

October 10, 2021

The View

“Sirs, we wish to see Jesus.”—John 12:21

Welcome Visitors!

You are our honored guests and we are pleased that you have chosen to visit us today. Our goal is to do everything according to God’s word, including respecting its silence. This is a church of Christ; we are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church and we have no earthly “headquarters.” The six elders oversee this work and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily aimed at our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don’t understand something, please do not hesitate to ask one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God’s word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

**Please fill out a visitor’s card and put it in the collection plate located near the entrance.
We do not solicit donations from visitors. See page 4 for more information.**

Schedule

The Lord’s Day

Gospel Meeting Continues Today

9:30 AM — Randy Radke on “Righteous Judgment”

10:30 AM — Ed Sanderson, Sr., “Why Call Me Lord, Lord
(Be Careful How You Build)

Livestream at 10:30 <https://tinyurl.com/5f2cbm3y>

Bible Class @ 1:30 PM in room 15/16 — Hebrews

Bible Class @ 5 PM — A Study of Prayer (Auditorium)

Young People’s Class, 5 PM @ David & Christie Posey’s home

Middle school class: monthly

Contact Dan Stegall at 818- 209-9810)

Wednesday 7 PM @ Building

Bible classes for all ages

Auditorium: A Study of Paul’s Letter to the Philippians

Is there any right or wrong in a “post-truth” world?

BY DAVID POSEY

In this “post truth” era many if not most people are rejecting the idea of an absolute standard of truth. Instead, they have adopted a philosophy that defines right and wrong by community — or even personal — standards. In other words, if it “feels” right it must be right. Or if *most* people in the community agree something is right or wrong, then it must be right or wrong.

Where does this philosophy come from? It’s the necessary inference from the rejection of a sovereign Creator. Author Fyodor Dostoyevsky said, in a stunningly true statement, “*without God, everything is permissible.*” You cannot sustain a belief that there is no God and believe in an absolute standard of truth at the same time. Those notions are incompatible. Yet many try because they are smart enough to recognize the logical conclusion that if there is no external standard of truth, then to say something is “right” or “wrong” is an untenable position. So they say, “there is something in each individual that (through evolution?) tells us murder is wrong.” Of course, though many of these treat science as God, there is no science that proves an internal standard of morality principle, so it is mere conjecture.

So, for example, if there is no external standard that establishes the value of every life then the “community” is free to develop its own “value” of life principle. One need look no further than the “values” of the Third Reich to see where that can lead. Hitler and Company decided the Jews were a drag on the economy so they decided Jews were less than human, making them expendable. It happened here, too. In the United States, Africans were brought to our shores and made to be slaves. At some point, the community of slave owners (many who called themselves “Christians”) decided these beings were not human, but simply chattel, of no more value than a hammer or a sickle. So, they were expendable. If a slave expressed a desire to be free, he could be terminated at will and the terminator felt no guilt at all.

Most everyone will say, now, “*that was terribly wrong!*” but if you have bought into the postmodern myth that there is no absolute standard of truth, then your protest is pointless. Few realize it, but they back themselves into a corner when they adopt this community-standard-of-morality philosophy. They don’t believe the Bible so they have nowhere to turn to establish their “standard” of right and wrong.”

But we have the Bible, the very word of God. When read regularly and correctly, we can determine whether any action, thought or speech is right or wrong. Paul told Timothy, “*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly*

handling the word of truth” (II Timothy 2:15). “Rightly” means “accurately” (see NASB). Literally, it means to “cut a straight line.” In the analogy, if you’re going to cut something, draw a line see you make a straight cut. In the case of “handling” God’s word, make sure you are measuring carefully before you call something right or wrong. Hebrews 5:14 describes the mature person as one who has his “powers of discernment trained by constant practice *to distinguish good from evil.*”

Distinguishing between right and wrong is a matter of carefully handling God’s word and putting it into practice. It’s crucial because our eternal destiny depends, among other things, on our ability to discern right from wrong. If we sincerely get something wrong (meaning we were genuinely — not *willfully* — ignorant of God’s teaching on some matter) then that’s when grace steps in (that needs more explanation, but this is generally true). But when we know or should know an action is wrong then we will have to answer for it.

