

Is Zeal Alone Enough?

Many people measure religion solely on the basis of the zeal exhibited by its adherents. Even some of the Lord's people (who ought to know better) are wont to justify the actions or teachings of men by the virtue of the zeal manifested in their doings. Especially this has been true of the Crossroads/Boston Church fiasco. How often have we heard someone defend the practices and dogmas of the brethren advancing this movement by saying, "They can't be all bad, because their zeal for the Lord is just so great" But is zeal alone enough to move the God of heaven to take delight in the actions of those who bear such zeal? Is zeal to be our standard in discerning right and wrong? Is human feeling to become our guide in living?

First, if zeal alone were sufficient to commend to us the actions or the zealous, then radical Marxism would be acceptable as a world-view. History is replete with examples of very zealous Marxists who even laid down their lives to further their philosophy. Yet, Communism denies the existence of God, and denounces religion *en toto* as "the opiate of the people." It is atheistic in foundation. Furthermore, Adolph Hider and the Nazis would stand equally justified in their fanatical and zealous extermination of over six million Jews, In fact, there would exist no crime so heinous as to escape possible justification on the basis of the zeal used in carrying it out. 'There would be no doctrine absurd as to not warrant Divine sanction on the premise of the zeal of its advocates.

Second, if zeal alone were all-sufficient, then there would never have existed the need for supernatural revelation from God in the form of the Holy Scriptures, The zeal which one held for his views would be enough to justify them and their believer without any support from the Bible. The more zealous the individual might be, then the more right his doctrine and behavior would be! If not, why not? However, truth is objective, and not subject to my feelings or state of mind as to its rightness. The Scriptures affirm their own all-sufficiency (2 Tim. 3:16-17), and without them one cannot go to heaven (Mat. 7:21; Rev, 22:14).

Third, the great apostle Paul prior to his conversion was a zealous persecutor of the church. The havoc which he wrought was done in all good conscience. He felt that he was carrying out the will of God, but he says later that he was "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious" (1 Tim. 1:13). Why wasn't his persecution of the early disciples justified by reason of his zeal? Why were his feelings in the matter unacceptable? Why then do some brethren seek to grant to the Crossroaders and Boston Church brethren that which was denied someone of the stature of Saul of Tarsus? Are they seeking to be more "loving" than the Lord? Does their mercy supersede his?

Fourth, the zeal-only philosophy promotes circular reasoning. If truth be based on zeal (and zeal alone), then how could one ever be certain—ever know—whether or not a thing were true or not—true? Someone might say, "By the zeal one manifests toward it," But how does one know that zeal is indeed all-sufficient to establish the Truth of a thing? The only conclusion would be that zeal bears its own justification. This would mean that zeal only is sufficient to establish truth simply because it is! This is the equivalent to saying that the conclusion is true because the antecedent is true, and the antecedent is true because of the truth of the conclusion!

Gentle reader, let us return to a "Thus saith the Lord," and realize that we must have zeal, honesty, and sincerity in the performance of our religious and moral duties, but a zeal that is "not according to knowledge" is vain (Rom. 10:2). Solomon warned: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Pro. 14:12).

Daniel Denham
Newport News, VA



BELVEDERE BEACON
"Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14)
Volume 10 Number 50 December 13, 2009
A PUBLICATION OF THE BELVEDERE CHURCH OF CHRIST
535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841-2574
(Greater Augusta, GA area)
SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
SUNDAY: Bible Classes for all ages 10:00 am
Morning Worship 11:00 am
Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.
WEDNESDAY: Bible Classes for all ages 7:00 p.m.
EVANGELIST: Ken Chumbley - Tel. No. (803) -279-8663
www.belvederechurchofchrist.org E-mail church@belvederechurchofchrist.org

It's a Danger to the Souls of Men!

To speak, or not to speak? That is the choice placed before every Gospel preacher, every bulletin editor, every Christian journal editor. The choice is placed before us because of issues; and issues are here, and will always be here, because of sin's entry into the world (Gen. 3). There is no such thing as an "issueless Christianity" in a world where sin and Satan do their work.

We keep hearing from those who admit that the issues are present, but their recommendation is that nothing be said about it. The preacher, or the editor, is censured for speaking and writing on it, as if the noble thing to do when an issue rears its head is to ignore it; we wonder if some feel that by ignoring it, it will go away? The basis behind the urging of silence is that men are involved, and thus, these men have their friends, associates, and supporters, and they do not want to see their friends spotlighted at all. Let a problem as Crossroadism appear, and let men thus begin to promote it; then, those who try to counter it face the friends and supporters. Let someone get off on the doctrine of marriage, divorce, and remarriage, and spread the doctrine abroad; again, those countering the false positions must face the friends and supporters. Let a college or a paper take a turn away from the truth; then, faithful men rise up to press the point of truth, and they must face the friends and supporters of those colleges and papers. And the beat goes on... "Ignore the issue, for I want no criticism of my friends and co-workers."

