

October 30, 2022

The View

“Sir, we wish to see Jesus” - John 12:21

Welcome Visitors!

Our goal at the Folsom church of Christ is to do everything according to God’s word, including respecting its silence. We are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church; we have no earthly “headquarters.” The six elders oversee this church and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily for the benefit of 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 the preacher or 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 when it is passed.

We do not solicit donations from visitors.

Schedule

The Lord’s Day

9:30 AM Bible classes

Auditorium: Timothy & Titus

Room 15/16: Relationships: Love (agape)

Room 12: Young Adults Class: “Be ready to give an answer” (1 Peter 3:15)

10:30 AM Assembly

Preaching Today: Scott Gardner

Sermon: “The Christian and Honor”

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

Singing @ 5PM

No Bible Class @ 5:00 PM

No High School Class, @5 PM

Middle school class: monthly (contact Dan Stegall at 818 209 9810)

There are several on-going Bible classes in the homes of members. Check with David Posey or one of the other elders if you would like to join one of those classes.

Wednesday 7PM @ Building

Bible classes for all ages

Auditorium: Letters to Timothy & Titus

Room 15/16: Relationships: Love

Room 12: Young Adults Class: “Be ready to give an answer” (1 Peter 3:15)

November 13 –16

How We Got Our Bible (Mike Wilson, Santa Clara)

See page 4 for the schedule

Where Are the Soldiers of Christ?

Gary Henry

I love the song *This Is My Father's World*: "O let me ne'er forget that though the wrong seems off so strong, God is the Ruler yet." Our Father's kingdom "shall never be destroyed" (Dan. 2:44), and, ultimately, good will triumph, even if some of God's people fail in their duties and are lost. No amount of sin in the world, and no amount of indifference to sin by the church, can thwart the final victory of righteousness. But meanwhile, what God's people choose to do can and will affect the eternal destiny of particular souls. And many of us who constitute the Lord's church are acting as if we were content to let the world go to hell.

God is asking us at present to live and do His work "in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" (Phil. 2:15). The world has rejected the sovereignty of its rightful King and submitted to an Invader. C. S. Lewis hit the mark when he referred to our world as "enemy-occupied territory." Jesus, the true King Himself, said that Satan was "the ruler of this world" (Jn. 12:31). It so happens that the devil holds most of the human race under his dominion. He has wreaked havoc in God's good creation, filling it with deceit, corruption, and violence. His malignant intent to destroy mankind is, with too few exceptions, being horribly fulfilled.

It ought to break our hearts just to think of what the Evil One is doing in our Father's world. We ought to be livid with rage at what is being done to the honor of our Creator and be pouring out our very last drops of strength struggling to rescue the perishing. But instead, a strange pall of stillness and silence hangs over the people of God. As the juggernaut of Satan's work grinds forward, crushing our loved ones, our neighbors, and our fellow citizens, we are staying safely out of the way, quietly letting it happen.

What can we be thinking? Have we simply given up? Have we surrendered to despair and finally begun to doubt that God has what it takes to overcome His enemy? Have we been so frightened by the strength of evil around us that we are afraid to step forth and fight? Have we huddled in our little congregations for so long we have forgotten the unseen armies of heaven? Are we defeated? Timid? Embarrassed? Do we just not care that the honor of our beloved God is being dragged through the mud? Is it a matter of no concern to us that Satan is demolishing the communities in which we live, devouring souls all around us, and destroying the beauty and goodness of everything his filthy hand touches? Just what is going on?

It may be that Satan is not persecuting Christians in the United States because he does not need to. We do not represent any serious threat to him. He surely knows by now that, even in communities where there is a "faithful" congregation of "disciples," he can do whatever he wants in our neighborhoods, and we will do no more than fret about it in our Bible classes. He is too clever to waste his limited resources persecuting people who are doing him no harm, people who are making no encroachments on his territory. Why should he pay any attention to us?

Now, it is not as though we never call upon one another to be more "militant." My fear, however, is that, because of the nature and the circumstances of these calls, Satan may find they help as much as they hurt him, and that, in practice, they will bring about no militance of the kind that really threatens his realm. Sometimes, when we preach and write about the need for greater militance, we have been dangerously limited in our view of what we need to be militant against.

