

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Not Intimidated

(Jerry Fite)

First comes fear, then comes being cowed into submission. Such is the process of intimidation. The pressure is on the Christian today to not only acknowledge the “anti-Christian” direction of the humanistic culture, but say nothing against it. If you speak out against homosexuality, you may be threatened with hate speech prosecution before a culturally sensitive judicial system. If you are in business and do not choose to promote same sex marriage by baking a wedding cake, or celebrate the marriage with your onsite picture taking skills, you may have your entire business taken away from you by a bullying minority and a complicit media.

What a bullying minority does not understand is that true Christianity will not be intimidated. It never will.

When the apostles were commanded by legal authorities to stop preaching Christ, two facts stand out regarding intimidation. First, God was not intimidated. He sent His angel to open the prison doors, and give the following instruction: “Go ye, and stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life”

(Acts 5:20). God did not instruct His ambassadors of life to back off, be quiet and accept the fact that the authorities do not want their message, but rather go and speak. Second, the apostles were not intimidated. They were back in the temple at “daybreak” and “taught” (Acts 5:21). When reminded by the authorities that they were “strictly charged not to preach in His name” (Acts 5:28), they boldly responded, “We must obey God, not man” (Acts 5:29).

When pressure increases to quiet the Christian, the Christian is not intimidated. When the apostles were charged again to not preach the authority of Christ, they were “beaten” and let go. That will probably do it; they will surely back off now, was probably the reasoning of the intimidating authorities. But they were wrong. The apostles accepted the beating with “rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name” (Acts 5:41). They did not cow into submission, but “...every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ” (Acts 5:42).

When the ultimate intimidation of death is used, the true Christian is not intimidated.

When Herod the king determined to afflict certain of the church, “he killed James, the brother of John with the sword” (Acts 12:1). While James’ voice was silenced in death, there was yet another, in this case Peter, to stand where he stood and continue to make known the truth of God. Because the Christian is convicted of the truth of the resurrection, death is not intimidating. There will be another to stand where the dead once stood to continue to speak the truth despite persecution (*cf. I Corinthians 15:29*).

Intimidation begins with fear, and God exhorts the Christian to “fear not their fear, neither be troubled” (I Peter 3:14). Public admonishment, pointed ridicule, shackled imprisonment or even death may be the instruments of fear to silence the Christian, but the Christian’s heart is elsewhere. Setting apart Christ in one’s heart as Lord, the Christian is ready to answer the critics with the sound reasoning of belief (I Peter 3:15).

The Christian may be threatened with loss of freedom, job and life, but Christianity will never be intimidated into silence. With each unafraid Christian, God’s Truth marches on!