

Dealing with Cultural Differences - - Sunday PM 03/15/20

Introduction:

One of the major problems in the early church were the cultural differences in those obeying the Gospel. As long as only Jews were being converted there were very few cultural differences. But eventually Gentiles were being converted, **Acts 11.19-21**. Issues arose and so did division, false teaching, jealousy, and other problems. The same is true today. The Gospel is not just for white Americans or black Americans or even just Americans. Add in to that we are exposed to people from different cultures all the time. This can create problems in the church today.

I) Super Bowl 2020 Halftime Show

A) Jennifer Lawrence and Shakira

1. Skimpy outfits, pole dancing, immodest movements
2. There were over 1300 complaints to the FCC. Most said something to the effect “I was embarrassed to watch this with my family” or “We don’t watch the Playboy Channel.”

B) Yet some said “They were expressing their culture” or “That is all acceptable in the Latino culture.”

II) The Problem with Cultural Differences

A) We don’t realize there are cultural differences.

1. Think every body else thinks and acts just like we do.
 - a. Believe it or not, every country does not charge tax.
 - b. In some places you order a hamburger chicken

because the bread is round and a sandwich is when the bread is rectangle or square.

- c. In some places the tea does not have sugar!
2. Differences in ways you show respect - yes ma'am, or yes sir
3. Make yourself at home means different things in different places.

B) We may not like the cultural differences

1. Makes us uneasy – **Acts 11.2-3**
2. People don't look like us, talk like us, different economic backgrounds, etc.
3. In this country blacks were told to go and worship with their own people. Etc.
4. Do you know in some parts of the world congregations meet without pews, they sit on the floor, they don't have projectors, and they preach for more than 30 minutes!
5. How would we respond to preaching in South Africa or Indonesia or Russia?

III) The Differences in Cultural Differences

A) Some are totally indifferent to God's law.

1. **Romans 14.2-3** eating of meats
2. Today in parts of the world—showing of the sole of your shoe to someone is a great sign of disrespect, wearing the wedding ring on your left hand means you are divorced and looking.

3. Paul understood cultural differences, accepted those differences in order to teach and preach, **1 Corinthians 9.19-23**
 - a. Circumcision was part of Jewish culture
 - b. Going to the Passover in Jerusalem was still part of the culture.

B) Some are related to one's conscience, *Romans 14*.

1. Eating of meats and observance of days, ***Romans 14.2-3, 8, 21-23***
2. Early religious teachings, idolatry in the first century, -
 - a. Those with the knowledge idols do not exist, ***1 Corinthians 8.4-6***
 - b. Those without such knowledge, ***1 Corinthians 8.7***
 - c. Therefore, ***1 Corinthians 8.13***.

C) Cultural differences being bound as part of the law of Christ, *Acts 15*

1. The act of circumcision, eating of meats, observance of Sabbaths.
 - a. They were taking away from their liberty in Christ, ***Galatians 5.1***.
2. This can be as simple as binding a "dress code" or a certain version of the Bible. Etc.

D) Cultural practices which violates the Law of Christ.

1. Peter warned Christians of using their liberty in Christ to sin, ***1 Peter 2.16***.

2. Things like idolatry were culturally acceptable but they were worshipping false gods.
3. Homosexuality was not wrong because the culture condemned it nor was it right because the culture accepted it.
4. Today – using of God’s name in vain and profanity, lasciviousness in dress and conduct.
5. The Christian must conform to the scriptures and not the society in these matters. ***Romans 12.1-2.***

Conclusion:

The Gospel is intended to cross all cultural lines. We will not all talk alike, or dress alike, or meet in church buildings, but we will all be children of God. Living pure lives, being part of the holy priesthood and offering our spiritual sacrifices to God. No one is excluded as Jesus died for everyone and anyone can become a part of this great spiritual family. Let us know this morning if we can aid you in becoming a child of God today.