How do we determine right and wrong from our external standard of morality, the Bible? Here’s where “handling accurately” comes in. An action is wrong when:

1. *Scripture* says it’s wrong (see Galatians 5:19-21, etc.).
2. *It violates a plainly stated principle* in scripture. There are no texts that mention, specifically, drug abuse, child abuse, pornography, bullying on social media, and many other things. But each one of these is covered by a clear principle in the Bible.
3. *You are enslaved by it*; it dominates your thoughts, your time or your finances (this is modern day “idolatry”; see Colossians 3:5; I Corinthians 6:12).
4. *It violates your conscience* (I Corinthians 8:7; I Timothy 1:5)
5. *If it leads someone to sin* (I Corinthians 8:10-12; Romans 14:13-16)
6. *It demonstrates an inexcusable lack of growth* (Hebrews 5:11 — 6:2)

More can be said, but every true, maturing follower of Christ wants to do the right thing all the time. No true follower of Christ justifies actions they know are wrong. Ideally, if there is any doubt, we do without. When we fail, we quickly repent. Why risk losing your soul for some risky venture? See Hebrews 11:25. And consider what Paul said in I Corinthians 14:20, “*Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.*”

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Never quit!

Before we met at the building on Friday to hear Dennis Wade's lesson on "Who is Blessed?" we were able to attend Folsom High School's junior varsity football game (our grandson Griffin is on the team). Folsom beat De La Salle 41-0. Another grandson, Reichen is playing football at his high school in Colorado. When we got home Friday night, we got a text from Dave, Jr telling us that Reichen's team was leading in their game by a score of 44-0 — at the half. But then Dave said, "the other team never came out of the locker room after halftime; they just quit."

I'm sure this has happened a few times in the history of high school sports but this is the first time I've ever heard of it. Unless there was some emergency, this is wrong on so many levels. Assuming the coaches called the game just because they were getting beat, they should be fired. If the kids said, "we're not going back out there," they should be kicked off the team.

Looking at the bigger picture, this is one example of where we are as a culture right now. *If things don't go your way, just quit.* It's this attitude that has promoted the "everyone gets a trophy" mentality. Meanwhile, Paul said, *"Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air"* (I Cor. 9:25-26).

High school sports is not, ultimately, about winning or losing. Done right, it's about building character. The reality in this situation is that if the team had come back out to play, the coaches on that team could have given some playing time to the kids who rarely get to play, and the same is true with their opponent. Reichen is a starter, but he would not have played the rest of the game. The third-string players would get their chance, but they were deprived of playing time because the other team quit.

More to the point, the coaches taught the kids that quitting is the answer when times are tough. What a terrible lesson!! Jesus didn't quit although he prayed fervently for the cup of suffering to pass from him (Luke 22:42-44). But he pressed on. Hebrews 12:2 puts it this way, "...for the joy set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame..."

Human wisdom chimes in on this, too. Winston Churchill said this in a speech to students of Harrow School in England on October 29, 1941, *"Never give in — never, never, never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy."*

What did the coaches teach their kids on Friday night? Just the opposite. What a shame.

Two teams bowed down to pray...

De La Salle is a parochial high school out of Concord. They are Folsom High school's perennial nemesis. As good as Folsom is, De La Salle often beats them in football. Before their games on Friday night, both the De La Salle junior varsity and the varsity teams bowed down to pray (private schools can do that). I'm assuming that they didn't pray that they would win the game; as it turned out, Folsom's junior varsity team beat them by a score of 41-0, but De La Salle's varsity won, 34-14. I'm guessing they prayed that they would practice sportsmanship, and that no one would be seriously injured. That's a good thing.

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Quit!

"And when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is just and right, he shall live by this." — Ezekiel 33:19

The term "turn" occurs nine times in the book of Ezekiel. Sometimes, it refers to those who quit righteousness and turn to sin and others times, as above, it refers to quitting sin and turning to righteousness.

Despite the argument made in the article to the left, there is a time to quit. There are some things we need to stop doing. Sometimes, we complicate things way too much. Someone is caught up in some sin and we think we need self-help books, counseling and myriad other "methods" to get them out of that sin. Sometimes we do. But Ezekiel's words are refreshing — *just quit* doing it. I have a feeling that if there was a death penalty for committing adultery or for cheating on taxes or for watching pornography, most people would find the strength to just quit doing it, straight up.

The words are not only refreshing in their simplicity, they are encouraging. Ezekiel says it so simply: quit sinning, do what is right, and you will live. He acknowledges that we all fall into sin (Romans 3:23) yet the cure is to quit and start doing the right thing.

Most of us probably grieve over some past sin that we've committed and, although we know better, probably wonder how God could possibly forgive us of such an awful sin. We keep thinking we need to do more than just say "forgive me" to make up for it. But Ezekiel, a chosen prophet of God, said simply: "stop, turn and do good and you will live."

And maybe there's a lesson for us when we struggle to forgive someone. How about we just quit holding their feet to the fire and forgive? Why not? What are we gaining when we hold on to some past hurt or sleight? Just stop and forgive.

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