

**LET US TEAR DOWN THE WALLS OF HATRED AND FEAR
LET US BUILD UP THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

Genesis 1: 26–28,31

Then God said: "Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground."

God created man in His image; in the Divine Image He created him; male and female He created them.

God blessed them.

God looked at everything He had made, and He found it very good.



Let us pause and remember that our God, the God Who created us, the God Who redeemed us, and the God Who continually gives us life and calls us to a closer relationship with Him, is constantly abiding with us. He is our God and we are His holy people. We are His beloved daughters and sons; the sisters and brothers of Jesus the Lord.

Hymn:

**For the healing of the nations, Lord we
pray with one accord;
For a just and equal sharing of the
things that earth affords.
To a life of love and action help us rise
and pledge our word.**

**Lead us now, Lord, into freedom from
despair Your world release;
That redeemed from war and hatred all may come and go in
peace.
Show us how through care and goodness fear will die and
hope increase.**

**All that kills abundant living, let it from the earth be banned;
Pride of status, race or schooling, dogmas that obscure Your
plan.**



In our common quest for justice may we hallow life's brief span.

You, Creator God, have written Your great Name on humankind;

For our growing in Your likeness bring the life of Christ to mind.

That by our response and service Earth its destiny may find.

"For the Healing of the Nations" Fred Kaan, 1968, Hope Publishing Co.



1 John 2: 3 - 11

The way we may be sure that we know Him is to keep His commandments.

Whoever says, "I know Him," but does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

But whoever keeps His Word, the love of God is truly perfected in him.

This is the way we may know that we are in union with Him: whoever claims to abide in Him ought to live just as He lived.

Beloved, I am writing no new commandment to you but an old commandment that you had from the beginning.

The old commandment is the word that you have heard.

And yet I do write a new commandment to you, which holds true in Him and among you,

for the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.

Whoever says he is in the light, yet hates his brother, is still in the darkness.

Whoever loves his brother remains in the light, and there is nothing in him to cause a fall.

Whoever hates his brother is in darkness; he walks in darkness and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

1 John 4: 7-21

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God.

Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love.

In this way the love of God was revealed to us:

God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through Him.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another. No one has ever seen God. Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us, and His love is brought to perfection in us. This is how we know that we remain in Him and He in us, that He has given us of His Spirit.

We love because He first loved us.

If anyone says, "I love God," but hates his brother, he is a liar;

for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

This is the commandment we have from Him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.



For those who have seen the Earth from space, and for the hundreds and perhaps thousands more who will, the experience most certainly changes your perspective. The things that we share in our world are far more valuable than those which divide us.

- Donald Williams

Know that although in the eternal scheme of things you are small, you are also unique and irreplaceable, as are all your fellow humans everywhere in the world.

- Margaret Laurence

An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.

- Mohandas K. Gandhi

The person who tries to live alone will not succeed as a human being. His heart withers if it does not answer another heart. His mind shrinks away if he hears only the echoes of his own thoughts and finds no other inspiration.

- Pearl S. Buck

- Every human heart is human.

-Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.

-John Donne

The oneness of human beings is the basic ethical thread that holds us together.

- Muhammad Yunus

-

Every man is more than just himself; he also represents the unique, the very special and always significant and remarkable point at which the world's phenomena intersect, only once in this way, and never again.

- Herman Hesse

+

James 2: 1-9

My brothers and sisters, show no partiality as you adhere to the faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ.

For if a man with gold rings on his fingers and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and a poor person in shabby clothes also comes in, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Sit here, please," while you say to the poor one, "Stand there," or "Sit at my feet," have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil designs?

Listen, my beloved sisters and brothers. Did not God choose those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that he promised to those who love him?

But you dishonored the poor person. Are not the rich oppressing you? And do they themselves not haul you off to court?

Is it not they who blaspheme the noble name that was invoked over you?

However, if you fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well.

But if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

For whoever keeps the whole law, but falls short in one particular, has become guilty in respect to all of it.

Reflection

James is known as the most practical and direct book in the New Testament. So, you'd better fasten your seatbelt for he is going to come after us in an area of our lives where many need to grow.

Let's look at James 2:1. "My brothers, as believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism." How much clearer can he be? And then look at Romans 2:11 from the apostle Paul: "For God does not show favoritism." Want to know an unsavory little secret about everybody in this place? Almost all of us walk around with an unpublished list in our minds of certain kinds of people we tend to like and certain kinds of people we could just do without. We have a list of desirables and a list of undesirables.

Of course, we don't talk about this kind of stuff. How could you in today's egalitarian society? Most of us have a hard time admitting to ourselves that we have favorites or show partiality to people we interact with. But, it's true nonetheless. Some among us, if the truth were known, would admit to having the same kind of problem that James is addressing in the passage. We prefer to be around rich people instead of poor. In fact, some of us are annoyed by the poor and we feel a little superior to them. We try to insulate ourselves from them as much as possible.

Others of us, if the truth were known, prefer to be with educated people. We look down at our noses at those who haven't gotten very far in academic pursuits. Some would rather be with people instead of people. But, interestingly enough, some people prefer to be with people, and they have strong distrust and dislike for anyone who works in a white collar, managerial kind of job.

