

Information and Reminders—

Pray for: Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Samuel Southall, and others with ongoing health battles or other trials, and our brethren who are travelling.

The men meet on the first Sunday of the month to discuss our work and duties. There is a sign-up sheet at the back for items needing their attention.

All initial outlines for SBS have been submitted and distributed. Our *Summer Bible Series* is scheduled for July 22-26 (evenings). We plan to host a booth at the Independence County Fair the week before SBS (July 15-20). We will need lots of help these two weeks. Are these in your summer plans?

We need your help—

Are you willing to help keep various Scriptures on our signboard, out by the road, for one month? Sign-up!

Are you willing to help prepare the Lord's supper for one month? Sign-up!

- Sign-up sheets are posted on the bulletin board at the back.

Our articles appear in *Arkansas Weekly* every other week (June 5, 19). Many past and current articles are available at our website.

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

June 9, 2013

WWW.QVCOC.COM

DO WE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT THAT?

Joe Price

When Peter and John were severely threatened for teaching the gospel of Christ they called on their accusers to judge whether it was right “to listen to you more than to God”, then concluded, “for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 5:17-20). Their example when threatened emboldens us to speak the truth instead of being silent (2 Tim. 4:2-5).

It can be intimidating to talk with others about the Bible. For a variety of reasons, Christians may hesitate to the point of silence instead of speaking to others about the faith. Fear of what others will say and do to you if you speak up is one reason some stay silent. Others, wishing to avoid controversy, refuse to involve themselves in the unpleasant (yet necessary) task of reproof and rebuking error.

And then, there is the whole matter of relationships. The anticipation of hurting feelings and harming relations is enough to silence good people from saying what needs to be said to inform and to warn those lost in sin and confused by error. Perhaps Solomon's wisdom is helpful here: “A word fitly spoken is like applies of gold in settings of silver. Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise rebuker to an obedient ear” (Prov. 25:11-12). Solomon addresses both the speaker and the listener. A word that is carefully placed is of great valuable, being suitable to the circumstance (Col. 4:6). Additionally, the obedient person will value the person who gives wise rebuke. Christians must speak “as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11). We cannot be silent when the truth is twisted and souls are deceived by sin and error (Jude 3). We know some will receive us when we speak God's word, and some will reject us (Jno. 15:20). But, like Peter and John, we must speak truth in order to try to save some (Acts 20:20).

A modern example of such intimidation just arrived in my email inbox. Ahead of “LGBT Pride Month” (June), the U.S. Department of Justice sent out a resource brochure to its employees on how to create “a workplace climate that is welcoming to and inclusive...in which LGBT employees feel welcome and included” (“LGBT Inclusion at Work: The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Managers”). Among its “practical tips” on inclusion is this: “DO use inclusive words like ‘partner,’ ‘significant other’ or ‘spouse’ rather than gender-specific terms like ‘husband’ and ‘wife’ (for example, in invitations to office parties or when asking a new employee about his/her home life).” This is a blatant effort to remove certain words from our vocabulary because their use offends those who violate their meaning! Incredible! A climate is being set in the DOJ, the U.S. government in general and throughout our society that says if you use “husband” and “wife” with their common meaning you are the one who is insensitive – or worse, a bigot. Why? In order to silence criticism against sin.

Here is another piece of counsel from the brochure, where managers are advised: “DO let your employees know they’ll be treated with fairness and respect...by ‘coming out’ as a straight ally. For example: Display a symbol in your office (DOJ Pride sticker, copy of this brochure, etc.) indicating this is a ‘safe space.’” So, is a Christian who is a manager at DOJ going to follow this advice? Not and be true to the Lord Jesus Christ! We treat everyone with kindness and respect, but we do not become allies with sin; we reprove it (Eph. 5:11). These are the types of situations where our faith is tested to stand for what is right before God without compromising the truth, being willing to suffer due to conscience toward God (1 Pet. 2:19).

Here’s another example of intimidation from the brochure: “Know How to Respond If an Employee Comes Out to You – DON’T judge or remain silent. Silence will be interpreted as disapproval. DO respond with interest and curiosity. Asking respectful questions will set a positive, supportive tone.” So, the straight person is to respond to one “coming out” with supportive words and tone. And what if you do not? Will your job be on the line? Will you get reprimanded? At the DOJ, you are expected to respond to LGBT people with acceptance, approval and accommodation.

Sadly, we see similar tactics of intimidation among Christians. Efforts to silence the truth on controversial subjects keep elders, preachers and teachers from speaking the whole counsel of God. Some subjects are off limits (like divorce and remarriage and fellowship, social drinking, immodest clothing, etc.). Speak the truth and the ministers of the evil one will set out to smear your reputation and destroy your influence (3 Jno. 9-10). We are told to be accepting and inclusive, otherwise, we are

troublers of Israel. If we relent, truth is silenced and error advances. Brethren, we must stand up, stand fast and speak the truth (1 Cor. 16:13-14)!

An atmosphere of intimidation, intended to reshape societal attitudes by silencing critics, is beginning to prevail across the land. We know this is nothing new; it has always been so with worldly, ungodly people. Like Herod cutting off John’s head to silence his dissent, these purveyors of evil metaphorically cut out the tongues of those who speak the truth about sin, all the while disguising themselves as the truly tolerant and compassionate ones. Do not be deceived, God will not be mocked. Each one will reap what he has sown (Gal. 6:7-8).

The temptation to remain silent when we ought to speak the truth of the gospel to those lost in sin can be very strong. Of course, our Adversary, the devil, wants us to be silent. And so, through intimidation, manipulation, isolation and more, his ministers attempt to inject fear and doubt into the hearts of God’s children. Our Adversary says, “Marginalize them, threaten them and keep them silent”, for he knows the power of salvation is in the word of God (Rom. 1:16). Keep it from being spoken and souls remain lost. Speak it to the world and good hearts will hear it, hold it fast and bear fruit (Lk. 8:15). Will you and I speak up or be silent?

-- THE SPIRIT’S SWORD (Volume XVI, Number 09 – May 26, 2013)

THE DESIRE TO BE FIRST

Derek Chambers (www.knollwoodchurch.org/yr2013/c09_be_first.html)

“But many who are first will be last, and the last first” (Matt. 19:30).

Everyone wants to be in first place. This is the place that wins the blue ribbon, the gold medal, the big trophy. Although contests are quite obviously all about first place, we find a sense of competition for first place in settings all around us. People wrestle to be first in their standing in families, in social groups, and in the work place. People strive to be first in terms of wealth and possessions. People struggle to be first in status and reputation. We are simply in love with being first; first in name, first to be asked, first in line, first to get the latest product, first to see the new movie, first to experience a new trend, etc.

Although seeking to be first isn’t always a bad thing, it is a bad thing if it is all a part of a “me first” sort of attitude. And it’s an especially bad thing if it is our attitude among our brethren. This was clearly the attitude among many of the proud religious leaders Jesus encountered. Jesus profoundly challenged their world view when he told them that in their efforts to always be first, they were in fact insuring that they would come in last where it really counts - the kingdom of Christ.