurt others, and the main aspect that I want to center on today is that which is ***dislike, hostility, or unjust behavior deriving from unfounded opinions.***



## PREJUDICE

" Unfounded biased opinions of others emanating from an evil heart and results in direct sinful actions or complicity with sinful actions."

This is how I expect the world to act and this has been the same prejudice in the world ever since Genesis 3. In this series and because of the context in which the elders committed to teach it we are focusing in on issues of ethnic prejudice, but I want us to see that prejudice raises it's ugly head in all sorts of arenas.

## PREJUDICE

Ethnic, physical, intellectual, class,  
denominational, political, traditional,  
cultural, allegiance, economic,  
theological.....

Comment on Allegiance. (I follow Paul, Apolos, Cephas) We are down to prejudice on very fine details right now.

When it comes to America's past, we all know very well that human prejudice was no more explicit than as it was in slavery and segregation. We all know that slavery was common in America from the very beginning. Even when the Atlantic Slave trade was stopped in 1808, slavery itself was ongoing in America until after the Civil War, the emancipation declaration and the 13th-15th Amendments. We know of the Jim Crow segregation laws that didn't really stop until Brown vs Board decision and the Civil Rights Act. We know this basic American history and we there might be some debate about the details of statements in the constitution etc, but the basic reality is there and the church had to live with it. The church had to decide how it would respond to this not on the basis of what was a civil law or not of the time but on the basis of what was the truth in the word of God. THAT brothers and sisters is the history we need to interpret through the lens of Scripture and the history we need to learn from.

BUT there is Slavery in the bible - criminals, debtors, and prisoners of war.

So much more humane than prisons! God gave Israel laws in which the punishment fit the crime and which human life was valued at the highest possible level.

## EXODUS 21:16

"Whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him, shall be put to death.

- Did anyone in the church have an excuse?

## 1 TIMOTHY 1:9-11

understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, 10 the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, 11 in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

- These sins are not representative of the gospel of Jesus Christ by which he paid for them on the cross. Those saved by the gospel who are truly saved from an unholy life which includes everything and more on this list.
- So what do these verses tell us? They tell us (along with the scriptures we have seen for the last two weeks) that there was no room for the church in America to live in acceptance of slavery or segregation or of the American laws and attitudes that allowed it. None.
- More than that. How should the church view EVERY person who walked into their gathering? Let's look for a while at Ephesians 2.

## Ephesians 2:5

even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us  
alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

– Our salvation is a matter of grace.

## Ephesians 2:11

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is **made in the flesh by hands-**

- What is happening?
- Ephesus is a gentile church. Are they second class people because they are not JEWISH converts? They know that the Jews call them dogs. The Jews take pride in their circumcision. Are they lesser Christians in the church than the church in Jerusalem?
- Made in the flesh by hands - circumcision was an outward sign of God's GRACE for the Jews. But as we found in Galatians, many Jews wanted to take great pride in this as if to say I am more of a child of God than you. So Paul makes it clear - this is just something that they make with their hands.
- Just like when the prideful pharisees were at the baptism of Jesus. John reminded them, you think Abraham is your father, God is able to make these stones into his children. In other words - you are no better than anyone else. You need God's grace just as much as anyone.

## JOSHUA 24:2

And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods. 3 Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan, and made his offspring many. I gave him Isaac.

- THERE IS NO ROOM FOR PRIDE IN YOU. GOD TOOK A GODLESS IDOLATOR AND SAVED HIM AND GOD MADE HIM INTO A GREAT NATION THAT THROUGH THIS THE WHOLE WORLD MIGHT BE BLESSED IN JESUS. This is basically what Paul is saying to encourage the gentiles in Ephesians. You are not second class Christians. There is no such thing.

## EPHESIANS 2:12-13

remember that you were at that time **separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise**, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 **But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.**

- BUT there WAS a spiritual separation in the past. The gentiles by and large rejected God and hated his people in the O.T. THEY WERE separated - not as much ethnically but spiritually. That is what Paul says here...
- As those uncircumcised. (now they have circumcised hearts) -
- Those who are truly God's holy people are Israel - Those who were living by faith in Christ - in the coming Messiah or in fulfillment. The GENTILES ARE NO LONGER SEPARATE in Christ. And Paul expresses two other ways he makes this explicit.
- 1. THEY WERE - NOT ANY LONGER - alienated from citizenship. The Greek word *Poiteia*. It means city, state, commonwealth or Citizenship. The Ephesians had nothing to do with Israel but in Christ they are full citizens of it. They are PART of the Commonwealth.
- 2. The promises of God to Israel had NOTHING to do with them but now they are FULLY included in the promises of God to his people.
- When does this happen for the Ephesians - NOW - The moment you come into faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- How does it happen - IN CHRIST. Because he has fulfilled EVERYTHING for us on the cross. He paid for our acceptance with God with his blood.



