

Glad Tidings

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

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What “Insolence” Looks Like

(Jerry Fite)

It was recorded for all to see on Facebook. A mentally challenged eighteen-year-old man was tied up for four to five hours, forced to drink water from a toilet, have part of his scalp cut away with a knife, and humiliated with foul language and racial slurs. The four charged perpetrators were apparently proud of it, for why would you want your face perfectly framed for the public to connect with such degradation of another? Such was the horrible scene this past week in Chicago as 2017 began.

The blood boils in decent minded people to know, much less see, what occurred on January 3. How could anyone degrade a mentally challenged young man, who thought on some level you were his friend, and force his head down to drink toilet water? Why cut part of his clothes off of him, slice away part of his scalp and laughingly regard his blood as merely “leaking”? How could you take a fellow eighteen-year-old, whom his parents dropped off at McDonalds to spend the night with you, and tie him up in a corner for hours, inflicting physical pain on him, while degrading him with racial slurs?

God has one word for it: “**insolent**”. It is not new, for Paul lists it among the works done by first-century man when he refused to have God in his knowledge. It is found listed between “*hateful to God*” and “*haughty*” (Romans 1:30). This

placement is fitting for us understand the nature of “insolence”.

When one refuses to have God in his knowledge and life, he or she becomes “god”. In this self-promotion, there is disregard for the laws God has laid down for us in His Word, and the pride of doing what we want. Refusing to acknowledge God, any demands coming from Him, leads to our hatred of Him. In effect, we are acting out the myth of Greek mythological thought: “jealousy among the gods”. I have control of my life, to do what I want, and I will have no other gods before me.

If you are the “one god” of your life, you tend to forget to think of yourself as the creature. Such haughtiness not only blasphemes God, but deprives one of caring too much about the condition of other fellow creatures.

Ernest Myers combines this hatefulfulness of God and the haughty spirit in his description of “insolence”: “...*ready to trample in violence over law and liberty to gratify selfish lust and pride*”. Barclay commenting on the Greek root word that is translated insolence writes: “*the basic evil of hubris is that when hubris enters into a man’s heart that man forgets that he is a creature and that God is the Creator. Hubris is the sin whereby a man forgets his humanity and makes himself equal with God. Hubris is that insolent arrogance which forgets the essential*

creatureliness of the condition of being a man” (William Barclay; *New Testament Words*; page 126). Barclay also quotes Aristotle as he identifies the pleasurable motive behind the sin of insolence: “...*The source of the pleasure found in the insolent action is the feeling that in injuring others we are claiming an exceptional superiority to them*” (*ibid*; page 131).

Four black young people took a mentally challenged young man whose skin did not match theirs, and degraded him for hours. Why, because they could! This was their world, and they were in control. They were not out for revenge, but for glorifying self. One girl could laugh at the proceedings while puffing on a cigar, as humiliation was experienced by one whom she thought was beneath her. The young man’s acquaintance could shove him into the toilet for he was showing his superiority over one whom he considered beneath him.

The spokesman for the White House commented that this demonstrated “*a level of depravity that is an outrage to a lot of Americans*”. Man says it is “reprehensible” and “outrageous”. God says it is what happens in life when man leaves God out of his knowledge. Sadly, four insolent people had to pick a mentally challenged man to make them feel superior. Secular America, God says it is “insolence”. Sin looks ugly, doesn’t it?