

**Due to international security issues, in order to protect our guest speaker's ministry in the Middle East, this morning's audio and video cannot be uploaded to the Web. If you would like to obtain an audio CD of the service, please contact the church office at (386) 760-4806.**

**If you do obtain a CD, we ask that you do not share any portion of it on the internet, or make reference to our guest speaker or his ministry on any social networking sites, such as Twitter, FaceBook, etc.**

**Thank you!**

## **Are We So Different?**

Why is it a problem to think we are so different from others?

Something in our nature makes us want to believe we are **better** than others. Soon we begin to feel that some people don't **deserve** God's grace. The truth is that **none** of us deserve God's grace.

So, what is the proper way to view our differences?

**Cultures can be different, without one being superior.**

*"For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" 1 Corinthians 4:7*

- All that we have, including our national **identity** came from God.
- Only God should receive **glory** for what He has given.
- Pride can cause us to have a distorted **view** of the world for whom Jesus died.

**Nations are different, but in Christ we are one.**

*"...And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith."*  
**Acts 15:9**

- Peter points out that it was God who revealed that there was really no difference between the Jew and Gentile in regards to **salvation**.
- Members of the body differ by gifts and roles, not by **nationality**.
- No one in the church is more **valuable** than any other.

People can seem different, but we are all the same before God.

*“What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.” Romans 3:9*

- The Jews had advantages over the Gentiles, but they were not superior.
- The Jews were tempted to believe their religious past gave them special privileges before God.

Islam is a religion that seems very different, yet is much like many other religions.

- It often tries to conform others to its rules.
- Its adherents look for ways to gain more of God's favor through their efforts.
- Its followers are left empty, devoid of the Truth, longing for something real and meaningful in their lives.

Paul, in writing to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 2:14, 15), mentions only two kinds of people in the world:

- Those who are saved.
- Those that perish.

The only eternal difference is whether we have received or rejected the gift of eternal life through Christ.

Missions helps us view the world in the light of God's Word, and realize that, despite our cultural differences, we can enjoy our union together in Christ, both now and in the ages to come.

*“...and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” Revelation 5:9*