**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

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**How Do We Know All Men Are Equal?**

However poorly practiced, there is nothing more securely woven into the fabric of American thought than the idea of human equality. It was embodied in the Declaration of Independence by Thomas Jefferson, when he wrote the now famous words, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights.” Abraham Lincoln referred to this principle at Gettysburg when he spoke of a nation, “conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” The subject of human equality has lost none of its currency with the passage of time. But how do we know all men are equal? Are they equal just because they want to be equal? What is the basis for human equality? This is the subject for our lesson today.

Let us first talk about what the basis is NOT.

Human equality is not based on a political contract such as the American Constitution. Just because the Constitution declares it doesn’t make it true. All such documents are mere human covenants, and as history attest can be quickly voided. You see, our nation could be overpowered by another because of their military strength, and the ideology of the new nation takes control, an ideology which does not include the principle of human equality. They destroy the American Constitution. Since the American Constitution has been destroyed, does that mean there is no basis for human equality? Of course not. Human equality is not based on a political contract such as the American Constitution.

Secondly, external circumstances to which men are born are not the basis for human equality. Few people are born to wealth. Most are born to poverty. Also people vary widely in their native mental and physical capabilities. Men are born different. Therefore, external circumstances into which men are born cannot be the basis for human equality.

And thirdly, the common experience of death is not the basis. It is true that only in death do men appear to be obviously equals. Death is the great equalizer. But the death that makes men equal to each other also makes them equal to brute beasts. Are we ready to admit equality with animals? Should animals have the same rights as humans? No, the common experience of death is not the basis for human equality.

So we ask again, what is the basis for human equality?

The basis for human equality is God. It is because of the God of the Bible, the One True God that we are able to assert that all men are equal.

First of all, we know that all men are equal because God created man. The founders of this republic knew that they had to have some greater basis for human equality and freedom than the mere fact that all men wanted to be equal. Consequently, Jefferson asserted that men are endowed with this equality by their Creator. Without God as the Creator of all mankind they knew there would be no basis for human equality.

The Bible says in Genesis 1:27, *“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”* If men have not been created, but have merely evolved by some mindless biological process, then there is utterly no foundation for the moral principle of human equality. Without God there would be no basis for any moral principle, period. If man is just the product of organic evolution there would be no equality, but rather survival of the fittest. Man would not have gotten where he is by moral principles, but by natural selection and survival of the fittest. Adolf Hitler could be right. Maybe a superior race killing off inferior races is what the world needs. That’s the conclusion man comes to if there is no God. If there is no God who created then there is no basis for moral guidelines, but each doing what is right in his own eyes. Without moral guidelines, there is no human equality.

And notice the Bible says that *“God created man IN HIS OWN IMAGE.”* This is what distinguishes human beings from animals. We are made in the image of God. Animals are not. God is Spirit (John 4:24), and God has formed within man a spirit, which is made in His image. Zechariah 12:1 says that God *“forms the spirit of man within him.”* Animals do not have this spirit. Rocks and trees do not have this spirit. Man is unique. ALL men are equal in this respect, that they all have a spirit made in the image of God. And God, the Creator gave man dominion over the animals. After God created man and woman the Bible says, *“Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”* (Gen. 1:28) Human beings are equal in that God created them in His own image. God did not make the animals equal with man. Animals are to be used for man’s good.

Secondly, we know all men are equal because GOD LOVES all men. Men are equal because God cherishes them alike. The Bible teaches that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). In this all men are equal. All have transgressed God’s law. The fact that all have sinned brings all under the condemnation of sin. Romans 6:23 says that *“the wages of sin is death.*” We all deserve eternal separation from God in hell because of our sins. Again, in this all men are equal. We all share the same plight. The only hope for all men is God’s love, a love that is extended to all men. That is precisely the kind of love the Bible announces. John 3:16, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”* God’s love was for the whole world. He gave His Son to die for everyone so that everyone can be saved. Hebrews 2:9 says, *“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.”* Romans 5:8 says that, *“God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* 1 Timothy 2:4 says that God *“desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”* Titus 2:11 says that *“the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.”*  And God seeks man’s response to His grace in a gospel that is to be preached to the whole creation. Jesus said to the apostles in Mark 16:15-16, *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”* All men are equal in the fact that all can be saved by the death of Christ if they so desire. All men are capable of seeking after God and finding Him if they will choose to do so. Paul said to the idolaters in the city of Athens, *“And He* [that is God] *has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.”* (Acts 17:26-27) All men are capable of coming to God and being saved by the death of Christ.

The body of people who do seek after God and who receive the gospel of Christ and obey are of different races and nationalities, and they come from widely different circumstances, but in Christ they all sit down as equals. Paul said in Galatians 3:26-28, *“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”* There is true equality and oneness among men, but it is found, not in the world, but in Christ Jesus. True freedom and equality are ultimately spiritual, not political or social. True freedom and equality are found in the church of Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, we know all men are equal because God has the AUTHORITY OVER ALL MEN to INSTRUCT ALL MEN. God has the authority over all by virtue of the fact He created all men. Isaiah, the prophet says in Isaiah 45:9, *“Woe to him who strives with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth! Shall the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?' Or shall your handiwork say, 'He has no hands'?”* Isaiah had been writing about how God will deliver His people from captivity by the hands of a heathen king. Some might argue or complain about that. Isaiah says, *“Woe to him who strives with His Maker.”*  He says that this makes about as much sense as clay quibbling with the potter about how he is being formed. That is absurd. When we understand that we all are God’s creation, it becomes clear that God has authority over all of us, and He has the right to instruct all of us how He wants us to live. All are equal in that all are under the authority of God, and all must submit to that authority. Jesus said to His apostles, *“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”* And then He said to them, *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations….”* (Matt. 28:18-19) Since Jesus has ALL authority in heaven and on earth, All nations are responsible to become disciples of Christ. All nations are equal in that respect.

And Jesus instructs us to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matt. 22:39; Rom. 13:8-9). We must all love our neighbor. But who is my neighbor? There was someone who asked Jesus this question, and Jesus responded by telling the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). We don’t have the time to talk about this parable, but the primary lesson is that whomever I have the ability and opportunity to help, he is my neighbor. It doesn’t matter what color skin he has, what language he speaks, or whether he is rich or poor, he is my neighbor, and if he is in need, I must show love for him. All who submit to the Lord’s authority will seek to break down all racial barriers. As we mentioned earlier, those who come to follow Christ come from widely different circumstances and backgrounds, but in Christ they sit down as equals.

Why is it that we should value the life of the unborn child as we would value the life of one already born? It is because there is a God who values the life of the unborn child. Why is it that we would treat people of all races with love and respect? It is because there is a God who cares for all races, and who has instructed us to love all men and show that love.

What we are saying is, if there is no God who created man, and if there is no God who cares for all men, and if there is no God who has the authority to instruct man, then there is no basis for human equality. If we take God, the God of the Bible, out of our society, which is what many people are trying to do, then watch out. There is no basis for human equality or freedom. It is only in God, the God of the Bible, that human equality and freedom exist.

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