

June 11, 2023

The View

"Sirs, 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 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.**

Remember to send in your photos for the picture board to 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

"Chosen by God"

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))

or Seth Reagan (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"

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.

Words on the World

"They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world." Jesus, John 17:16

"What's the World Coming To?!"

BY DAVID POSEY

Before 2018, Christie and I had been to Mexico and Canada and most of the states in the US but never outside North America. In October of 2018, we had the pleasure of traveling to various places in Europe, from Paris to Germany to Prague. Since then, we've been able to travel to cities like Budapest, Barcelona, Florence, Vienna and many others. Each time, we've had the honor of traveling with good friends and family.

It occurred to me, on our last trip in March, that reports of the ugliness of the world as we know it are overstated somewhat. Here's what I have found on our travels in the last five years:

- We've been to several big cities in the US and the world and we have not yet been mugged or shot at.
- We have not been yelled at or accosted by an activist.
- Generally people seem to be relatively happy, not like the angry folks we see on the news.
- Here and abroad, on countless occasions, I smile and say "hello" to people of different races, nationalities and lifestyles and they smile and say "hello" to me.

I can go on, but I'm sure you get the idea. If your primary view of the world comes only from CNN, NPR or Fox News, then you are likely depressed and pessimistic, or soon will be. There's a difference between what is featured on the for-profit "news" networks than what most of us experience in everyday life.

Don't get me wrong — this world has a plethora of problems that makes me glad "this world is not my home." The political scene in most countries, including this one, borders on insanity or worse; crime rates are up, especially in big cities because criminals are not being held accountable; there is widespread corruption... But it's always been this way.

Genesis 6:5; Judges 17:6... way back in 30AD Peter, in Acts 2:40, described the world as *skolios* — literally, "curved or bent." The word appears four times in the New Testament to describe that which is *morally twisted* — unscrupulous, crooked, distorted — behavior. Then around 67AD, Paul, in II Timothy 3:1-4, says people will be "*lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving*

good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."

He even says some of these will be doing it while, at the same time, "*having the appearance of godliness.*" In other words, they are doing these "crooked" acts in the name of religion. We've seen this time and time again in our lifetime from Jim Jones (the infamous "religious" leader who

compelled his congregants to "drink the kool aid" which was laced with cyanide. That led to 900 deaths in Jonestown, Guyana) to David Koresh (leader of the Branch Davidians) to the Roman Catholic Church scandals and more. The ills of the world are not new and there is nothing you or I

can do as individuals to "change the world."

So, yes, the world is messed up. But what good comes from wringing our hands and saying, "what's the world coming to?!" For Christians, there's a "world within a world." It's not that we plug our ears and "whistle past the graveyard" as if we don't see the problems in the world. But we can do what we can to make our own little corner of the world a better place. We can smile and say "hello" to everyone, regardless of race, background or lifestyle. We can love God more than we love ourselves and love our neighbor as ourselves. Most importantly, we can share the good news of Jesus Christ as often and as widely as possible. I'm convinced there are thousands of people in the world who are looking for an alternative to what this world has to offer. We should be inviting people to become citizens of the kingdom of God as often as we possibly can.

Many years ago, our friend Don Alexander, author of songs such as "Mended and Whole" and "Saints Lift Your Voices," and many others, said something that stuck with me. He said, "*we talk so much about 'what the world is coming to' that we forget who and what has come into the world.*" Of course, he was talking about Jesus Christ and the good news, the gospel.

The Bible doesn't teach us to be naive about what is going on the world; but it does teach us there is a better world, if we choose to be part of it.

“husband of one wife and his children are believers...”

Taking a closer look at these oft-debated qualifications of elders

It's common knowledge that many churches do not have *any* men serving as elders and that there are probably several churches that have men serving as elders that are not qualified. But there's another problem that I want to address in this article. Some men are prevented from serving based on a particular view of one or both of two physical qualifications that have been debated for decades. I want us to think carefully about these.

