

“Pride & Prejudice!”

I. INTRO:

A. **Announce:** Communion 7am; Cross Walk 11am, Temeku; Easter 8am.

B. There is a **fable** of an **eagle** which could outfly another, and the other didn't like it. The latter saw a **sportsman** one day, and said to him: “I wish you would bring down that eagle.” The sportsman replied that he would if he only had some feathers to put into the arrow. So the eagle pulled one out of his wing. The arrow was shot, but didn't quite reach the rival eagle; it was flying too high. The envious eagle pulled out more feathers, and kept pulling them out until he lost so many that he couldn't fly, and then the sportsman turned around and killed him. [If you're **jealous** the only 1 you can hurt is yourself]

II. PRIDE & PREJUDICE!

A. **MIRIAM & AARON'S COMPLAINT!** (1-3)

B. If you're in a place of leadership expect **criticism**, even from members of your own family

1. Happened to **Moses**, **David**(Mical/dance)& **Jesus**(own family **He's out of his mind** Mr3:21)
2. Here we have a **family quarrel** that effects the whole camp.

C. **Ethiopian**/Cushite - **Interracial?** The Cushites were **not** necessarily a **different color** since people of that name existed in early times in Arabia as well as Cush proper (what is today southern Egypt, Sudan, and northern Ethiopia).

1. **Zipporah**, Moses' 1st wife, had probably died, & no legal restrictions prohibited Hebrews from marrying Cushites (Ex.34:11-16).
2. But **Miriam & Aaron** apparently **disapproved** of the union. **Miriam** in particular might have felt that **her leadership position** among the women was **threatened** by this newcomer's status, as Moses' wife.

D. Keep in mind **Moses** was **80** at the exodus from Egypt; **Aaron** was **83**; this would make **Miriam** in her **90's**, as she was old enough to watch over Moses when floating in the Nile.

1. **This is no squabble among youth**. These siblings should know better.
2. **Miriam, has led a tremendous life, with tremendous authority – but apparently that is not enough anymore!**

3. She has been part of a **leadership team** that has led a people who faced **no** chance of survival in the desert, **but instead** has led them through peril to the land promised them by God. **But she sees what her brother has and wants that too.**

- a) **Q:** Have you ever **looked past** all that you we're blessed with? [We all have!]
- b) She had **contracted** an **inward stain**. But the bible is a strange book. It puts a blot upon all its portraits (except Christ) & it does so **not by mistake but by design**. Its **blots** are as much a bit of the **art** as are its **beauties**.

E. **But who exactly was Miriam?** - **See** Ex.15:20,21

1. Miriam leads the woman in **song and dance** **worshiping** God for saving them all from certain death.
2. 1st Prophetess; musician; leader; dancer; singer; poet.
 - a) You could say **Moses** was **Law**; **Aaron** is **Religion**; & **Miriam** was **Art**.
3. **Single** whole life, in an age where *female celibacy* wasn't a consecrated thing.
4. Micah 6:4 **I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. I sent Moses to lead you, also Aaron and Miriam.**
5. Miriam isn't just another **Hebrew**, and she isn't just **the sister**,...Miriam is one of the **three leaders** of Israel.

F. **Was Moses' wife the real problem?** **Nope**, see vs.2.

1. Their question gets to the **heart** of the matter.
2. If there be a **hidden evil**, circumstances will sooner or later occur in which it will be **outwardly manifest**.
3. **You will find that, as a rule, those who complain about the way the ball bounces are usually the ones who dropped it.**

G. Miriam & Aaron had a very special **place & standing**...**but** it **did not** entitle them to **criticize & rebel** against Moses, the one called to **lead** Israel & to **receive** divine revelation.

1. Miriam & Aaron were **jealous** of the **authority** God had given Moses, & they wanted him to **share it**.
2. **Was this a reaction to what God did for the 70 elders?** (Spirit coming upon them)

H. (3) In their **self-importance**, they **accused** Moses of **arrogance** appointing himself as leader, which was the furthest thing from his **humble** mind.

