

PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

March 31, 2019

"We Preach Christ Crucified"

by Frank Himmel

Paul said, "We preach Christ crucified" (1 Corinthians 1:23). "Christ crucified"...

Expresses God's love. Divine love is not mere philosophical or theological speculation; it is real. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). If He did that, how much more will He do? (8:32)!

Reflects the heinousness of sin. Our sin separates us from God. Forgiving it is no small matter for Him: He cannot rightly just dismiss it. His solution? We are "justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness..." (Romans 3:24-25a).

Prices salvation. Salvation cost God His Son. It cost Jesus His life. Does it make sense that it costs us nothing? Actually, in one sense that is true: it is a free gift (Romans 6:23). In another sense salvation costs us the same price Jesus paid: giving up self. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1, NKJV). Discipleship requires that.

**Prepares us
for rejection.**

If the world crucified the only perfect man who ever lived, we surely cannot expect better treatment as His followers.

"If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20).



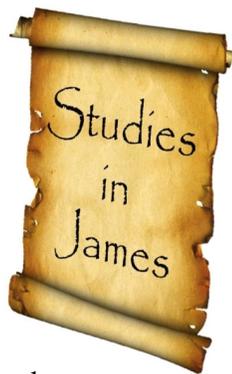
Demonstrates God's ability to keep His promises.

Jesus' crucifixion was part of God's eternal plan (1 Peter 1:19-20). Old Testament events foreshadowed it. The prophets predicted it, at times in detail (e.g., Psalm 22; Isaiah 53). Ironically, people who regularly listened to the Scriptures were the ones who fulfilled them by crucifying Him (Acts 13:27).

Allays our fears. People fear death. Jesus died "that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives" (Hebrews 2:14-15). We fear divine judgment, too. And while the Bible tells us to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12), it also assures us, "Abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming" (1 John 2:28). ■

The Problem of Prejudice

by Frank Himmel



The word *prejudice* means just what it says: pre-judging, forming an opinion before examining the evidence. It is often an assessment based on a single factor such as race, ethnicity, occupation, wealth, etc. Prejudice expresses itself in how we respond to others: we favor the approved while slighting (or worse) the disapproved.

Prejudice is an easy mistake to make. It can slip up on us. James discovered that it had crept into churches.

My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing fine clothes, and say, “You sit here in a good place,” and you say to the poor man, “You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,” have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? (2:1-4).

Why would church ushers treat visitors this way? An obvious answer in this case is greed. The wealthy visitor might donate more when the plate is passed,

or perhaps he will even pick up the tab if the usher invites him out to lunch! Visitors might be pigeon-holed for other reasons. It may be pride: a church wants to portray a certain image and welcomes only those who conform to it. It may be fear: we just aren’t comfortable with those who are “different” . . . and in some communities that includes anyone from someplace else. James bluntly calls all such “evil motives.”

Another potential area for prejudice in churches is in caring for our members. In the very first church, Jerusalem, “a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food” (Acts 6:1). If that could happen at Jerusalem it could happen anywhere. It is natural for us to be most aware of the needs of members who are related to us, who have been with us a long time, or who are actively involved. The Bible teaches us to be considerate of all, “so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another” (1 Corinthians 12:25).

1 Timothy 5 addresses prejudice in appointing elders. That is no time to either select a good friend despite his lack of qualifications or reject a Biblically qualified man on some arbitrary basis. “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality” (v. 21).

May God help us to be fair and objective as well as kind and merciful in all our dealings with others. ■

Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday	Wednesday
GREETER	David Gray	Howard Moore
SONG LEADER	Carlos Garcia	Ian Brown
OPENING PRAYER	Albert Harrison Sr	
LORD’S SUPPER		
BREAD	Mike Zachry	
CUP	Jason Chandler	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	J B Williams	
SERMON/INVITATION	Sam Walters	Gary Hagler
CLOSING PRAYER	Kerry Gray	Adam Wilson