

HE IS A JEW!

*From: Stories, Parables and Fables of life of P. Ribes, s.j.
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Intent of the Story

- ✓ *On Prejudice, Communalism and their evils.*
- ✓ *God made us all alike. We, men, created distinctions and classes amongst peoples.*
- ✓ *Courage needed to fight prejudice*

The Story

During the Nazi occupation of Austria, there were severe floods in Vienna. Just then, a man fell into the swollen waters of the Danube. There was a crowd of onlookers, all too afraid of jumping into the swirling waters of the river, to save the drowning man.

A courageous youth removed his coat and made ready to jump into the water to rescue the drowning person. Just then, someone in the crowd shouted aloud: "Do not jump! This drowning man is a Jew! Let him die! Don't risk your life for a dog! The crowd too joined in, in a chorus, they shouted: "Do not jump! Let him drown! He is a Jew!, Do not jump!".

"The rescuer quickly replied: "No! He's not a Jew! He is German! I am sure" Against everybody's approval and at a great risk to his life, the young man plunged into the swollen waters of the river. After a long struggle, he brought the drowning man to safety. When the crowd came close to see the man who had been saved, in amazement exclaimed: "Thanks be to God! Yes, he's a German."

Then, the savior picking up his clothes, slowly walked away and emphatically for all to hear he remarked: Yes, he is a German! I am a Jew!"

(From an incident reportedly true during the Nazi occupation of Austria at the II World War)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION:

1. Before God, are there any differences between Jews and Germans? Negroes and Whites, Brahmins and Harijans, Rich and Poor, Men and Women, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, etc? Why?
2. Who has made all those hateful distinctions between man and man? How? What are their ugly consequences? Why do we keep them?
3. How do those discriminations and prejudices pass on from Parents to children, from generation to generation?
4. Can we break away from them? How? Is it easy? Why? Is it possible? Why?

5. Have you ever been a victim of prejudice? On what grounds? Give instances. How did you feel? How did you react?
6. What are the consequences for the ‘self-image’ of those prejudiced against?
7. Have you ever been prejudiced against others? In what way? Give instances. Were you aware of it? Why?
8. Was Jesus ever prejudiced against anyone at all? Why? Could he really be? Why?
9. Were the Jews of the time of Jesus prejudiced against him? On what grounds? What did they do to him at last?
10. Were they really aware that what they did to Jesus was wrong? Why? In this connection, can you explain the words of Jesus on the Cross: “Forgive them, Father, they do not know what they do?”
11. What happens to people who fight against prejudices? Are they liked or disliked? Accepted or done away with? Why?
12. Give some names of people of our days who paid with their lives for fighting against prejudices?
13. Explain the following sentences
 - God created one human race, men divided it into ‘races’
 - ‘Before anything else, we are citizens of the world’.
 - ‘All men and women of the earth form one single family’
 - ‘Though the color of skin varies, and the languages of the world differ and people belong to different nations, all human blood is red, and all human hearts beat alike’.
14. Which ‘prejudices’ are more common in India today? Mention them. Are they reasonable? How did they come to be? Can law uproot or eradicate them? Then, what should we do?
15. Can you find some Gospel Texts bearing on the subject of prejudice? Mention them. Explain them

TEACHINGS OF JESUS REFERING TO PREJUDICE:

Mt 5/1-11	The Beatitudes . True happiness is for all irrespective of from what race, caste, social group, etc. we belong to
Mt 6/9-13	Teaching about prayer. The Our Father; the basic idea is that God is the father of all. We are brothers and sisters. All other distinctions have no meaning.
Mt. 20/1—16	Parable of the Workers of the Field. All men are loved by God even those who seem last or least. His mercy and acceptance, knows no bounds.
Mt 25/31-46	Parable of the Last Judgment. God will judge all according to their deeds and merits. No distinctions based on human considerations.

- Lk 10/25-37 **Parable of the Good Samaritan.** God has no class, caste or group prejudices
- Lk 15/ll-32 **Parable of the Prodigal Son.** God is not prejudiced against the sinners.
- Lk 16/19-31 **Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.** God is free from Economical Class Prejudices.
- Lk 18/9-14 **Parable of the Tax Collector and the Pharisee.** God does not make distinctions between persons He accepts all humble and honest people.

INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF JESUS:

- Mt 9/9-13 The call of Mathew – the Tax Collector – No prejudices against the so called traitors to the nation”.
- Mt 12/1-8 Eating on a Sabbath in the Corn Fields. No prejudices based on human traditions and customs.
- Mt. 12/9-14 Cure of the man with a crippled hand in the Synagogue on Saturday. No religious prejudices.
- Mt 12/22-32 The Pharisees are prejudiced against Jesus.
- Mt 15/21-28 The Canaanite Woman. No race prejudices. No sex prejudices.
- Mt 21/23-27 On who’s Authority? Pharisees are prejudiced against Jesus; he is not prejudiced against the Pharisees.
- Mt 26/57-68 Jesus before the council. Naked prejudices against Jesus.
- Mk 3/13-19 Jesus chooses his disciples from all sorts of classes of people.
- Mk 6/1-6 Jesus rejected at Nazareth Prejudices against the poor
- Mk 7/14-23 No prejudices against food or human traditions.
- Mk 10/13-16 No prejudices against children.
- Lk 7/1-10 No prejudices against foreigners, non Jews, Romans..
- Lk 7/35-48 No sex prejudices. No prejudices against sinners. Mary Magdalene in Simon House.
- Lk 8/1-3 No sex prejudices. Women join company of Jesus.
- Lk 10/38-47 Same as above. Jesus visits Martha and Mary.
- Lk 17/11-19 No prejudices against Lepers and the Sick. The 10 lepers.
- Lk 19/1-10 Zacchaeus. Accepting Tax collectors and sinners.
- Jn 1/43-46 Nathaniel prejudiced against people from Nazareth.

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| Jn | 4/1-30 | Samaritan woman. "Sinner, Woman and Samaritan". She would be prejudiced on the three counts. |
| Jn | 8/1-11 | Woman caught in adultery. Woman and sinner. |
| Jn | 9/1-41 | Cure of the Blind Man. The whole chapter is a study in prejudice. |
| Jn | 12/20-26 | Greeks come to see Jesus. The Jews were prejudiced against Non Jews. Jesus wasn't. |

OTHER TEXTS:

James: 2/1-10; 4/11-12 Warning against prejudice and judging others.