

Prejudice Extermination Plan

I. Announce:

- A. **Slide1 REAL** - Ladies we are resuming our **REAL Tuesdays** on **July 21st, 7pm** w/a worship night (w/Mary Ives) to celebrate being together again. **Seating is limited and we will taking reservations about 2 weeks before.** Please mark your calendars
- B. **Slide2 July Wed night Series - *Praying Relationally*.** Our Father. How to come to the throne of Grace Relationally. **Phrase by phrase of the Lord's Prayer.** This Wed night I'm starting it off, 7pm. [BB, JT, AL, AP, JB]
1. When you go into **an airplane's bathroom** you latch the door, & when you do, *the light comes on brighter.* **Maybe** it's the same when we enter *our secret place*, it's there that He gives **brighter illumination.** **Let's find that secret place together!**
- C. **Prayer:** Lord we stand on our *resurrection-centered, new-covenant, love I another* faith.

II. **Slide3 Intro: Prejudice Extermination Plan**

- A. **Peter** was making progress in working through his *prejudices*, **but** he was **far** from **liberated.** How are **you** doing with **yours?**
1. Color prejudice. Class prejudice. Political Party prejudice. Denominational prejudice. Calvary Chapel prejudice (CGN vs.CCA).
 2. **Prejudice** is *pre-judging*, making your mind up before you know the facts.
 3. Frequently we **back up our prejudices** by finding out **just enough facts that support our case, and** conveniently ignoring the rest.
- B. Peter's vision here will reinforce *the universal cultural scope of the Church's message and mission.* *We'll look at...*
- C. **Slide4 Outline: Three Visions Upstairs. Three Visitors Downstairs.**
1. Whenever God is at work **upstairs**, He is also working **downstairs.** **He leads at both ends.** **Or** as Warren Wiersbe said, *He prepares us for what He is preparing for us.*

III. Slide5a **THREE VISIONS UPSTAIRS (9-16) READ Text**

A. **Slide5b Here's my take:** It's lunchtime. Peter goes up on the flat-rooftop where he's staying, at his friend Simon's Beachhouse, waiting for food to be prepared. He's staring out at the beautiful blue Mediterranean Sea, watching a Roman-sail-ship go by. He dozes off, **hungry** & the last thing he saw was **the sails** on the ship. He falls into *an extraordinary vision* about those 2 things, **sustenance & sails** (food/linen sheet) He's having a food fantasy of **shwarma, falafel & Gefilte Fish and camel, gecko, & canary** (all he could eat & couldn't eat. Like when you're on a **diet** staring into the fridge, *fruit or fudge? carrots or carbs?*). Then he hears a voice telling him to choose from this heavenly menu, & eat it. He says, *no way*. Rinse & repeat 3 x's. Then sheet goes *poof*, back up to heaven from where it came.

B. **Slide6a PIGS IN A BLANKET**

C. Peter is starved for a *shwarma or falafel*. So God speaks **Food** to him.

1. Here's where **Noah's Ark** meets a **Magic Carpet**.
2. **Hunger, is always a nice medium for teaching.**

D. **Lev.11** tells which animals **could** be eaten & which ones **couldn't**.

1. **Could** – whatever has a **divided hoof & chews its cud** can be eaten.
2. **Couldn't** – if only had 1, couldn't eat it. [eg. pig has divided hoof, but doesn't chew cud. rock badger chews cud, no split hoof]

E. **Slide6b OLD HABITS DIE HARD**

F. (14) God was about to do a new thing & Peter wanted to hold on to the old.

1. It's interesting how the unbeliever was more flexible **than** the believer.
 - a) **Cornelius**...immediate obedience. **Peter**...**Not so, Lord**.
 - b) The unbeliever, *ok Lord*. The believer, still trying to catch up to the heart of God.
2. **Note:** Peter was maintaining **a pose of piety** beyond the will of the Lord. **Or**, I'd say it this way, *It might be a problem when we're more righteous than Jesus!* [that's every time we esteem our **traditions** above **His word**]
 - a) Hyper-spirituality is actually *no spirituality at all*. [hyper = over/beyond]

