

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **John 1:44-46.**
- B. "It is the lock of the door of the closed mind. It is the ignorance we usually mistake for reason. It is the **first** enemy of information and progress. It is intellectual astigmatism. It is a perfect combination of conceit and ignorance...it is the defense of the devil, shell of a petrified mind, and the ceiling of understanding." What is it? It is *prejudice*!

I. WHAT IS PREJUDICE?

- A. Webster defines *prejudice* as, "preconceived judgment or opinion, an opinion or leaning adverse to anything without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge." Thus, prejudice is being down on something we are not up on.
- B. *Prejudice is close-mindedness.*
"Many a person's mind has been closed for years, but not for repairs or alterations." "The most difficult thing to open is a closed mind."
- C. *Prejudice is condemnation without investigation.*
"Prejudice is a great time saver: it enables us to form convictions without bothering to get the facts." We so often convict without proper consideration of the facts involved.

II. PREJUDICE TOWARD THE TRUTH.

- A. C. C. Colten said, "The greatest friend of truth is Time, her greatest enemy is Prejudice, and her constant companion is Humility."
Galileo was tried for heresy, when called before the Inquisition, because he affirmed the revolution of the earth. He said to the judges, "Here is my telescope; look through it and you shall see the moons of Jupiter." However, they were so firmly convinced that the earth did not revolve around the sun that they refused to look. They were prejudiced against the truth.
- B. Note the following examples:
 - 1. *The Pharisees were prejudice against the truth.* (Mt. 13:15; also 2Cor. 4:3-4).
(Mt. 13:15) '...FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM.'
 - 2. *Prejudice against the truth was one of the sins which crucified Jesus* (Mt. 27:21-26). In spite of the many overwhelming evidences that he was the divine Son of God, the majority of the people of his day clamored for His blood.
 - 3. *The Jews in Antioch of Pisidia were prejudiced against the truth* (Ac. 13:44-46).
And the next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of God. **45** But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy, and *began* contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming. **46** And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.
 - 4. *The Bereans were not prejudiced toward the truth.*
Consequently, they searched the scriptures daily to ascertain the truth, resulting in many believing (Ac. 17:11-12).
Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, *to see* whether these things were so. **12** Many of them therefore believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men.
 - 5. *To overcome prejudice toward the truth, consider what the truth will do for you.*
 - a. The truth makes men free (Jn. 8:32).
"...and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

- b. The truth begets (Jas. 1:18).
In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures.
 - c. The truth purifies (1Pet. 1:22-23).
Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, [23] for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and abiding word of God.
 - d. The truth produces faith (Eph. 1:13).
In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,...
 - e. The truth sanctifies (Jn. 17:17, 19).
"Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth... 19 "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth."
 - f. And, by the truth we will be judged (Rom. 2:2).
And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.
- Upon an observance of what the truth will do, it can be readily seen that when one is prejudiced toward the truth, that not only is he an enemy of the truth, but that he is also an enemy to his own self; for, depriving himself of the truth, he deprives himself of the truth's blessings.
- 6. *Instead of being prejudiced toward the truth we should:*
 - a. Hear the truth (Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5).
 - b. Believe the truth (2Th. 2:12-13).
 - c. Obey the truth (1Pet. 1:22).
 - d. Love the truth (2Th. 2:10).
 - e. Teach the truth (Eph. 4:15).
 - f. Live the truth (3Jn. v3-4; Gal. 2:14).
 - g. Rightly handle the truth (2Tim. 2:15).

III. **PREJUDICE TOWARD OTHER PEOPLE.**

- A. One of Webster's definitions of prejudice is "an irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics."
- B. Note the following:
 - 1. *Nathanael was prejudiced against anyone coming out of Nazareth* (Jn. 1:46). But, how wrong he was!
 - 2. *The Pharisee was prejudiced against the publican* (Lk. 18:9-14).
He judged guilt by association. We need to beware of categorizing, of wholesale indictments. For example, if we know a certain person of a certain race who is dishonest and shiftless, we need to beware of categorizing every one of that race as being shiftless and dishonest.
 - 3. *We need to avoid prejudging people.*
Have you ever decided that you would never like a certain preacher, a certain elder, a certain teacher, or a certain neighbor even before you ever met them, heard them, or became acquainted with them? Well, you were guilty of prejudging, of condemning without investigation, and of convicting without evidence. This is prejudice.
 - 4. *Areas wherein prejudiced toward other people is often exercised.*
We can be prejudiced toward people:
 - a. Of other races (the black man can be prejudiced toward the white man, and the white man against the black man).
 - b. Of other intellectual levels ("all intellectuals are snobbish").
 - c. Of other financial statuses ("all rich people are merciless, dishonest and greedy").
 - d. Of other occupational pursuits ("all politicians are crooked, all lawyers are liars, all doctors are quacks and all preachers are mercenary itinerates").
 - e. Of other ages (the aged must avoid thinking that all young people are going to the dogs, and young people must avoid thinking of the elderly people as old fogies).
 - 5. *Things to remember to help us overcome prejudice toward other people.*
 - a. Christ died for all (1Tim. 2:6).
...who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time.

- b. Christianity is world-wide in scope (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16).
(Mt 28:18-20) And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations,..."
(Mk 16:15) And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.
- c. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek (Gal. 3:28).
There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
- d. God is no respecter of persons (Ac. 10:34-35).
And opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand *now* that God is not one to show partiality, 35 but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him.
- e. God looks on the hearts of men, not their external circumstances (1Sam. 16:7).
But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God *sees* not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. R. L. Whiteside said, "Prejudice is a robber which many of us entertain in our hearts. It robs us of generous feelings which we would have for others, and leaves us with torments of hate. By shutting our eyes and stopping our ears it robs us of many precious truths, and leaves the dross of distorted opinions. It robs us of life and shuts us up in the blackness of our own ignorance. No other robber can leave us so poor. Do not let your light or life, brother, be made poor by prejudice."
- B. May we overcome prejudice by practicing and accepting the truth.
- C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.