

Answers to Sermon Notes

“Pride and Prejudice...and Predestination”

Acts 21:37 – 22:22

11/21/21

1. This morning I would like to begin with two stories.
 - a. My encounter with a customer of Grand Rapids Bolt and Nut.
 - b. The day I realized that not all DeVries's believed the same things.
2. In recent years there has been much discussion about the dangers of tribalism – especially for Christians.
 - a. “A strong feeling of identity with and loyalty to one's tribe or group.”
 - b. Because of the pride and prejudice that it so frequently engenders.
 - a. “If you ain't Dutch, you ain't much.”
 - c. And, to that degree, the warning is crucial.
3. But, in response to that word of warning we should note a few important things:
 - a. Tribalism is as natural to human beings as breathing. (It is nothing new.)
 - a. You will always have a strong feeling of identity and loyalty to those who are like you.
 - i. Even the people who warn against tribalism practice it.
 - b. It is also the source of good things, like the dynamic of belonging.
 - a. Each of our families is, in some real sense, a tribe.
 - c. It was never God's intention to eliminate tribalism in this world, but rather to start a new tribe. (Mt. 10:24-42)
 - a. There is, then, a danger inherent in warning Christians against tribalism: the implication that the goal of the Christian faith is its opposite.
 - i. For the opposite of tribalism is a kind of universalism.
4. Now, it is certainly true that tribalism can often create both pride and prejudice.
 - a. We see that here in our passage.
 - a. The Jews of Jesus' day were very proud of being Jews.
 - i. And Paul seems to be attempting to use that to his advantage.
 - ii. That it might be a reason for them to more easily accept his testimony.
 - a. “I am one of you.” (21:39 – 22:3)
 - b. Similarly, their pride in being Jews had created a prejudice against other groups.
 - i. Particularly those whom they believed to be dissing them.
 - a. Paul seems to be seeking to use this to his advantage as well.
 - i. “I felt as you do.” (22:4-5)
 - c. Yet, no amount of commonality between Paul and these Jews was enough to make up for what now divided them: A saving encounter with Christ.
 - i. A reality that Christ recognized long before Paul. (22:17-21)
 - a. “You are not in that tribe anymore.”
 5. When you become a Christian you are moved from your previous tribe into the tribe of Christ.
 - a. No matter how much you still have in common, you will no longer be seen as one of them, because you aren't. (John 15:18-19)
 - a. Some of you are about to experience the reality of that once again as you prepare for holiday gatherings with either family or friends.
 - b. This is a reality that we have to acknowledge and embrace.
 - a. Otherwise, it is too easy for us to slip into compromise.

- b. And, in so doing **void** our testimony, **deny** our Lord, and **break** fellowship with the rest of our tribe.
 - c. Of course, this is not just **subtraction** for us; there is an even greater **addition**. (Mk. 10:28-30)
 - a. As **Paul** has been **enjoying** continually on his journey back to Jerusalem.
- 6. But, there is one other very important thing that we need to recognize and embrace: that we were **appointed** to this. (22:10, 14-15) (Eph. 1:11-14)
 - a. It is only in the knowledge of having been **predestined** to the tribe of Christ that we can avoid the **pride** and prejudice that so often **dominates** other tribes.
 - a. This (contrary to popular belief) **eliminates** pride because the **means** he has chosen to draw the chosen to himself is the **gospel**. (22:16) (I Timothy 1:15)
 - b. It also eliminates **prejudice**, for we cannot look on those of other tribes with **derision** (as though we were **better** than they), but rather with **compassion**.
 - i. “There, but for the **grace** of **God**, go I.” (I Timothy 1:16)
 - c. So, even while they are crying out for his life to be **taken**, he continues to testify to them in order that their lives might be **saved**.

Central Takeaways

1. Tribalism is as **natural** to mankind as breathing.
 - a. **Everyone** identifies with a tribe.
2. Though there are very real **dangers** to tribalism (pride and prejudice), there are also genuine **blessings** (identity and belonging).
 - a. Though **warnings** against it for Christians are to a certain degree helpful, they can also imply something **false**: that the goal of the Christian faith is its **opposite**.
3. God’s intention was never to **eliminate** tribalism in this world, but rather to **start** a new tribe.
4. When you become a Christian, you are **moved** from your previous tribe into the tribe of **Christ**.
5. This is **critical** to recognize and embrace...
 - a. In order that we not slide into **compromise**, voiding our testimony, **denying** our Lord, and **breaking** fellowship with the rest of the tribe.
 - b. And in order that we be able to fully experience the blessings of **belonging** of being in Christ.
6. It is also critical for us to recognize that we were **appointed** to this tribe.
 - a. That our **pride** might be eliminated by our experience of the **gospel**.
 - b. That our **prejudice** might be eliminated by our understanding that, “There, but for the **grace** of **God**, go I.”

Application

1. Life for the Christian in our day is very much like driving **Skyline Drive**.
 - a. There is great **danger** on both sides of the road.
2. We cannot give in to the suggestion that all tribalism is an **evil** to be avoided.
 - a. Or, we will **void** our testimony, **deny** our Lord, and break fellowship with the rest of our brothers and sisters.
3. But, we also cannot give in to either **pride** or **prejudice**.
 - a. Or, we will actually be **identifying** with some other tribe than the true tribe of **Christ**.
4. We must stand on the truth and testify to the truth (allowing that identity to both **define** us and **distinguish** us) with the humility and compassion through which God might use us to draw more of those he has **chosen** into the tribe of Christ.
5. What **tribe** do you identify with, and how is that **evident** in your life?