

May 21, 2023

# The View

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

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## 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 five 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 is passed.  
We do not solicit donations from visitors. See page 4 for more information.**

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Remember to send in your photos for the picture board to [FolsomCOCphotos@gmail.com](mailto:FolsomCOCphotos@gmail.com) OR if you prefer, Adam, Betsy & Lisa are available to take your picture after the morning services on the next few Sundays.

## Schedule

### The Lord’s Day

#### 9:30 AM Bible Classes

*Auditorium: “Love Your Bible” (Part II).*

*Young Adult Class (room 12): “A Study of Ruth, and 1 John: Trust & Love”*

#### 10:30 AM: Assembly

Preaching Today

Scott Gardner

*“The Heart of a Servant”*

*Livestream at 9:30 & 10:30 <https://tinyurl.com/5f2cbm3y>*

#### Bible Class: 5:00 PM @ the Building

*“Praying the Psalms” (Auditorium)*

*High School Class @ 5 PM @ David & Christie Posey’s home*

*Middle school class: monthly (contact David Sanderson ([david.r.sanderson@intel.com](mailto:david.r.sanderson@intel.com))*

*or Seth Reagan ([sethreagan@gmail.com](mailto:sethreagan@gmail.com))*

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 7 PM @ Building

Bible classes for all ages

*Auditorium: Love Your Bible, Part II*

*Room 12: Young Adults Class: “A Study of Ruth, and 1 John: Trust & Love”*

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Articles published in the View reflect only the thoughts and opinions of the author alone, not necessarily the editor, the elders or any member of the church at Folsom.

# Being a Christian is Radical!!

In the 1960s to be “radical” meant burning flags, protesting in the streets and torching buses. Or at least engaging in sit ins or “going San Francisco with some flowers in your hair...” If you were radical you were probably a “hippie.” The word immediately conjures up thoughts of rebellion and anarchy. That’s why you might find it odd that I want to persuade you that, if you are a Christian, *you are a radical*, in the truest sense of the term. To a kid who grew up in the 60s, that sounds rather intriguing, to others it might sound sacrilegious.

Actually, the term “radical” simply means “arising from or going to the root or source.” Or, “relating to or affecting the fundamental nature of something; far-reaching or thorough.” It would be hard to find someone was more “radical,” in this sense, than Jesus Christ — or even John the Baptizer. The preaching of John and Jesus went to the root of the problem — sin. John and Jesus both exposed and dealt with sin as the root cause of the the perversity in the world.

**In Matthew 3:1-12, we see four radical ideas.**

**First, there is a radical theme: *repent!***

This is radical because it is really difficult to change. Harmful habits, tradition and — needless to say — addictions, are extremely difficult to run away from. Look at Jeremiah 13:23,

*Can the Ethiopian change his skin  
or the leopard his spots?  
Then also you can do good  
who are accustomed to do evil.*

God hates sin and he could deal with it swiftly. For example, he could eliminate nearly all adultery by simply striking adulterers dead on the spot. That would make men and women think twice about engaging in that sin. But God doesn’t do that; he gives us freedom, even to sin, but also opportunity to repent. Peter says, in II Peter 3:9, “*The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.*” God requires true repentance and that requires “bear(ing) fruit in keeping with repentance” (Matthew 3:8). The repeat adulterer (or drunkard, or thief) has not repented.

Commanding us to repent is pretty radical. But it’s fundamental — it goes to the root of the problem: sin. People who have trouble all their life that is not the result unavoidable issues like health are probably dogged by sin. As Vance Havner says, they are constantly brushing away the cobwebs of various sins, but they never do anything about spider!

**Second, this radical theme attracts only radical people.**

John was the last great prophet. He came preaching with a sense of urgency — and it was all speech and preaching

“There are churches all over the world that are filling up their building largely because the church makes no radical demands whatsoever. Do we?”

— no miracles, no fanfare; he didn’t offer free camel rides or hand out autographed copies of Isaiah. He just came preaching, telling it like it is, and people flocked to hear him even when he called insincere listeners a “brood of vipers” (Matthew 3:7). Some would say he was preaching *at* the people instead of *to* them and maybe he was. Read Matthew 3:7-10. It takes a strong person to stay and listen to tough talk like John dished out. You can imagine someone saying, “don’t preach at me” and walk away from in disgust. John didn’t seem concerned about that.

If there is any doubt that John was justified in his approach, read Matthew 11:11 where Jesus says that there was no man born of women greater than John the Baptist. That’s high praise for this “fire and brimstone” preacher. If we can’t listen to John without

becoming offended, how on earth can we handle the Lord? Do you really think you could look Him in the eye? See John 8:43.

**Third, the message of the kingdom is radical message.**

Speaking of Jesus, John says, “*His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.*” — Matthew 3:12. That’s why criticism of God is pitiful and worthless. Jesus is doing the judging *right now* — “*even now the axe is laid at the root of the trees*” (Matthew 3:10).

