

“Not Like Me: Religion, Sex, and Politics”

By Eric Bryant

Mosaic (Peppermint-Filled Pinatas series)

Show “Religion, Sex, and Politics Promo”

Today we continue our series.

When engaging in conversations with others we were taught not to talk about religion, sex, and politics. So today, I thought we would talk about all 3.

Fitting on Father’s Day (any fathers?). Today reminds us of the incredible influence we can have on our kids. Genetic predisposition towards politics. (Caleb loves Dodgers, roots against the Angels, but somehow likes Raiders (peer pressure). Trevi – leader? Already am. Pres? want to be on the dollar. Trophy. Follow Jesus. Already told Jesus I would be his leader.)

Many times Fathers get ripped off. \$16 billion on Mother’s Day and only \$9.9 billion on Father’s Day. Avg family spends \$139 vs \$98. 87% of moms get a card only 69% of fathers do. This actually makes sense. Guys tend to be a bit more cheap. Don’t buy me gifts, just let me watch the game. Just let me sleep in and have a donut.

Reason avoid these subjects = creates controversy and conflict. Some of us have very strong convictions regarding religion, sex, and politics. We should! But we should never allow our convictions to become a litmus test for friendship. In fact, we should actively pursue friendships with people – even people with whom we may disagree. In the world in which we live and in the city in which we live, if we don’t develop friendships with those with whom we disagree we may be surprised with how many people are left to befriend. Paul wrote to the church in Corinth in chapter 5, it is ok to spend time with people who believe and live differently. If it wasn’t, where could we go?

Mosaic – anyone can be a part of our community. You belong. You can serve. We will serve, love, teach, bless, and encourage you in your spiritual journey anyway we can. If you want to be on the team of those who serve more and give more then you would connect to our volunteer staff. This group holds the same convictions, values, and commitments. Our role as the staff is to serve our community – those who consider Mosaic their spiritual home and those who live around us in this city.

Religion = Believe, Become, Belong

Relationship = Belong, Become, Believe

Misunderstand church.

Would Jesus go to church? Yes, his mom would make Him.

The church is not here to meet our needs, we are the church here to meet the needs of the world.

Too often the church is seen as exclusive or judgmental. Instead, we should be inclusive/loving, and authentic.

World sees the church much like Jonah. We think of Jonah as a hero, but let's take an honest look at Jonah. For that matter, no matter where you are in your spiritual journey, let's take an honest look at ourselves. Are we exclusive and judgemental or are we loving and authentic?

Jonah ran the opposite way at the beginning and then angry at the end.

Jonah 1:1-2 Why did Jonah run? Was he afraid? Was he stubborn?

Jonah unwilling to interact or connect with Ninevites because he wanted them to be punished by God. Jonah hated the Ninevites. Different god, different morally, different politics.

Nineveh – 60 miles circumference, Assyrian capital by Tigris River (modern day Mosul, Iraq). Evil of Nineveh

Kyle Lake – opposition from the world (demeaning, mocking, and laughing at this tragedy). I wanted to lash out against this. A few Xns had beat me to it. Their angry responses broke my heart and made feel so ashamed – not for these other believers but for the way I knew I was planning to respond. The person who seemed to be the most venomous was asked why she was so angry at someone she had never met. Stephanie's response: "As a child, involved in church. Parents committed suicide. Went to church looking for answers but not one reached out. No hugs. No encouraging words. Instead the pastor preached a message warning all of those there that someone who kills himself is unworthy of forgiveness. Stephanie along with her siblings left the church that day and left God for the rest of their lives.

We are so far from others because we have pushed them away. How often do people walk away from God because of what we have done.

No caste in Bible, but caste in churches (Father of Constitution, became Buddhist)

If you've been pushed away from God by people who follow Jesus. I am sorry. We have misrepresented who Jesus really is.

Recount story of Jonah – Ran away from God, storm on ship so thrown over board, drowning with seaweed around his head, God rescues with a fish, Promised to follow through, vomited out onto the beach, Began preaching (Jonah 3:4-5), People believed

Jonah 3:10-4:3 This says a lot about God's character and Jonah's character. God spoke of judgement, yet Jonah knew God is always looking to forgive.

Jonah would rather die than see the Ninevites forgiven.

To the world, Christians seem to take delight in God's judgment. In fact, we don't want to wait until the Judgement Day, we want to pass judgement now. We criticize. We blog. We vent. We want revenge. We cast stones at the people around us forgetting that we too will face judgement. None of us are perfect.

"Why doesn't Mosaic talk about God's judgement or sin?" We use stronger language such as destructive choices, evil that we choose to do. Difference we don't take pleasure in punishment. We assume most people are aware of hell on earth.

Ninevites didn't have to have Jonah explain the many wicked things they were doing. God is loving and merciful and changed his mind about punishing Ninevites.

Love = new apologetic. (rather than debate intellectually attacking others to convince them of our beliefs. The world so aware of what we hate rather than what we love).

In the midst of some of Paul's strongest words about God's desire for us to live lives that honor Him – with His help, those who judge others are in trouble. Romans 2:1-4  
If God's kindness leads us towards turning to Him, once we find Him, shouldn't our kindness lead others towards God? If God is kind, merciful, forgiving, and loving, why aren't we? Why do think we are better than God?

Rather than judgement or exclusion, we should be offering love and friendship with those around us.

Story of the lesbian gynecologist.

Seid Abdu, from program to relationship  
“proximity equals opportunity” – look for those seeking (Lk. 10:6),  
Have we placed limits on who we are willing to love? Have we placed limits on who God should love?

Set apart and sent out. Too often Christians seen as hiding from the world. The first suburbs were created by evangelicals who wanted to get out of the evil city of London. Set apart in how we live not our zip code. Set apart in how we live and sent out where we live.

Set apart in behavior. Sent out in relationships.

Some of us do the opposite, set apart in our relationships. Sent out from those we are supposed to love and serve.

Supposed to live with a different standard, not in a different place with a different standard.

Some of us, live away from the world physically, but we live just like the world in our hearts. Are you set apart in how you live? Have you allowed God to forgive you and change even the desires of your heart? Have you been willing to share what God has done in your life with others still hurting and still struggling with destructive choices?

Jonah 3:3-7 - change from the ground up, Lincoln's view on public sentiment,  
“With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed...  
Consequently, he who holds public sentiment goes deeper than he who erects statutes or pronounces decisions.”

Uncle Tom's Cabin

Jonah was rescued and went to the city. Like Jonah, rescued to be messengers, to love, to serve, to embrace those with whom we disagree.