- I. **GOD'S WOODSHED!** (4-10)
- J. Taken to the woodshed.
- K. Moses didn't defend himself; he waited for God to act.
1. Ps.37:1,7 **Do not fret because of evildoers,...Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him;**
 2. If we **defend ourselves**, we may hinder the Lord from defending us.
 3. When we hand our cause over to God...He comes down!
- L. (6) God informs them of who Moses is...
- M. (8) By challenging **Moses'** authority, they were really challenging **the Lord's choice & the work** He was doing through His servant.
- N. **He sees the form of the Lord** - This was fulfilled on the Mount of the Transfiguration. Prior to that he, & others, saw Jehovah in angelic form.
1. **He(Jesus) is the image of the invisible God**, Col1:15
- O. (10) So God **vindicated** Moses **& rebuked** Miriam & Aaron, laying the punishment on Miriam because she had apparently incited this rebellion. [Note her name preceded Aaron's]
1. **God's irony:** Miriam's prejudice - skin color; God's justice - skin color. ;-)
- P. **MIRIAM IS INTERCEDED FOR!** (11-13)
- Q. *How often people turn for help to **the very ones** they have **criticized!***
- R. In his meekness, Moses **did not rejoice** at his sister's punishment; instead, he **prayed** for her. You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you & persecute you
- S. **MIRIAM IS RESTORED!** (14-16)
- T. (14) God would heal her...but she would have to **bear the shame** of her sin for 7 days.
1. Our **intercession** may bring **pardon & healing**; but sin leaves **its mark**.
 2. You are shut out of the *enjoyment* of the camp **& the march** is delayed.
- U. (15) **The people didnt journey** - For 1 week whole camp *waited*, sin delaying them again.
1. The **sin of criticism** is far more serious than most people realize.
 2. James 3:5,6 **Even so the tongue** is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of **iniquity**. The tongue is so set among our members that **it defiles the whole body**, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.
 3. **Criticism** - *Lord, deliver me from the lust of vindicating myself.* Augustine

4. "If you are a Christian, you can *expect folks* to **criticize**, **but** you ought to **live** so nobody will believe them!"
5. I like the fact they don't leave her behind. "**No child(of God) left behind!**"
- a) She is **thought very highly** among the people, in fact they **love her** so much, the people **wait for her**, until she is healed and able to travel with them.
- V. Everyone learned that God had provided for them adequately & that it was their job to accept His will for their lives.
- W. **Illustration:** Back in Ontario when the **apples** ripened, Mom would sit all seven of us down, Dad included, with pans and paring knives until the mountain of fruit was reduced to neat rows of filled canning jars. **She never bothered keeping track of how many we did**, though the younger ones undoubtedly proved more of a nuisance than a help: cut fingers, squabbles over who got which pan, apple core fights. **But when the job was done**, the reward for everyone was the same: the largest **chocolate-dipped cone** money could buy. A stickler might argue it wasn't quite **fair** since the older ones actually peeled apples. **But I can't remember anyone complaining about it**. A **family** understands it operates under a different set of norms than a **courtroom**. In fact, when the store ran out of ice cream and my younger brother had to make do with a popsicle, we felt sorry for him despite his lack of productivity (he'd eaten all the apples he'd peeled that day - both of them).
1. God wants **all** his children to enjoy the **complete fullness of eternal life**.
 2. No true child of God wants it **any other way**.

Poem: Author Unknown

As I watched them tear a building **down**, A gang of men in a busy **town**,
With a ho-heave-ho, and a lusty **yell**, They swung a beam and the side wall **fell**.

I asked the foreman, "Are these men **skilled**, And the men you'd hire if you wanted to **build**?"
He gave a laugh and said, "No, **indeed**, Just common labor is all I **need**."

"I can easily wreck in a day or **two**, What builders have taken years to **do**."
And I thought to myself, as I went my **way**, **Which of these roles have I tried to play?**

Am I a builder who works with **care**, Measuring life by rule and **square**?
Am I shaping my work to a well-made **plan**, Patiently doing the best I **can**?

Or am I a wrecker who walks to **town**, Content with the labor of tearing **down**?
"O Lord let my life and my labors **be**, That which will build for **eternity**!"