Some people like to be around thin people and would rather not associate much with those who weigh a little more. Of course, many people come right out and say they feel a lot more comfortable and would rather be around heterosexual people than homosexuals. A lot of people don't even try to hide their disdain for homosexuals.

Then we get into skin color. There are the whites, and then there's everybody else. Some of us have feelings we wouldn't want to be made public about where our preferences lie regarding skin color. Some of us tell jokes at the expense of certain ethnic groups. We say it's just a joke, but there's a reason why we're telling it. There's a reason why we laugh at the person who tells it. Don't kid yourself about this. James says we all have our favorite kinds of people. Instead of acknowledging these preferences as human and acceptable, James says, "Friends, this stuff must be exposed. This stuff has to be repented of. This stuff has to be transformed from the inside by the love of God."

Paul and James would say this subject is very close to the heart of God. Then he cuts right to the heart of what God stands for. You see it in Romans 2:11, "With God there is no partiality of any kind." James would say this is serious business. Tolerating favoritism splits churches right down the middle, causes fights in schools, shootings in the neighborhoods, and bombings on the international front. This has to be rooted out of my heart, and rooted out of today would be a good time for us to start the rooting process.

Roots of favoritism

When you study the research done on determining the origin of prejudice, do you know where the fault lies most of the time? With parents. If children grow up in a home where the mom or dad berates someone because of their skin color, ethnicity, gender, status or belief system, there is a strong possibility the children are going to catch that kind of discriminatory spirit. They are going to carry it in their hearts and, some research shows, the intensity of prejudice can increase from one generation to the next.

The second source of prejudice is peer groups. This is learned primarily in the junior high and high school years. Peer pressure is usually strong enough at that age to motivate a kid to say or do things he or she would never do or say on their own. Researchers also say that once the poison of partiality gets into your system, there's almost no human way to get it out. In fact, it tends to get worse throughout the course of your life. Therefore, it takes something supernatural to root partiality out of each of us. When Jesus started his teaching ministry, he seized every opportunity to expose and transform the hearts of people with discrimination problems. Jesus went after this stuff like a missile. Jesus was not afraid to mingle with the outcast, the unwelcome, and the dispossessed. How are you imitating Him in your everyday life? How do you welcome those who are different from you and your circle of friends???



Intercessions

For the times we have built walls and put others down, forgive us Lord.

For the times we have thought ourselves better than others, forgive us, Lord.

For the times we have stood idly and silently by and allowed another to suffer harassment, forgive us, Lord.

For the times we have been quick to condemn others, forgive us, Lord.

For the times we have participated in jokes that are derogatory and insulting to other races or nationalities, forgive us, Lord.

For the times we have been filled with vengeance and hatred, forgive us, Lord.

For the times we have had hearts of stone rather than hearts of flesh, forgive us, Lord.

For the times we have failed to see the face of Christ in the other no matter who they are, forgive us, Lord.



Hymn:

**Diverse in culture, nation, race,
we come together by Your
grace.**

**God, let us be a meeting ground
where hope and healing are
found.**

**God, let us be a bridge of care connecting people
everywhere.**

**Help us confront all fear and hate, lust and power that
separate.**

**When chasms widen and storms arise, O Holy Spirit, make us
wise.**

**Let our resolve, like steel, be strong, to stand with those who
suffer wrong.**

**God, let us be a table spread with gifts of love and broken
bread**

**Where all find welcome, grace attends, and enemies arise as
friends.**

**"Diverse in Culture, Nation, Race", Ruth Duck, 1992, GIA
Publications, Inc.**



Human beings are all members of one body.

They are created from the same essence.

When one member is in pain,

The others cannot rest.

If you cannot care about the pain of others,

You do not deserve to be called a human being.

**The Persian poet Saadi whose words grace the entrance to the United
Nations**

**"Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that."**

Martin Luther King Jr.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12: 12-14, 26-27

**As a body is one though it has many parts
And all the parts of the body, though many,
are one body, so also Christ.**

**For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body,
whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons,
and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.**

Now the body is not a single part, but many.

If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it;

if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy.

Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it.

Colossians 3: 1-2,12-17

Go in the peace of Christ!

**If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above,
where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.**

Think of what is above, not of what is on earth.

Christ is all and in all.

**Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved,
heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and
patience,**

**bearing with one another and forgiving one another,
if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has
forgiven you,**

so must you also do.

**And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of
perfection.**

**And let the peace of Christ control your hearts,
the peace into which you were also called in one body.**

And be thankful.

**Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,
as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another,
singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in
your hearts to God.**

**And whatever you do, in word or in deed,
do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to
God the Father through him.**

Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.

'Where there is hatred let me sow love

where there is injury, pardon

where there is doubt, faith

where there is despair, hope

where there is darkness, light

where, there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master grant that I

may not so much seek to be consoled.

as to console; to be understood as to

understand; to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned

and it is in dying that we are born

to eternal life.

REMEMBER

when you do not think much of yourself

or of another person,

THINK OF ISAIAH 43:1

I will be with you; I am the Lord, your God,

you are precious in my eyes

and glorious because I love you,

Thus says the Lord, who created you,

fear not,

for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name:

you are Mine.

Fear not, for I am with you.



Saint John Baptist de La Salle

**and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
help us to see the face of Jesus in all whom we meet.**

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!