

Glad Tidings

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

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“Being defamed, we entreat”

(Jerry Fite)

What do you do when people speak against you to discredit you before others? Paul met the onslaught of such injurious speech with a response which to many would be considered quite extraordinary. Paul challenges us with his example: “*being defamed, we entreat*” (I Corinthians 4:13). In the face of derogatory and lying words about Paul, he offered constructive words beseeching the defamer to see truth and reconsider his position. Christians live in such a climate today, who, in following Jesus, need to follow Paul’s example.

Christians are called “*homophobes*” today if they condemn the practice of homosexuality. The word “*phobe*” is defined as “*fear*.” We entreat those who seek to defame godly people to consider this fact: Just because one condemns something, does not mean one has a fear or an irrational phobia for it. Why call us “*homophobes*,” if it is not prejudicing others against Christians standing for the truth of God? The truth is that God has always condemned the sexual act of homosexuality. It is “*an abomination*” (Leviticus 18:20), “*against*

nature” (Romans 1:26), a manifestation of “*vile passions*” (Romans 1:26) and will keep one from *inheriting the kingdom of God* (I Corinthians 6:9-10). We entreat those who call us “*homophobes*” to see homosexuality as God characterizes it and depart from the sin as some of the Corinthians did (I Corinthians 6:9-11).

Some will defame people who believe in capital punishment by calling them “*murderers*.” They will view those who protect the unborn in the womb from abortion but are willing to put a fellow human being to death in the gas chamber as “*hypocrites*.” We entreat such people to look deeper than “*protecting*” and “*taking*” to see the issue pivots upon “*innocent life*.” The command to not murder is the command to not take innocent human life, which willful “*abortion*” is doing. God authorizes the taking of the life of those who take the life of others (Genesis 9:6). God authorizes the government to wield the sword as His minister to create fear in those who would do evil (Romans 13:4-5).

Some seek to defame members of the church of Christ by telling others that “*...the*

Church of Christ are the ones who think they are the only ones going to Heaven.” I have never heard the statement being used to usher in an honest Bible study, but as a parting shot to prejudice others to not listen to such religious elitists.

To those who use this phrase to defame the church of our Lord, we entreat you to open your Bible and notice the relationship of the church to Christ and salvation. The Greek word “*church*” denotes the “*called out*.” Every member of the church has been called out of the “*darkness*” of sin by the saving “*gospel*” (I Peter 2:9, 2 Thessalonians 2:14). We entreat you, can one be saved apart from the gospel, while remaining in darkness? Certainly not! We find them where God put them: “*...the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved* (Acts 2:47 KJV). We entreat you to not look at the church as another denomination, but as it is revealed Scripture: the one saved body (Ephesians 4:4, 5:23).

The Devil and His angels do not care about truth, but God and His people do. We entreat all to see what is true and holy, especially when God’s Ways are defamed!