## EPHESIANS 2:14-16

For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

- This is how the church should see each other. There is no dividing wall or line between us in Christ Jesus. NOTHING.
- There was a GREAT separation between Jews and Gentiles. BUT NOW in CHRIST THERE IS NOT EVEN THAT Separation.
- In Jesus Christ there are no separate special people. THERE IS ONE NEW MAN in place of the two. ONE ONE ONE. There is not two people of God. There is one IN CHRIST. I don't know of any other wording more explicit than this in the bible.
- There is no reason for anyone to come to Christ and feel as though they are a second class citizen in his kingdom. Christ has overcome every dividing wall.

## EPHESIANS 2:19

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

## COLOSSIANS 3:11

Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

-This is why we see other passages that show that in Christ there is not only no division between gentile and Jew but also between any other category we might want to think of.

## GALATIANS 3:28-29

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

- I am showing you this to say that the church is a place in this world where every source of unfounded prejudice is done away with in Christ. If the Church stands on the Scriptures that we have seen in this series, then it will lead the way in this world in valuing humanity and appealing for the unity that we can all have in Christ.
- Now I do want to clarify this because as we follow Scripture our Society will still call us prejudice....
- Unfortunately instead of standing on these truths, we have to acknowledge complicity to prejudice has weaved its way through the church in American history.

John Leland

"It is not an article to be settled by legislation among us. It belongs to the moral and religious department, and not to the legislative.."

Baptist History and Heritage Journal, Fall 11  
www.baptisthistory.org

John Leland was a strong voice against slavery at the very beginning of Baptists in America. In 1785 the Baptist General Committee in Virginia stood against slavery but there were unfortunately many baptists who were very angry at this and the committee met again and dismissed it entirely and said it is a matter for the legislators - the state/ government to decide. John Leland who was originally a strong voice against slavery later also said this.... Please hear this. It is not about what the state says. It's about what God says. We don't allow something in the church just because the government does. Making Government laws and documents our authority is subjectivity that leads to complicity.

At the same time some of our evangelical heroes of the faith were holding slaves. Jonathon Edwards and George Whitfield. As we go through Christian history we always have to remind ourselves that we read about men with feet of clay.

Basil Manly Jr.

"Discipline improves the converted and exposed the hypocrite."

Jesse Mercer

"Discipline is the life of the church... Most of church difficulties grow out of neglected church discipline."

At the same time. In the early American Baptist churches through to the time of the Civil War, church discipline was a big feature of the church. They were regularly removing people from membership of the church (about 2% per year) and the church was growing. The church used biblical church discipline to protect purity in the church and to be a light of God's holiness and true salvation to the community. God blessed this hugely. But how did that relate to slavery??

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Many churches allowed slaves to vote on discipline. A member charged with drunkenness and trading on the Sabbath at a camp meeting failed to obtain forgiveness because two black members were not satisfied with his repentance.

Democratic Religion, C. 1850, p. 53



Churches prior to the Civil War were not really separate. Often Baptist churches had congregations of both slave and free and the same voting powers given to both. BUT if you read through American Church history, you will find a distinct absence in these churches of disciplining people for holding slaves and being enslavers in the first place. Also many meetings for discipline were held on Saturday's when slaves could not attend. Some allowed for slaves to have their own discipline meetings between themselves on Sunday afternoons.



Although they ('black' members) embraced similar theological and ecclesiological principles to the whites, their social subordination precluded any determined opposition to white wishes.

Democratic Religion, G. Will, p. 51



Now if you read American Church history, you will also find that the church tried hard to minister to slaves and evangelize them. But, brothers and sisters, there was a constant contradictory life that was lived out right in the midst of the church. Particularly in reading this baptist history it showed that many white baptists truly believed the gospel to be the leveling power of unity in the church. But in those same churches....it is also clear that....

"The church expressed the social inferiority of African Americans most visibly in the seating of their meeting houses. Church seating had traditionally reflected social divisions. New England Puritans seated Africans and Indians in galleries or rear seats....Baptists assigned the blacks to the worst seats."

Democratic Religion, C. Wilentz, p. 63



Now this is pre Civil War when Baptist churches met together. After the Civil War, African Americans asked more and more to meet in their own churches. Surely we would want to be disappointed with that, but I just want us to at least accept part of the main reason why this happened. Many African Americans who had lived through this period believed that....

