



Spurgeon Baptist Association Of Churches

Weekly Update ~ November 15, 2007

Volume 3, Issue 45

Associational News & Prayer Requests

- Our third Reformation Weekend has come and gone at First Baptist Church, St. Francis, Kansas. Dr. Tom Nettles, Professor of Historical Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, was with us to preach on *The Glory of God in the Face of Christ*. Dr. Tony Mattia of Trinity Baptist Church in Wamego, Kansas, was with us and provided our book table. Danny Thompson of Fair Grove Baptist Church in Fair Grove, Missouri, blessed us with his music (www.fairgrove.blogspot.com). We were encouraged with visitors from Oklahoma, Missouri, Kansas, and Colorado. **If you would like to have the conference CD set, please contact Tony Mattia at trinityb@wamego.net.**
- For information about the Spurgeon Baptist Association of Churches Log College, please visit our website: <http://www.sbaoc.org/logcollege/>.
- If you would like to submit information for the weekly update, please e-mail it to trinityb@wamego.net.

No Time

No time to study, to meditate and pray,
But much time for doing in a fleshly worldly way.

No time for things eternal,
But much for things of earth.

The things of God are set aside,
For things of little worth.

Some things 'tis true, are needful,
But first things must come first.

That which displaces God's own Word;
Of God it shall be cursed.

Skiles, Bible Pathway.

Beatitudes XXXXI; Persecute V

¹⁰ Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ "Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. ¹² "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:10-12).

We have been looking at those who have been martyred for the faith in terms of being persecuted. We can admire these men and women and wonder at the faith they had in choosing awful torments and death rather than deny Christ. We must be careful, however, not to think of martyrdom as something that belongs to an elite group. In reality all believers are called to be martyrs in at least one sense on a daily basis. Whether we are killed or not we are all to die to self on a daily basis and be willing to suffer persecution for the name of Christ. In one sense the daily life of the believer is to be a constant willingness to suffer persecution for Christ. In modern America this part of the faith is not seen and is perhaps even hidden. Instead of embracing the truth of Christ large segments of Christianity opt for finding ways to be more gracious and winsome and to water down the hard parts of the truth. While this makes it appear like we are trying to be like Christ, the reality of it is that it makes us quite unlike Christ who did not flee from applying the Word of God to the hearts of men and women in a way that the hatred in their hearts would come out. He suffered persecution and hatred for the duration of His entire ministry.

As we think back through Scripture, we find that persecution comes from two sources. One, it comes from the world. Jesus taught us this in John 7:7: "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil." When an individual or a group of individuals testify to the world that its deeds are evil, the world will hate the person or the group. Thus we see one reason that people are not being persecuted and that is because the "Church" in America will not stand up and declare the evils of this generation. It is true that the "Church" has picked out a few things and calls those

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Beatitudes (Continued)

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things sin, but it is not standing against sin as sin. The world, then, does not hate because the “Church” is not declaring that its deeds are evil. One could also argue that the “Church” has become so much like the world that it has no basis for standing up and declaring anything against the world.

Jesus spoke on this several times: "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it hated* you. 19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you" (John 15:18). "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:14). "You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved (Matthew 10:22). Paul teaches us that “all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (II Tim 3:12). In this we can see how Paul writes in agreement with his Master. To live godly is to live with an attitude that is centered upon God and His glory and to do that is to go contrary to the world and its ways which is at enmity with God and even hates Him. The hatred of the world should be something that is expected rather than coming as a surprise: “Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you” (1 John 3:13). In opposition to this we think that if we can be nice and gracious enough the world will not hate us but perhaps even respect us. While that is a nice thought, it is simply not biblical. The promise of Christ as spoken through Paul is that we will be persecuted if we live a godly life.

One thing we should notice is that living a godly life is not just being nice and helpful. Being gracious and win-some is not the same thing as being godly. There is a lot of talk these days about being like Christ, and in some ways that can be good. But notice what happened to Jesus when He spoke the truth of God and lived a perfectly godly life. He was hated and despised by all. He raised people from the dead and some hated Him (John 11:46-48; 12:41-43). He healed people and He was hated. He fed people with free food and they ended up hating Him. He preached the Word of God and they tried to kill Him. Why did they want to kill Him? Let Jesus answer in His

own words: "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me" (John 8:45). It was not because Jesus refused to speak in love, but because He spoke the truth to people who hate the truth. People hate the light because it exposes their hearts and shows them who they really are. "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed" (John 3:20). People get angry at the messenger rather than at their own hearts when their sin is exposed. They will hate when we preach the truth.