The Bible — *and only the Bible* — is the source of this radical message. William Willimon said,

One of the things that make Christians who we are is that the Bible occupies a privileged place in our communication, a starting point for our thinking. In submitting ourselves to scripture, on a weekly basis, in opening up this large, old book called Bible, we are apt to hear an original word not of our own devising. We come to suspect our own suspicion. Make no mistake about it. The Bible’s self-intentions are fairly imperialistic. Scripture doesn’t just want to speak to us; it wants to change us, convert us, take us somewhere we would not have gone had we been left to our own devices. The Bible doesn’t want to speak to the modern world. The Bible wants to subsume our world into its world. We can’t judge the scriptures by our experience because the Bible wants to give us different experience, experience we would not have had if we had not listened to the Bible.

**Fourth, entrance into this kingdom is Radical.**

Matthew 3:13-17. Jesus came to be baptized of John. Jesus had no sin but, he said, he was doing it to “fulfill all righteousness.” After his baptism, God said from heaven... “*this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.*”

If Jesus, who was sinless, was immersed, why would anyone think they are excused, when they know they have sins that need to be washed away? (See Acts 22:16). To desire to fulfill all righteousness is a radical desire.

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Jesus and his forerunner John came along to deal with what really ails us — sin and all its consequences and to transform our lives and convince us to “be like Jesus.” So they say “repent” — change. Jesus said “you must lose your life to gain it” and “forsake all you have” and “take up your cross and follow.”

That’s *Revolutionary!! Radical!!*

It’s so easy to minimize and trivialize what we come to do here on Sundays — to worship and glorify God. It’s easy to reduce it to an exercise in seeing whether the song-leader can lead well enough to touch me or whether the preacher can entertain us. But it’s so much more important than that. We come to learn how to be genuine, radical Christians. G.K. Chesterton, though, identified that problem. He said, “*True Christianity is like any other radical cure — we postpone it as long as we can.*”

It’s easier to complain about the temperature in the building or whether the pews are as comfortable as they should be or even about the latest decision of the elders. It’s easier to stay home and watch the livestream in your sweat pants and wrinkled t-shirt. But I suspect that people who think that way, do not understand the radical nature of this calling. If you don’t that point from reading Matthew 3, *your wood is wet!*

Are you a little more radical today? Christianity is as radical as it gets — in a good way, not in the “1960s” way. Christianity is radical yet there are “churches” all over the world that are filling up their buildings by selling a cheapened form of Christianity — those churches makes no radical demands whatsoever. They’ve entirely missed the point of what it means to be a CHRISTIAN.

*David Posey*

## “I Have No Problem with Instrumental Music”

We are hearing this phrase coming from the mouths of Christians with increasing frequency. It is disturbing to hear, because it reflects an even deeper problem with some brethren’s thinking.

First, we must be careful with saying “I have no problem. . .” “I” is not the standard, God’s Word is the standard. No matter the question, we must always ask, “What does God say about this issue?” Two passages which must be considered are Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16. Since they specify the “instrument” to be the heart (i.e., “*make melody in your heart*”) then no other instrument is allowed in worship.

Secondly, the statement “I have no problem with instrumental music in worship” indicates that someone is unaware of how to ascertain Bible authority. It is a symptomatic statement. It reveals that the person may have no problem with a wide variety of practices which are not authorized by God.

We must realize that the same reasoning which allows instrumental music in worship would also allow women to preach in the assembly; or a Thursday night observance of the Lord’s Supper, or accepting the unimmersed as members of the church. When we leave off scriptural authority, there is virtually no end to the things which are no longer problematic for us. When this happens, we are no different from the myriad of denominational churches who long ago abandoned the need for a “*thus saith the Lord*” in their teaching and practice.

Hearing this phrase from a new convert is understandable; hearing it from people who have been members of the church for many years is distressing and indicates we have a problem.

—MARK W. WHITE  
CY-FAIR CHURCH OF CHRIST

## “I Have No Problem with Women Preaching”

As brother White mentions in his article above, this is another statement that we are hearing from members of the church. And this is also a product of (a) not taking the Bible seriously enough and (b) misunderstanding biblical authority. I’ll take Mark’s point a large step further: the same “hermeneutic” used to allow women to teach when Christian men are present is the same that would permit a whole array of things — some that would shock most of us.

Before I make that point, let’s review the text which limits public teaching in mixed audiences to men. Paul said, “*Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet*” (I Timothy 2:11-12). Since Paul says, “I,” you may question Paul’s authority to say this. But most of us accept the apostleship of Paul and Jesus gave all the apostles the authority to “bind” and “loose” (Matthew 16:18; 18:18).

Assuming you do not argue with Paul’s apostolic authority, then to decide that women have the right to teach publicly when Christian men are present is to decide to ignore what Paul says under some guise, usually something like, “the culture has changed since Paul wrote that.” If that’s a valid reason to change what Paul (or any New Testament writer) said, then what else?

The culture has changed in a variety of ways. Divorce is common, living together without the benefit of marriage is common, open homosexuality is common, abortion is common — I can go on, but you get the idea. If our hermeneutic allows for cultural change, then scripture is a dead letter and we are free to pick and choose how we will apply it. Why not allow a gay woman to preach?

Putting a woman up front to teach when Christian men are present may not sound like a big deal in 21<sup>st</sup> century America. But Paul’s words are still in every reliable version of the Bible and the meaning of I Timothy 2:11-12 could not be clearer. Paul is not being mean to women. He is simply defining roles. Men do the public stuff and women often are doing even more important duties.

Be careful about saying “I have no problem with. . .” As Mark points out, that’s not the point. What the *Bible* says is the point. —DAVID POSEY