

“No Partiality”

05-10-15

I grew up in Detroit, Michigan during the '50s and '60s. At that time, Detroit was the 4th largest city in America with a population of 4 million. I went to St. John Lutheran Church which was the Church my great-grandparents, grandparents and parents went to. That's also where I went to school through 8th grade. Like many of the Lutheran Churches, we were a one-color church in a community of colors.

In the mid '60s, Detroit was in a time of unrest. But the Church was a place of calm. That was until THEY CAME! Maggie and Harold LaMar. Maggie was this small rotund woman who dressed to the nines, always had a hat, was a great cook, never lost her smile, and hugged everyone! Harold was this three-piece dark suit man who was so dignified. But after they joined our Church, he was a most willing worker around the Church. There was only one difference, they were African-American, or as we said back then, black.

Open to Acts 10. Our pastor at the time wouldn't commune them and really didn't want them there. He wanted them to leave. Instead, the congregation knew this was wasn't right. When the pastor heard the congregation was inviting them to be members, he left. The congregation was integrated from that point on! There was no partiality! Verses 34-35, *“So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.”*

No matter what we might do and be judgmental of, **God shows no partiality**. John 3:16 says that God sent His Son to save the whole world not just some select group, but all! He looks at everyone from the same perspective and in the same way.

Partiality is where we have a difficult time in life. It's so easy to just seek those who are like us and make us feel comfortable. Look around you right now. You and I have come together in faith in Jesus Christ in worship, building each other up with praise, His Word and His Sacraments. That's good, and that's what He's called us to do. But are we willing to welcome and include those who aren't like us and accept them with no partiality? I would pray we would and are!

All three of our lessons today give us words and thoughts that show the cause and effect of those who believe. From verse 35, everyone who, **Fears God**, and **does right** is **Acceptable**.

When we walk with God and follow His commands, and put those commands first in our lives, we're doing those things that are acceptable to Him. We have clarity in our lives knowing what He commands and doing it!

Look at 1 John 5. God sees us as His special children. We're **born of Him**. **Verses 4-5**, *“For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? The world around us is continually at battle with us as Christians. Each day we hear about something that is against us. Many things in the news and the courts are against what God says in His Word.*

As we walk by **faith** we will not only **overcome** but we'll have **victory**. Jesus Christ descended into hell after His crucifixion and proclaimed victory over Satan and his ways. We too can proclaim victory over sin and the world as we spend time in God's Word, and prayer, and realize we've only been victorious through Jesus Christ. We are in the world, but we need to remain strong and not be of the world. We need to be strong remembering we're not alone, but Jesus is with us!

Look at John 15. We have a special relationship with God. Three verses here show us how special we are, and how God wants to bless us. Look at Jesus' words in Verse 9, *"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love."* Verse 11, *"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."*

Then look at verse 16, *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you."*

From these three verses, we find the core of what God gives and how this needs to affect our lives. God **loves** us and because of His love toward us asks us to abide in His love. To abide is to **follow** His example. We talked about this over the past two weeks. We need to love like God loves. But look closely at **verse 16**. God's **chosen** each one of us as His. He's looked closely at our lives, loves us with a never-ending love, and forgives us as we turn to Him.

God has a special mission for you. He appoints you to love all people. He wants you to **preach** the Good News of Jesus Christ. Through the Holy Spirit's power you can **bring** others to know Jesus more closely and come to faith in Him and **bear fruit** and be **baptized** with the Holy Spirit's power and presence.

If you've ever tried doing something nice and kind for someone whom you're angry with or at odds with, you know that there's absolutely no joy involved in it. But Jesus talks about how your joy will be complete and that His joy will actually be in you.

So when you get caught in being partial or if you don't feel like loving others, there's something you can do to override your inaction. Be filled with Jesus' joy and willingly serve the needs of someone else in the name of God. Watch how it changes your life!