Only the naive would deny we need to aggressively oppose the damage that can still be done by denominational and institutional ideology. But while we have spent precious time and energy arguing about the relative urgency of false religion's threat today, Satan has been slaughtering us with the simple lie that religion of any kind is irrelevant to people's needs. The body of Christ is wounded. It is hemorrhaging the lifeblood of its faith and devotion and commitment to its Head. Is the devil's assassination of people's souls with the weapon of indifference a crime we can afford to be less militant about than his other atrocities? Where did we get the notion that preachers are soft who see the need to be militant against this evil? The very idea smells of the abyss itself. In fact, it would take nothing less than the perverse ingenuity of the devil himself to think of a way to get the Lord's own people to distract one another from some of the worst dangers they face by crying for more "militance" elsewhere! As long as we restrict our militance to the selected areas we prefer to fight in, Satan will continue to have his way in our communities, and he can disregard our limited "interference."

One testimony to how limited our real militance can be is the fact that we can be so "militant" on the one hand and do so little personal evangelism on the other. I speak to my own shame when I say that I know how easy it is for a gospel preacher to restrict his militance to the pulpit and the computer keyboard. If we are as concerned about defending truth and righteousness as we like to appear, why are we not out there in the trenches where thousands of souls are being slain every day? Why are we content to try to save the few who will come hear us preach or read our articles? All our militant rhetoric aside, how many perishing souls have any of us actually rescued during the last year? We are often so busy militantly comparing ourselves among

ourselves, and militantly biting and devouring one another, that we can scarcely find the time to “wage the good warfare” (1 Tim. 1:18). What we need is to make sure our militance against evil is actually that, and not merely a cover for carnal combat. We need to be obsessed with the godly militance that will take as a personal affront what Satan is doing up and down the very streets we live on, such that we contest the claim he has laid to any soul within our reach.

One of my own problems has long been the tendency to confuse the victims of the Enemy and with the Enemy himself. I have acted and spoken in such a way that those in sin thought I was mad at them, or wanted to harm them. But it is the devil whom we ought to hate without remorse. His work ought to actually anger us. For our fellow human beings, though, even the vilest of them, we are to have the benevolent, tender love of our Father, who “is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pt. 3:9). Despise us as they may, mistreat us as they often will, resist being rescued as they are prone to do, we never, ever have the right to do anything but act in good will toward other human beings. They are not our enemies. They have been victimized by the Enemy. And they deserve to know, as we gird on the towel and stoop to wash their feet, that we would give our souls for theirs, if it were possible. It is time we learned how to be tough with sin while gentle with people (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

As we labor in evangelism — with love for the Lord, compassion for our fellow man, and hatred for Satan — we are privileged to work with the attitude of triumphant over comers. For too long we have fed our minds on defeat, when we should have been thrilling to the vision of the disciple whom the Lord loved: “Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:11-16).

I challenge you, along with myself, to answer the Lord’s call to arms. Afflict your soul with penitent sorrow for your past indifference to His holiness and your disregard for dying souls. Soldiers of Christ, arise! Put your armor on! Be strong, and quit yourselves like men! Be eaten up with zeal for your Lord’s honor. Become inflamed with indignation at what has been allowed to happen in your locality. Take the insult personally. Vow that, God being your Helper, you are simply not going to stand by and take it any longer. Whether alone or arm in arm with your brethren, commit yourself to the proposition that evil will not go unopposed where you live even one day longer.

Rattle the devil’s cage! Get his attention! Give him to understand that he no longer will be allowed to have it all his way. Get out-of-doors and go on the offensive. Resist the devil. But keep clear in your mind who the Enemy actually is. Learn loving kindness for those who are his victims. Weep o’er the erring one! Lift up the fallen! Dedicate the rest of your life to nursing the bloody wounds of those who have been brutalized by Satan. And know, as you labor to care for the dying, that “he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins” (Jas. 5:20).



Read your Bible