**“White Christians, especially white preachers, had practiced their religion in hypocrisy. Though they preached against stealing, they upheld a system found on the theft of human beings.”**

Democratic Religion, G. Will, p 71



I know you are saying to me right now that we are not doing this. Perhaps you might be asking yourself why we should hear this, this is not how it is now and this is not how it is at HPBC. I agree. This is absolutely not how it is at HPBC. If we never preach about the dangers and consequences of complicity in prejudice in this church we will one day fall into it and it will, just like this history, dishonor Christ. Also, if nothing else, this is an opportunity for us all remind ourselves that prejudice in the church is ugly in whatever form we see it. The injustices that Israel continued to perpetrate against the poor and needy in their society saw them come under great judgment from God. Just read the OT Prophets.

W. A. Criswell

**" True ministers must passionately resist government mandated desegregation because it is a denial of all that we believe in.....Let them stay where they are, but leave us alone."**

Journal of Southern Baptists, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0009636211000001>

Sermon preached in 1956 to the South Carolina Baptist Evangelism Conference. His sermon - A baptist - was also like the quote I gave from a presbyterian last week, a response to desegregation in America.

Now you might say, does he really mean what you think he means here? Let me tell you that I decided not to share the most explicit statements this man made because I couldn't bring myself to read them out aloud to you.

- At the same time and into the future - 3 Generations of Bob Jones in differing forms of segregation at BJU.

## JOHN 3:1-3

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." 3 Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

-very different because other Pharisees were saying that Jesus does these signs by Satan. - So Jesus sees that the question is about the Kingdom of God. Jesus is showing and Nicodemus sees that these signs represent God's kingdom..

-Jesus says - this is a kingdom that requires entry through a new birth. REGENERATION.

## JOHN 3:4-5

Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

- Nicodemus, understandably has a problem with this... How can I crawl back into my mother's womb? His problem is that he cannot see Jesus' point that the kingdom is a SPIRITUAL kingdom. And Then Jesus helps Nicodemus see that this is a kingdom that requires us to be spiritually cleansed (washed clean) to enter it.
- This is what we must protect in the church. To be born again is to be washed clean of sin and live in this new kingdom. We leave the old. We are NEW creatures and the old has passed away. This is also what Paul says to Titus.

## TITUS 3:4-5

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the **washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,**

- Look at these same words. We are saved not by our works but only through the grace of God in Christ who died and rose for our sins. In coming to Christ we are WASHED in regeneration and renewed in the Spirit. Water and Spirit.... here it is again.
- What does this mean if it does not mean that the church must recognize that it is defined by regeneration and cleansing from sin. Not complicity with sin.
- WE MUST PROTECT THE REGENERATE NATURE OF THE CHURCH.

## MATTHEW 18:15-18

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

-THIS IS why the church has church discipline. We have church discipline because the church is to protect the very nature of who we are which is a Regenerate people in Christ. A cleansed people through the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Spirit in our lives to make us a new and holy people. This is the very identity of the church in the world. This is what sets us apart. We are born again in Jesus and we live to please Jesus not the world.



## 1 PETER 1:15-16

but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

- I have talked about slavery and segregation. Human prejudice that is sinful.

-But it cannot stop there - There IS a sense in which we must be prejudice. We must be prejudice against sin. Look at the society in which we live. Two huge issues before us today in our culture are the culture of death in the abortion industry and the sexual revolution in the promotion of LGBTQ+ values. In one sense abortion is EXTREME prejudice. It says my lifestyle is more valuable than this life that is not as developed as me. The church must stand against this extreme prejudice. We must be prejudiced against sin. For doing that we will be branded as being prejudice. When we stand as regenerate people against the sinful sexual ideologies of our culture, we will be branded as prejudice. If that is the case, I am happy to accept that brand for the sake of Christ. Think about what we have before us this week. The former Vice President Joe Biden just selected his running mate in Senator Kamala Harris. This is what is before us right now as Christians. For any Christian to speak against Kamala Harris simply for having an ethnic heritage in India and Jamaica, we would be sinfully prejudice. However, as we stand against her sinful pro abortion and LGBT agendas, WE will be deemed prejudice by the world. This is why the church must stand on the authority of the word of God, protect the purity of regeneration, and go out as God's holy people into this world with the only message of hope.

**-Imagine if the church during slavery had stood up and said, we will not allow complicity with man stealing in the regenerate body of Christ. If you buy and hold slaves you will be commanded to repent or be ex communicated.**

**-Imagine if the voices of W A Criswell or three generations of Bob Jones who allowed differing forms of segregation at Bob Jones University - Imagine if their voices were saying that regardless of laws in favor or against, the church will protect it's regenerate nature by showing we do not allow superficial sinful prejudice in our walls.**

**-Imagine if the church today says that we will protect the regenerate nature of the church in human value and biblical sexuality no matter what this culture thinks of us. Imagine if we say no to sinful prejudice wherever we see it. Imagine if we show the whole world that the church is actually a holy people with a message of hope for our country and the whole world.**