

“Prejudice”  
Acts 11:1-18 and John 13:34  
May 6, 2007  
By Rebecca Enney

Elizabeth and Sam and Barabas are playing in Elizabeth’s back yard. They have a giant yellow ball that they are playing tag with. Sometimes Barabas jumps to keep from getting tagged with the ball. He can jump really high and twist as he lands, like a spider man. Then they all fall on the ground in fits of laughter because of Barabas’s silly antics!

Aunt Gertrude watched from the kitchen window. You might remember that Aunt Gertrude is staying with Elizabeth while Elizabeth’s parents are away in Tanzania.

As Aunt Gertrude watched all their fun play she felt ashamed. She remembered that several years ago she was very unkind to Barabas. You see, Aunt Gertrude was prejudiced against Barabas. Prejudice means to have hatred towards someone for no good reason. Back then Aunt Gertrude did not know Barabas at all, but she would not allow Elizabeth to play with him that whole first summer she stayed with Elizabeth. She would only allow Elizabeth to play with Sam. Aunt Gertrude never even met Barabas. She just hated him for “no good reason”.

I wonder WHY Aunt Gertrude had such prejudice. After all, who could hate Barabas? I LOVE Barabas! He is such a nice boy.

In the Bible lesson that Mrs. Cuthbert read this morning it tells about a prejudice that the very first Christians had. Peter was teaching about Jesus to people who were not the same as the new Christians in Jerusalem. These people were called Gentiles because they had never believed in the God that WE believe in. But when Peter taught them about Jesus and that Jesus is the Son of God, then the Gentiles DID believe in God and Jesus as the Son of God.

The early Christians needed to let go of their prejudice and accept these Gentiles as believers. Peter carefully explained how he taught them and how the Gentiles truly believed. It is not easy to let go of prejudice.

It was not easy for Aunt Gertrude to let go of her prejudice. You see, the reason she hated Barabas and would not let Elizabeth play with him was because . . . he was not a giraffe! Can you imagine such a thing?! Aunt Gertrude thought that Elizabeth should only have giraffes for friends, because giraffes are smarter than every thing else, because giraffes are taller and better looking than everything else. That is why she allowed Sam here.

Elizabeth carefully explained to Aunt Gertrude that Barabas is a good friend, even if he is NOT a giraffe. It took a long time for Aunt Gertrude to let go of her prejudice.

Now, when she remembers her prejudice, she is ashamed. Now she knows Barabas and she loves him almost as much as I do! In fact, Aunt Gertrude is the one who secretly paid for the very expensive operation that Barabas had when he needed that vase transplant.

I wonder if WE have prejudice towards people who are different from us? Jesus has asked us to love one another. Even the people who are different from us. In fact, he has COMMANDED us to love one another.

Aunt Gertrude went out into the back yard just as Barabas was doing one of his high jumps. He twisted in the air and when he landed he found himself face to face with Aunt Gertrude. Without even thinking about it, he bent down and with great flourish, he kissed Aunt Gertrude on the cheek!

And they all fell to the ground in fits of laughter at Barabas's silly antics! THE END