



## SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND HATE

Dignity  
Shane Philip  
February 9, 2020

## SUNDAY MESSAGE QUESTIONS

The Crossing Church

Las Vegas, Nevada

### OPENING

We are continuing our four-week series entitled “Separation of Church and Hate.” We’ve all heard of separation of church and state, meaning that the government can’t impose any one religion upon the people in the United States, but hate? Do we hate everything that does not agree with our Christianity? This is an opportunity to evaluate our behavior in this current political environment and respond to it with love, civility and dignity. The goal for this series is to teach us to **disagree politically and love unconditionally**. Let’s listen, learn and love together.

### SCRIPTURE<sup>1</sup>

**Acts 10:13-15** Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.” “Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.” The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”

**Acts 10:27b-28** Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. He said to them, “You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean.”

**Acts 10:34b-35** “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.”

**Acts 11:2-3** So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him and said, “You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them.”

**Galatians 2:11-14** When Cephas (Aramaic for Peter) came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?”

**Galatians 3:28** There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave or free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

**Galatians 2:20a** I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

### OBSERVATION

Throughout the Old Testament, God had issued some major rules to follow: The Ten Commandments, “thou my not intermarry with other peoples”, and “your men must be circumcised.” The latter two were to keep the Jewish

---

<sup>1</sup> All scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated

nation pure as it awaited their Messiah. The “other peoples” were called Gentiles. When the northern kingdom of Israel, in the area of Samaria, intermarried with the Assyrian captors and produced interracial children, no Jew would go near them. That is why the Good Samaritan parable is so poignant.

So, Peter was really confused when the Lord told him that this particular rule had been rescinded! Allowing the eating of all animals equated to the inclusion of all believers into God’s Kingdom. God is always surprising us, isn’t He? And so, now we have the story of the Gentile Roman centurion and his family whom God is allowing in and Peter is to be the conduit. His entire previous life backed up his prejudice against this: his religion, his upbringing, and his political views. Was he ever stepping out of his comfort zone! The Gentile Era was beginning. God was ushering in a new age for the world and Peter was part of it.

**Question:** Tell us about a time when God called you out of your comfort zone. In what ways are you just like Peter?

Later Peter is criticized by the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem (led by Jesus’ half- brother, James) because he communed with Gentiles, and then vacillated in his new understanding that God was now letting all of us into His Salvation by stepping back and not eating with Gentiles when Jews were around! Well, that’s Peter for you, isn’t it? He exemplifies for us what we do when we doubt. But, Paul did not hesitate to confront Peter about his **racism**. Later the Jewish leaders wanted new Gentile Christian men to be circumcised before accepting them into their fellowship. This was another battle Paul took up with Peter, and eventually won because Jesus came to change everything.

**Question:** How do you handle criticism? What resources do you have to help you deal with it?

**Question:** When have you vehemently resisted a change in something? How difficult was it to change such internalized biases?

## APPLICATION

We are always told to stay away from two topics in our conversations: Religion and Politics. Since we must share our faith with others, only politics seems to be a stumbling block. So, the question is “Are we willing to put our faith filter ahead of our political filter?” We must first be a Christ-follower.

**Question:** How are you doing with confronting your faith vs political filter?

In the first century, children, women and slaves were not valued. Racism, classicism, and sexism were not only accepted, they were encouraged. They were forms of prejudice which means having preconceived opinions that are not based on reason or actual experience, such as rich people are greedy, poor people are lazy, the younger generation doesn’t work, and Republicans/Democrats are always.... But Jesus broke down every wall and every division so now all people have dignity in the Kingdom of God. For Peter, these changes happened because God changed his heart.

**Question:** What pre-judgments are you making today? Where does your heart need to be changed?

We all make pre-judgments about people. Jesus is calling us to eradicate racism, classicism and sexism in our modern society because everyone is made in the image of God. And if we are an extension of Jesus, we are His hands and feet. The Crossing Church, which is us, see ourselves that way. We believe, when we walk through God’s Word, it addresses those three issues. We invite prisoners, special needs guests, the unsaved, community partners, the homeless, rescued women and new locations in – in order to build bridges. Let us **1) Identify our prejudices and 2) intentionally build bridges**. Prejudice has no place here.

**Question:** Where are you breaking down walls. What bridges are you building in your family, family, and church?

**Question:** What does it mean to be all one in Christ Jesus? What progress are you making in becoming more like Jesus?

The lack of dignity isn’t just the presence of hatred, it is the absence of love. All followers of Jesus need to place loving one another as the highest value – we have to nail all pre-judgments to the Cross because we no longer live - it is Christ who lives in and through us.

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we all want dignity so please help us to extend dignity to everyone around us. Our prejudices are like anchors for our souls which are aching to throw them off in order to have a more intimate relationship with You. In Jesus’ name. Amen.