

Glad Tidings

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

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Servants of the Lord

(Jerry Fite)

God defines for us the character of His servants: *“And the Lord’s servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, and in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth, and may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him unto his will” (2 Timothy 2:24-25).*

The Lord’s servant is not in your face shouting, but through gentleness and meekness allows God’s teaching to permeate the opposing mind. The truth received through the skillful and forbearing teacher equips one to extricate himself from the snare of the devil. God “gives” repentance or the change of mind to those who in turn “recover themselves” from the devil’s snare. How? He employs the instrumentally of the Lord’s humble servant.

On the basis of “free speech”, the Supreme Court of the United States recently upheld the right of the Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kansas to spread its anti-gay message as they picket such gatherings as fu-

nerals for slain soldiers. The church, headed by its “pastor” Fred Phelps Sr. believes God is punishing America for tolerating homosexuals. Shirley, Phelps’ daughter, says God’s tool for forcing us to taste the cup of His wrath is the death of our soldiers. Arbitrarily connecting these dots, they further assume all disasters including 9-11, Katrina, and the Tucson Shootings as God’s punishment for homosexuality.

Phelps teaches God “hates the world” when God clearly reveals “God so loved the world” providing salvation through Jesus Christ (*John 3:16*). Mr. Phelps said in 2003 on his website, ““Anyone believing and preaching that God loves every individual of mankind. . . we say, you are going to Hell! Period! End of discussion! God’s decree sending you to Hell is irreversible! Hypocrites! How can ye escape the damnation of Hell?!”

God hates the sin of “homosexuality” saying it is an abomination to Him (*Leviticus 18:22*). It is a sexual union that is “against nature” and fueled by “vile passions” (*Rom. 1:26*). Those practicing homosexuality will not inherit the Kingdom of God (*I Corinthians 6:9-10*).

The Lord’s servant must teach the word of God accurately. If the Phelps clan accurately cut the word straight (*2 Tim. 2:15*), they would communicate God’s distinctions. While not overlooking sin, and condemning it, He loves the world enough to seek and to save it (*Lk. 19 10*). He seeks the lost and ungodly communicating love for them, not repelling them with a sign reading, “God hates you.”

The Westboro church is a self-appointed messenger of doom. Saving individual souls for Christ is not their agenda; they are focused on broadcasting the message that America is irreversibly doomed. Also, America is not speaking as one voice condoning homosexuality. Many in America decry it as sin.

Even Sodom would have been saved if ten righteous people resided in its borders (*Gen. 18:32*). Where in Westboro message of “hate” is God’s message of doom tempered with hope? These self appointed messengers assume God hates all of America. They assume too much, proclaiming what God has not revealed. They serve themselves, and hinder the truth in their unrighteousness (*Rom. 1:18*).