

God Loves Diversity by Elder Beatrice Muma Delivered 08 23 20

Genesis 1:20-31; Colossians 3:5-17; 1<sup>st</sup> John 4:7-21; Romans 12:2-21

Our message today is titled God loves Diversity

It is with great humility and gratitude that I am given the opportunity this Sunday morning to deliver the sermon. I struggled a great deal about how I wanted to present my message about God's love for us, and how he purposefully created us the way we are in our different physical looks.

The current times we live in battling the pandemic; COVID 19, and also the civil unrest orchestrated by a handful of individuals whom may make us question God's purposeful creation, gave me an opportunity to confront my own shortcomings, biases, and other stereotypes.

It is with this in mind that we therefore have to constantly remind ourselves that we are created by God. Our different physical characteristics, be it color, gender, physical attributes, all the different ways we are different is just the way God wanted it to be. God Loves diversity!

The book of genesis Chapter 1 verses 21 says "God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems according to their kind, and God saw that it was good,.....let the land produce living creatures according to their kind, livestock, creatures that move along the ground each according to its kind". God Loves diversity!

Brothers and sisters, the way God uniquely created all kinds of creatures, is the same way he created us with all our different physical attributes and because he made us different on purpose, we are instructed to love one another as he loves us regardless of our different physical characteristics. We need to embrace God's plan for us which is to love one another just the way they are. When we put down people who look different than we look, or we criticize them, or we avoid them, we are criticizing God's handiwork.

So; when we do not love one another, or people who are different from us, we are going against God's divine plan for our lives. In our lesson from st John, it is clear that if we do not love people who are different from us, then we do not love God. We are violating God's commandments if we do not love people who are different from us. Mathew 22 verses 36 to 40 give us God's greatest commandment which is to love God and to love other people.

God tells us in Colossian's 3:11 that "here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian or Scythian slave or free, but Christ is all and good in all. Therefore; as God's purposeful creation, holy and dearly loved by him, God commands us to cloth ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, generosity and patience. God reminds us to bear with each other and not just that, but be willing to forgive whatever grievances we may have against each other.

Dear brethren, let us imagine for a moment that we were not different, but we all looked like one person. Let us close our eyes for a minute and imagine a world where everything and I mean everything looked the same; would we be able to survive as specie? I also learned from science that our hum race is able to be preserved and survive by the share nature of its diversity; otherwise we will all perish/ die or be extinct in an event where a deadly disease came through. If we can only take a look at what is happening right now.

God in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12 to 36, uses the analogy of the different parts of the body and how one part cannot say it is the most important, or it does not need the other part : The eye can never say to the hand I don't need you and the head cannot say I don't need you.....God has combined the parts of the body has given greater honor to the parts that lacked so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers. Again, I say if one part suffers, every part suffers. When we do not love each other, it leads to suffering, and everyone suffers.

Our God is a non-respecter of person but loves all of us the same. Galatians 5:22 lays out God's love for his purposeful creation, "But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

We read in first Corinthians 13: 4 that love is patient, love is kind, it does not envy, and it does not boast and it is not proud, it is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrong. God's love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth, it always protects, it always trust, it always hopes, and it always perseveres, and if there is one last thing to remember, Love never fails.

In first Samuel 16 we read about the lord choosing David to be the king of Israel. Verse 7 says "do not consider his appearance or his height for I have rejected him" The lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the lord looks at the heart. If we look at people the way God does, there would not be any biases, no stereotypes, no prejudices, or any segregation. The reverend Martin Luther expressed this principle this way in his I have a dream speech. He pointed out this fact; people will judge a person by their character and not by the color of their skin. We cannot change others but with God's help we can change the way we think about people who are different from us. If we are obedient Christians, we will choose to love everybody.

I will like to end the sermon today with a song. This song recently came out during the crisis with the passing of Mr. Floyd from the hands of our law enforcement officers and it brings to the very core the hope that we will understand we look different on purpose but we the same inside, and we are called to seek deeper into our own biases, because if you did not already know, we all bleed the same. Feel free to sing along and let the words of the song wash over you as you mediate over God's purposeful creation.

We all bleed the same by Mandissa and Toby Mack

Our challenge comes from 1<sup>st</sup> John

God challenges us this week to go out of our comfort zone and show love, not only to someone we know, but to someone we don't know. When we do not love people who are different from us, we are going against God's divine plan for us. If we do not love people who are different from us, then we do not love God because God is love.