

Is There Hope For Equality?

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Given 13-Sep-14; Sermon #1231c

in my commentary last week ["What's Happening to Deference?"], I mentioned that there is no equality within the subject I was giving, and that it might be a shock for some to learn that hard fact. The striving for what some might believe is a better measure of equality has been continuous almost from the beginning. Cain undoubtedly felt God's judgment of Abel's offering was unfairly skewed. A bit later, he compounded that by complaining bitterly that God's judgment of him regarding the murder of Abel would bring death upon himself. In this world, it is easy to feel discriminated against.

Now let's learn a reality. It is not love that makes the world go around; it's feelings of being taken advantage of and being used is when we react. We say things like, "The law is not fair." "The judge is biased." "The price is too high." "The jury is stacked." "The police are prejudiced." "It's because I'm poor, white trash that they are just picking on me."

This nation was kick-started in an atmosphere charged with feelings of being discriminated against by the Crown in Britain. The colonists focused their anger first on the Stamp Act, and then rallied themselves to fight a bloody war against those they perceived were prejudiced against them. It's almost as if this nation was born with a chip on its shoulder. Its citizens are almost constantly in a state of being aggrieved because of feelings of abounding inequality in each one's life. Inequality is something Americans seem trained to quickly perceive.

On the other hand, equality is also something that we are told by the leadership of this nation is what they are striving for. However, though the American Revolution was fought to produce equality with other nations in this world, slavery officially existed within this nation right from the beginning. When the Constitution was framed, slaves were not equal with other Americans even though they were literally, by law, citizens who were

not permitted to vote. It is entirely possible that this played a major role in triggering the bloodiest war this nation was ever involved in. Such was the official hypocrisy which Lincoln clearly recognized. Following the Civil War, even though slaves were legally free due to the Emancipation Proclamation, they were not free in the hearts and minds of very many fellow Americans.

The Declaration of Independence States, "We hold these truths to be self evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

But who can tell us when equality is attained in any area of life? Is it measured by one's wealth? How about by social acceptance or academic level? Is it when one is married or when they have a certain number of children and the right address? Is it one's ethnic group that makes all the difference in the world? In the Church of God? Is that when they are members of a certain group?

What I am getting at here is that it is very easy for anyone to set his own standards that can, in reality, in real life and time, be quite fluid—up and down—because equality is a matter of the heart. Its children are intolerance and discrimination, and it will prevail in this world as long as Satan is the ruler of this world and mankind is dominated by his carnality.

According to the apostle Paul, the works of the flesh are these—listen to these works: hatred, contentions, rivalries, jealousies, wrath, selfish ambition, dissention, and heresies. Every one of those are clearly capable of being the fruit of feelings of not being equal, and therefore, discriminated against by whoever it might be.

We have reached a period in mankind's history, in this nation's cultural deterioration, and therefore in God's purpose, too, that being able to absorb being discriminated against *must* be anticipated by us because it is already occurring. It is gradually intensifying and it must be endured.

It must be a part of our working knowledge that God clearly shows that, as a carnal-minded person would perceive it, God Himself is unequal in His

dealings with men! Romans 9:13 clearly states, "Jacob I have loved, Esau I have hated." Is that fair? To the carnal mind, that is clearly inequality. Two verses later, in Romans 9:15, God adds,

Romans 9:15 For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion."

Is that fair of God to pick and choose?

Jesus can easily be charged as well by the carnal. For example, He deliberately chose *only* twelve apostles. He devoted much of His ministry directly to them. He often took them—and only them—aside to explain things more perfectly. Why did He do this? Why did He not put *more* into His inner circle? Why not 30? Was He discriminating against others?

This is the way the carnal mind works. It searches to *find* reasons for complaints of being discriminated against. Why did God strike Uzzah dead when he put out his hand to save the ark from falling into the dirt, but in the midst of the same operation, God allowed the equally-guilty David, who gave approval for the illegal transporting of that ark, to live? Ah ha! Favoritism toward David.

Speaking of David, he took an ill-considered census, which Joab disagreed with and therefore dragged his heels, even while obeying in carrying out the command of his master. God then called David into account. As a result, 70,000 Israelites died. The single greatest catastrophe in Israel's biblical history, but the one who started it all—David—live right through it.

The point of this is not that we should *not* strive to treat all as equally as lies within us. We most certainly should. In fact, we must strive to live according to the Golden Rule. However, at the same time, we must accept the fact that as time and circumstances progress, there are going to be many occasions in which God acts according to His wisdom and purpose in our or others' lives, and those things are going to appear unfair and discriminatory. Will our faith evaporate in a torrent of accusing words?

Christians are going to be hated with greater intensity in the not-too-distant future, and perhaps to our eyes, God seemingly does nothing. Our faith is going to be much more severely tested. Christians are going to be unfairly discriminated against in all manner of cases. The world is going to openly revile us, even though they do not know us personally and have nothing against us personally, except that we are dumb, stupid Christians.

Understand: We will be hated and discriminated against because we are Christ's. There is nothing complicated about that equation.

Equality in this world will ever be an unrealized dream, and we must accept this as a part of the cost of our faithfulness to Christ. II Timothy 3:12 leaps to the fore to inform us, "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution"—despite how good they are. It's not here yet, but it's on Satan's agenda and he practices equality in one major area of life: He hates all Christians because they love Christ and the kingdom of God.