We have noticed that the world is one source of hate directed at the believer. The world will insult and call us names if we do things in a righteous way and will not insult and call us names if we are nice and take the edge off the sword. Another source of hate is “the Church” or religious people. One could argue that this is a major source of hatred and perhaps more than the world. Both have the same source because both are at enmity with God. There are people who are in the world and not religious and then there are those who are in the world and also religious. However, we can notice that in Scripture and during the time of the Reformation the source of persecution was from religious people above all. We should not deceive ourselves on this. To preach the truth means that there will be persecution. It might come from the world or religious people. It might come from liberals or conservatives. It might come from Arminians or the Reformed. People will fight for their doctrine and their own righteousness regardless of their creed. True life will be hated by people of all theological stripes and all of them will want the truth to be watered down in the name of tolerance, niceness and graciousness. It will happen and is happening.

In the Old Testament the Jewish people hated the prophets because they did not speak nice words. There were many false prophets and priests who hated the few true prophets. The godly prophets were abused, thrown into prison, sawn in two and put to death in many ways. They were mocked and ridiculed as a part of life. Things were no different in the New Testament. We know that it was the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus His entire ministry and were the major players in having Him put on a cross. The apostles also fought with the Jewish leaders and those who espoused their teachings. During the time of the Ref-

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ormation it was Roman Catholicism that insulted and called the Reformers names for righteousness sake. It was also religious people who killed the early Baptists.

What makes us think that we are different today? Are human beings no longer born dead in sins and no longer at enmity with the God they hate? Has God changed so He no longer stands against sin and sinners? If God never changes and all human beings are by nature children of wrath, then things have not changed. The externals have changed and certain conditions have changed, but the nature of God and of fallen humanity have not changed. Unbelievers still hate God and will hate those who tell them the truth. All the humility, kindness, meekness, peace-making and mourning will not change this fact. As we look at the rest of the Beatitudes one would think that people like that would be loved. But our text (Matthew 5:10-12) shows us differently. If we live a life of the Beatitudes we will be persecuted because that is what it means to live godly in Christ Jesus. People will hate you rather than love you if you live out the Beatitudes as they reflect the glory of God in the face of Christ.

While the world is working to make "the Church" like itself, those within the external church are working to make true believers like themselves. True believers have to fight the world and the external church. True believers are told that they must be more loving and to be more gracious so that the world will give them a hearing. We are told

to be winsome so that others in the denomination will not be so offended by us. But Jesus tells us that we are blessed if we are "persecuted for the sake of righteousness." Jesus tells us that we are blessed when people "insult and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me." Jesus tells us that we are to rejoice when this happens because of His name and righteousness because the prophets were treated like this.

We live in a day full of milk toast "Christianity" that offends no one but God. Indeed believers should not try to offend others for the sake of offending, but we must proclaim the truth of Christ even if it does offend. We have become so afraid of the world and denominations that we

are afraid to preach the true Gospel for fear of offending people. Notice, however, what we have done. Rather than standing for the truth like the martyrs have done, we have acquiesced and become like the world. This is utterly disgraceful to Christ. We have decided that we will not have to suffer persecution but instead we can just do things in a nicer way. We think that Luther was too bombastic and Calvin was too precise. We think that the martyrs, though we admire them in a way, should simply have been more gracious and winsome. In trying not to offend other people, we have offended God. We are under judgment.

However, it could be (I think it is a fact) that we have become weak by being afraid of being called names. It is not that we are unlike Christ in being gracious and winsome, but that we flee from true godliness by seeking to be like the world in its tolerance. If we were being godly, we would be suffering persecution for righteousness sake. If we were being like Christ, we would be called names by the world and the religious elite. Scripture promises blessing to those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, yet in our day we think blessing is found in outward peace. We must repent or we will continue to be effectively neutered from really being like Christ.

Richard Smith

"We hate each other because we fear each other. We fear each other because we don't know each other. We don't know each other because we won't sit down at the table together." Ralph David Abernathy

***To view back-issues of the Spurgeon Baptist Association weekly update, visit our website:
www.sbaoc.org***

SBC Prayer Lines

Use these numbers year round to obtain current missions prayer requests.

*North American Missions ~ 1-800-554-PRAY
International Missions ~ 1-800-395-PRAY*