

“Beware Prejudice  
(Exodus 20:16)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

- 1.
- 2.

B. Preview.

1. This evening, we want to consider other ways the tongue can be used to injure others and how to avoid these sins.
  - a. Of course, everything our tongues are armed with first come through our minds.
    - (i) Misunderstood words, intentions, actions, perhaps purposely so.
    - (ii) Too harshly judging someone’s actions or judging them unjustly.
    - (iii) Not even seeing, but suspecting they’ve done something.
    - (iv) Receiving and believing rumors and gossip.
    - (v) Not listening to their defense.
    - (vi) And then enjoying what we hear because we know it’s damaging to them.
    - (vii) There is the ammunition.
    - (viii) It is gathered through the mechanism of prejudice.
      - (a) Let’s face it, we easily overlook the fault of those we love.
      - (b) But we hold every infraction against those we don’t and use it as a weapon.
      - (c) This is not according to love.
  - b. Then, loaded into the canons of our mouths, we fire the shells aimed at destroying our opponent.
2. This evening, let’s consider the sin of prejudice/unrighteous bias, the receiving of false information or the twisting of the facts to the injury of our neighbor and to the breaking of the ninth commandment.

II. Sermon.

A. First, let’s consider again how prejudice can help us store up ammunition to attack our neighbor.

1. Prejudice inclines us to believe the worst about our neighbor.
  - a. Where does the prejudice come from?
    - (i) Ultimately sin.
    - (ii) Usually through some provocation: they’ve injured you in some way, there’s something about them you don’t like, there’s something they believe you don’t agree with, there’s something they do you can’t support, etc.

- (iii) It comes through some injury that you can't overlook or forgive.
  - (iv) Sadly, sometimes – as we see today with the Muslims – it comes through religious convictions; at other times, because of race, traditions, the color of our skin, our accent, the way we talk, etc. – any number of things.
- b. But it always has the unhappy effect of making us dislike that person we're prejudiced against.
- 2. The result is that we will begin to take offense at them when no offense is really there.
    - a. Prejudice will make us want to think the worst of others.
- 13. Purposely misunderstanding their words, intentions, actions (wanting to believe the worst). (28)Neh. 6:6-8; Rom. 3:8; Ps. 69:10; 1 Sam. 1:13-15; 2 Sam. 10:3
    - b. It will make us judge their words and actions too harshly.
- 6. Passing an unjust sentence. (6)Prov. 17:15; 1 Kings 21:9-14
    - c. It will make us suspicious of what they do or might do all the time.
- 21. Unjust suspicion. (39)1 Cor. 13:5; 1 Tim. 6:4
    - d. It will make us listen to rumors and gossip that is damaging to their reputation.
- 19. Receiving, believing or publishing false reports. (Passing on information we know isn't true). (36)Exod. 23:1 (37)Prov. 29:12
    - e. It will make us unwilling to listen to what they have to say in their defense.
- 20. Not listening to a just defense. (38)Acts 7:56,57; Job 31:13,14
    - f. And it will make us enjoy the bad things we hear knowing that these things will hurt them in some way.
- 23. Rejoicing in their disgrace. (42)Jer. 48:27
- 3. Needless to say, ammunition of this sort can do a lot of damage – we all know.
- B. What is the righteous response to prejudice?
    - 1. In a word, love.
    - 2. Love will overlook faults.

3. It will defend a person's innocence.
  6. Defending their innocence. (16)1 Sam. 22:14
4. It will put the best construction on another's actions.
  7. Be willing to believe the best and reject the worst. Put the best construction that their actions can receive. (17)1 Cor. 13:6,7 (18)Ps. 15:3