

Religious Bigotry

(Cont. from pg. 3) the wishes of our Lord when He gave the Great Commission. (Matt. 28:19,20)

Tolerance is indeed advocated in scripture. We are taught in Romans 14 and other places as well that we should respect the personal choices of those who are serving the Lord and not try to impose our opinions upon them. The example used is that of eating meats. Apparently some were having difficulty determining whether they could eat meat and still be pleasing to God. Never does scripture tell us to tolerate that which God has condemned. Tolerance is something



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we practice as a means of encouragement to those who are striving to serve God. Tolerance is something we practice with our neighbors when they are living in sin. But tolerance is not what we practice relative to the sin they commit, only to the person because he too can someday understand his error and turn to the truth that has been spoken by the Lord.

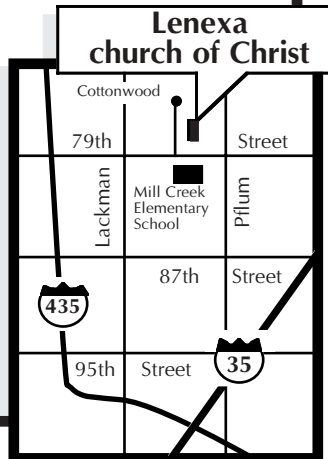


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...Let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. – Romans 14:19

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Number 1

They Were Cut To The Heart

By Kyle Pope

On the day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts chapter two we are given a glimpse into the heart and soul of the Jewish men and women who first heard the gospel preached to them on that monumental day. Acts 2:37 tells us — **“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and Brethren, what shall we do?’”** (NKJV). What resulted from this condition of heart was the conversion of some three thousand souls (Acts 2:41) who — **“...continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”** (Acts 2:42).

In our day we have become very familiar with the story of Jesus’ death by crucifixion. Gold crosses hang from the necks of athletes and musicians. On them is portrayed an anguished artistic representation of Christ dying — yet we focus on the music or athletic skill.

In the church we assemble each Lord’s Day and celebrate the solemn memorial which commemorates His death. Around a nicely polished table we break bread, which is to represent the body of the Son of God surrendering to death. From a clean cup arranged in a shining tray, we drink a sip of juice, which is to represent the blood stolen from the Savior’s veins by the stakes and spear of filthy executioners. As we observe this memorial, we must constantly chase from our minds thoughts of the meal at home after services, the past week’s activities, the television program of the past night, an assignment at school or the unpaid bills waiting for us. Yet, how often can we truly say we are “cut to the heart”?

Is the world so unfamiliar with the truth of the death of Christ that it is untouched by its horror? Have we as Christians become so familiar with the account that — (Cont. on pg. 2)

They Were Cut To The Heart

(Cont. from pg. 1) we are calloused to its cruel heartstirring realities?

When David sinned by committing adultery with Bethsheba and conspiring to have her husband die in battle, the horror of his own behavior escaped him. Only when the prophet Nathan came and told him a veiled story about a rich man's cruelty in taking a poor man's lamb was his heart stirred to anger, then repentant sorrow (II Sam. 12:1-7).

Are we like David, when it comes to our attitude towards Jesus' death? Does a news report about some tragic loss of life cut us to the heart more than the message of the crucified Christ? Can we be captivated by a heart-

breaking drama in a book, movie or TV show and yet untouched by the drama of the gospel?

The challenge for us is to realize everyday the reality of Christ's death for us. We must keep it from becoming something which we accept casually and unemotionally and instead let it stir our hearts daily to greater faithfulness to the Lord and to His people. If Christians in this age would allow the message of the the crucified Messiah to touch us as it did those on the day of Pentecost it might be that the message of the gospel would "turn the world upside down" (Acts 17:6) today as it did when it was first preached.



Religious Bigotry

by Jim Stauffer

The dictionary defines bigotry as follows: Attitudes, beliefs, or actions characteristic of a bigot; intolerance. What is intolerance in religion? It seems everyone has his or her opinion of just what it takes to be intolerant. As is the case with all things religious, we must consult the Word of God if we are to be sound in our conclusion. This past week Reggie White, one of the all time great football players died unexpectedly. Beside being well known for his football exploits, Mr. White was very outspoken about his faith in Jesus Christ. He spent

much of his life preaching and teaching many principles that Jesus espoused. There was an occasion when he spoke before the Wisconsin State Legislature. Here is a report from a Wisconsin newspaper on the comments he made on that occasion.

Famed Green Bay Packers defensive end Reggie White stepped into controversy a year ago with his speech to the Wisconsin Legislature in which he called homosexuality a sin and said blacks like to dance, Asians could "turn a television into a watch," Hispanics knew how to put 20 or

30 people under the same roof, and whites were good at making money.

Then he appeared in a national newspaper advertisement and taped a commercial against same-sex "marriages." Since then, he says he has lost several million dollars in endorsement contracts, as well as a possible job as a TV sports analyst, because of his beliefs.

As a result of the comments he made on this occasion and similar comments at other times, he has been branded by some as a religious bigot. It seems we must come to grips with intolerance to determine what bigotry is and if indeed it is taught in scripture.

While it is true that Jesus came to save that which was lost and thus appealed to all to come unto Him, this does not in anyway condone the sin that people have when they come to Christ. It is that same old expression that says it best, "love the sinner and hate the sin". What does it say when we see the first century Christians willing to be jailed or persecuted to preach Christ even when told not to by the authorities. Does that mean the Christians were intolerant of the local citizenry because they persisted in *speaking the things we saw and heard?* (see Acts 4:20) What is to be said about Paul's statement in Romans 1:18-32 when he discusses homosexuality and several other sins that are reprehensible to God. Paul says here that *God gave them up to a reprobate mind to do those things that are not fit-*

ting. Is it intolerant to teach one the truth of the gospel? To be sure, when you do you will have to tell that person he needs to change his life. What seems to be lost or not accepted in this matter is that the God who created everything in the Universe that we come to accept as factual did so by the Word of His mouth. What this means is that God speaks the truth and that is as reliable as the physical facts of our universe that we have come to accept in our everyday lives. Jesus said in His prayer in Jno. 17:17, *Sanctify them in the truth, thy word is truth.* Paul says in Rom. 3:4, *let God be found true and every man a liar.* These are just a couple of passages that remind us that what God has said is reliable and we must depend upon it.

Now let us define for ourselves intolerance. That is when you have such a fear of something you will go to any means to quash it. A good example of this is the authorities in Philippi who arrested Paul and Silas. The officials acted illegally in an attempt to silence Paul and Silas. (see Acts 16:37) In fact if we were to attempt to force people to believe in Christ and live as Christians by law, we would indeed be as these men were, intolerant. However, to attempt to bring the saving power of the gospel to the lives of the lost is simply following **(Cont. on pg. 4)**



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