Then, what does the faithful writer, editor do? Is he to elevate men above God? Is he to value physical association above truth? Is the protection of some man, or school, or paper to take precedent before proclamation of truth? Is he to decide that Paul really did not know what he was talking about in picturing the warfare upon us in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5? Is he to be a man-pleaser, when such is never commended, but rather always condemned in the work? Is every issue Satan places before the kingdom to be weighed with: "Where do my friends stand? Maybe I should just be silent?"

Brethren, there is just one consideration, and it is paramount: On any issue, the question is: "Is this a danger to the souls of men?" If it is something in the realm of human judgment and expediency, then there should be no pressing. But if it has to do with the doctrine of God, and thus truth is involved and the souls of men are involved, speak we must! What man is involved, what group may be involved, what congregation, what college, what paper—the kingdom and God's Word are vastly more important than any man or group of men, involved in whatever endeavor. Every faithful man must view every issue, and then in weighing whether he is to speak or not, we insist that it is still the vital question: "Is it a danger to the souls of men?" If it is, truth and souls demand speaking!

Bill Jackson, Deceased

Time for Courage and Vigilance

The advancement of tyranny is sweeping across the land of freedom. It is seeking to destroy the liberty enjoyed by Americans. It veils itself in religion, blurring their hatred for freedom in the “holy war” called *jihad*. The events that have unfolded since 9-11 have turned many Americans against sustaining the war against terrorism. It is not uncommon to hear some cry out to stop the war in Afghanistan, it is not worth fighting, Should America surrender to terrorists? Or perhaps a better question is, do Americans have the tenacity and strength of heart to sustain a war against evil?

This war against terror is not the first time our country faced Islamic tyrants. Thomas Jefferson faced it when Muslims would seize American ships and men on the Barbary Coast. Muslims would take the men and sell them as slaves. John Adams refused to go to war against them and preferred paying an extortion price instead of standing firm against evil. He said, “We ought not to fight them at all unless we determine to fight them forever” (Bennett 182). Jefferson had the tenacity to stand up to tyrants and stopped the Muslims from attacking the American ships. It took courage and the willingness to sustain the fight against terrorism.

We should pray to have our soldiers to come home and pray for peace! As Christians, we must pray for our enemies. It is written, “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Mat. 5:44). But, we must be wise and realize that Islamic tyrants are not going to stop their jihad against America, their “religious book” the Qur’an commands them to fight and kill all unbelievers of Islam.

And fight them on Until there is no more Tumult or oppression, And there prevails Justice and faith in Allah Altogether and everywhere; But if they cease, verily Allah Doth see all that they do (Surah 8:39).

Islamic terrorists will not stop until America is a Muslim nation or that the blood of freemen flow and fill every valley We must ask, are we going to be like Adams and pay the price of tribute to tyrants or are we going to have the tenacity of Jefferson to stand up against evil men.

Work Cited:

Bennett, William J. *America: The Last. Best Hope: From the Age of Discovery to a World at War*: Vol. I. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2006.

Paul Vaughn, Cloverport, KY

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, Maomi Aaron’s sister, Leann Rogers, who is having health problems, and Lanny Niver together with his daughter and son, and Tim Smith.

Our sympathy is extended to the family of sister Grimsley passed away Tuesday evening about 8.00 pm. He condition had deteriorated rapidly Monday. Visitation was held Thursday evening and graveside services on Friday.

Lanny Niver is doing some better but still has problems.

Ken Ford came through his prostate surgery in Brisbane, Australia well on Friday. The family appreciate the prayers offered on his behalf.

Tim Smith’s condition has improved significantly and he was released from the hospital on Thursday.

The next pot-luck will be December 27 after the morning services. Plan to stay and eat with us.

The Main Attraction

I recall an advertisement not long ago in which talented group of acrobats was billed as the “main attraction” to an amusement park. No doubt, the drawing power of this team was being used to the best advantage by the promoter.

Looking into the Bible, I see the “main attraction” quite clearly; Jesus said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself “ John 12:32). Preaching “Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor. 1:23; 2:2) is to be the focal point of our message. Some promote gimmicks, games, giveaways, and gymnasiums, instead of dedicating themselves to a plain, bold, and forthright proclamation of the Gospel which alone saves souls! Millions of dollars of the Lord’s money are spent emphasizing entertainment and social functions, making the Lord’s precious church into hardly more than a soup line for the distribution of loaves and fishes when we should be pointing people to eternal water and eternal food (John 4:10-14; John 6:26-27)!

Some will continue to draw attention to programs, speakers, edifices, and novelties. Some pulpits will persist in feeding spiritually starved people with a “social gospel” that talks of psychology, weight loss, and “feeling good about yourself.” However, faithful followers of the Master know that His way and message is best. So, by the help of God, we will continue to point men and women to the Lord through direct, timely, and much needed Bible preaching! Jesus and His Word is what the world, and the church desperately needs! Let us put our emphasis back on spiritual matters rather than material. Let us, through our teaching and preaching, feed people with God’s Word which is able to build them up and give them an inheritance among all them that are sanctified (Acts 20:32).

Lynn Parker
Kingsbury, TX 78638