- G. (16) **3 times** - Just as Peter had denied Jesus **3 times here** he refuses to obey **3 times**.
- H. **Seemed Peter learned best in 3's**: 3 x's roster crows. 3 denials. 3-fold restoration.
1. **Now here**: 3 sheet drops. 3 gentiles at gate. [a Semitic way of emphasis: Is.6:3 **holy x's 3**. Jer.7:4 **the temple of the Lord x's 3**] **3rd times a charm!**
- I. We are not any different **today** when God wants to **do a new thing**.
Are there any **prejudices** that the church needs to overcome in sharing Jesus?
1. **Of course**. Right after 9-11, the Church wasn't too keen on showing Christ's love to **Muslims**.
 2. Do you think the Church has **more ministries** to the **Jews** or **Palestinians**?
 3. Do you think the Church has more difficulty showing Christ's love to the **LGBTQ community** or to **a heterosexual who is sleeping with their girlfriend/boyfriend**.
 - a) **Yes**, we passionately hold to our **timeless truths**, **but** what if He wants to change our methods to be...**timely methods**?
 - b) **Yes**, we are to be **biblically faithful**, **but** what if he wants to change us because we are no longer **culturally fruitful**?
 - c) **Yes**, we must **contend for the faith**, **but** how do we respond when He asks us to **contextualize** our approach? [*ie. become all things to all men that we might by all means save some*]
- J. **2 HANDED THEOLOGY**
1. **Some** hold both hands open, **doctrine** & **Practice** (anything goes).
 2. **Others** are **so rigid** they have a closed hand to both **doctrine** & **practice** (good for doctrine, **but** bad when they say, *we'll never change our practice, we've been doing it this way for 100 yrs*).
 3. **Jesus** showed us **the best way** is to have a closed hand on **doctrine** & an open hand w/**practice**. (That's what **the religious folks** accused Him of before they murdered Him...*in the name of religion*).
 - a) Are you ok if God wants to do a **new thing** in your **heart & life**?

b) **Slide7** You can say, *Lord*, and you can say, *not so*, but you cannot say, *not so, Lord*. Graham Scroggie

K. **Peter** was making progress in working through his *prejudices*, but he was far from liberated. How are **you** doing with **yours**?

L. **Slide8** Peter's vision denied any *distinction* between clean & unclean.

1. Yet this isn't about **Food** but about **Family**. This had nothing to do with *pigs in a blanket*, or food at all.

a) **Jesus** already dealt with that in **Mark 7:14-23**. (read)

2. **Read Acts 10:28**. Here it's clearly a **people** issue. A **race** issue. A **prejudice** issue. A **partiality** issue. A **discrimination** issue. A **intolerance** issue. A **discrimination** issue.

IV. **Slide9** THREE VISITORS DOWNSTAIRS (17-23)

A. (19,20) **the Spirit** - The Spirit helps Peter to understand the vision by **acting** on it instead of merely continuing to **contemplate** it.

B. The whole verse 20 is very **emphatic**. There is no option for Peter **but to go**. **This** was a divine appointment.

1. **The Spirit** was responsible for *Cornelius's vision, Cornelius' sending the men, Peter's vision, and now Peter's responding to the request*.

2. When God works **upstairs**, He is also always working **downstairs**.

C. **I have sent them** - The Spirit has not only sent the **apostles** to the **Gentiles**, but He has sent the **Gentiles** to the **apostles**. This is Divinely-Synchronized-Visions.

The Spirit preparing both Pete & Cornelius.

D. **Slide10** Alexander Whyte (Scottsman, died in 1921, aka last of the Puritans), prescribes a healing but painful procedure to **treat the disease of prejudice in our hearts**.

1. If you would take a four-cornered napkin...and write the names of the nations, and the churches, and the denominations, and the congregations, and the ministers, and the public men, and the private

citizens, and the neighbors, and the fellow worshipers, - all the people you dislike, and despise, and do not, and cannot, and will not, love. Heap all their names into your unclean napkin, and then look up and say, **“Not so, Lord. I neither can speak well, nor think well, nor hope well, of these people. I cannot do it and I will not try.”** If you acted out and spoke out all the evil things that are in your heart in some such way as that, you would thus get such a sight of yourselves that you would never forget it.

- E. **Slide11a This morning God is lowering a sheet before you.** *Write down a list of your unclean people.* Once your list is complete say, **“Not so Lord. I cannot speak well of these people, nor think well of them, nor hope well for them. I cannot do it and I will not try.”** Do you hear how ugly your prejudice sounds? **Pray that God will wipe clean your sheet of scorn & devaluation, erasing the names one by one.**
1. Swindoll said, **Prejudices** are like **cockroaches**. Once we think they're gone, they creep back unnoticed, investing the dark corners of our lives. It takes **consistent maintenance** to completely eliminate them.
- F. Do you have a **Prejudice Extermination Plan?** [I'll get us started w/4...]
1. **Slide11b Catch** yourself pre-judging someone, because of their differences.
 2. **Imagine** their hurt, as if they heard what you *said or thought*.
 3. **Replace** your prejudice thoughts, with precautionary thoughts.
 4. **Pray** for those on your *sheet of scorn*.