Here are the relevant texts:

“Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, **the husband of one wife**...He must manage his own household well, with all dignity **keeping his children submissive**, or if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?”

1 Timothy 3:2, 4-5

“...if anyone is above reproach, **the husband of one wife, and his children are believers** and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.”

Titus 1:6

When choosing elders, I'm aware of two common problems. Some churches fall into the trap of considering qualified as long as he is married and has a couple of faithful kids. He's appointed even if he has demonstrated minimal leadership ability. 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 include many qualifications and each needs to be understood and applied. And, in my opinion, the church should only choose men who have displayed wisdom in their life, especially in dealing with others (see James 3:13-18).

The second problem is more controversial, so feel to disagree. There are often a few members in churches that believe that an otherwise qualified man should be rejected if he has only one child. Or, he should be rejected if he's been married before even if his previous wife passed away. And many believe a man who has been divorced and remarried is automatically disqualified, even if the divorce was on the lawful grounds of the wife's unfaithfulness.

In my opinion, both of these views require a rather wooden reading of the qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. On the “one wife” issue, in both texts, the Greek is, literally, “of one wife a husband” (1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6). That's all it says. On its face, it could be talking about “one wife at a time,” forbidding bigamy. Given the idolatrous sexual climate in Ephesus and Crete, Paul *could* be referring to bigamy but to most Bible students that seems too obvious for it to be Paul's meaning.

So, some jump to “one wife in a lifetime.” That even disqualifies a man who remarries after his first wife dies. Most churches I'm aware don't see it that way, and I agree. But what about the situation where a man's wife was unfaithful and the man divorced her on that basis and then marries another? Is he qualified to be an elder if he meets all of the other qualifications?

To answer that question we need to answer another: is he, at the time of his appointment, “of one wife a husband”?

No one would argue he has two wives. My view is that a man in that situation should not *automatically* be denied the opportunity to serve if he is deemed to be “blameless” (more on that below).

On the “believing children” issue, I have never understood the argument that a man must have more than one child. My wife is an only child. Her father was an extremely competent leader but was never appointed as an elder because a couple of people objected. Yet, if you have one child and someone asks, “do you have any children”? would you say “No, I only have one?” Of course not.

When the Bible uses the term “children” it is not always referring only to a plurality. In 1 Thessalonians 2:11, Paul says, “how, as you know, we treated each one of you as a father would treat his own children.” Does that analogy break down for the man who has an only child? Of course not — and we can multiply those examples.

Most of those who reject men with one child understand that the text doesn't necessarily imply more than one child so they'll say, “well, a man with more children is more qualified to lead...” But that's some serious *eisegesis* — reading *into* what Paul actually says.

Paul could have easily said, “more than one child” but he doesn't. The only condition is that they be “believing” (Titus 1:6). It's interesting to me that some elders who argue that a man with one child is not qualified to be an elder will, at the same time, serve as an elder even if only *one* of his children is faithful. Does that make any sense? If “believing” modifies “children” (and it does) then all the children must be believing — whether he has one child or many. There are questions about whether that is only while they are at home, or forever. We're not dealing with that question in this article.

These are age-old disagreements and I'm not suggesting that there are not legitimate questions to be addressed on these issues. And we should note that both of the texts that specify the qualifications (1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1) begin with “if anyone is blameless.” That means that a man is only qualified if he is above reproach with regard to all of the qualifications. For example, even if we accept the notion that a man who has been divorced can be appointed, the man would have to be considered “blameless” in the matter. Often — though certainly not *always* — both parties share some blame and often both admit it.

Unfortunately, too often, these “hot-button” issues are used as hammers by unqualified men to keep qualified men out of the eldership. Other treat them as “settled issues” that need no further study. If your careful, unbiased study leads you to these positions, then so be it. But if you've just adopted someone else's view of them, go back and look at the text carefully to make sure. Let's all try to be more like the noble Bereans who studied the scriptures to see “it these things are so” (Acts 17:11). — DP