

July 9, 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.

NEW QUARTER BEGINS TODAY

Schedule

The Lord's Day

9:30 AM Bible Classes

Auditorium: "Jesus at work in the Gospels."

Young Adult Class (room 12): "Jesus: making the best use of the time." Ephesians 5:15-17

Room 15/16: "Building a Great Marriage"

10:30 AM: Assembly

Preaching Today

David Posey: "Unspectacular Religion"

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

Bible Class: 5:00 PM @ the Building

"Praying the Psalms" (Auditorium)

Young Peoples' Class, 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: 5th grade and lower

6th grade and up, auditorium: Praising God in Song

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.

Craving Controversy

BY DAVID POSEY

I've seen it all my life — some people love to argue, love to be contentious, love to insert their opinion into every issue, whether they know what they are talking about or not. Paul spoke of people like this and said they have “an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.” *1 Timothy 6:4*

Not that anyone is asking, but if you should wonder why I rarely visit my Facebook page these days, that's one of the reasons. I posted something once that I thought was humorous along with a disclaimer that I was not taking a particular position on the issue.

If all you saw was the lengthy responses to the post, you would think I posted something that was so profound and/or controversial, that people felt compelled to respond. Since some of the responses were 2-3 paragraphs long, you might think it was some new take on a familiar passage of Scripture that spawned so much discussion.

What was the nature of this controversial post? Was it a Dodgers v. Giants thing? Or something about Donald Trump? Or a remark challenging some “sacred cow” that got people in a tizzy? How about an out-of-the-box interpretation of a Bible passage?

Nope, it was none of those. It was a (I thought) harmless quote from a humorous bumper sticker that I happened to see the day before. As I said, I prefaced the post with a clear disclaimer that I wasn't making a point one way or another about the issue raised by the bumper sticker — *I just thought it was funny and clever* (and it was).

The bumper sticker said, “*I've seen the village; that's why I homeschool.*” This post was in 2016. The other day — here in 2023 — I noticed that there are T-shirts and hoodies that feature this statement; so, obviously, it caught on.

There is controversy surrounding homeschooling vs. sending children to public schools. I was naive to think that people understand that this is a strictly personal judgment matter; the Bible has *nothing* to say about it. But the rather robust reaction to this benign (I thought) post suggests a few things that, just maybe, we should think about.

First, it reminds me that people feel strongly about subjects that are near and dear to their hearts (“*duh*”). Two men chimed in — on opposite sides of the issue — and they passionately defended their views — and that's fine, even if they were tilting at windmills a bit, since I had no intention of starting a debate on the subject.

I learned also that even if something is put in a humorous context, some people who feel strongly about the issue assume that the one passing it along believes in the message,

even if he doesn't say so. I get that. There's even a Proverb that seems to speak to that:

Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death is the man who deceives his neighbor and says, “I am only joking!”
Proverbs 26:18-19

I remember our kids getting on each others' nerves by making fun of the other, then saying, “I was only joking.” (They weren't joking; they were *mocking* each other under the cover of humor). I can say, however, in all good conscience, that I had no intention of using the humorous statement to “make a point.”

A third thing I learned is that some people like to use social media to stir up controversy (another “*duh*”). They've never met an argument that they won't respond to. To them, everything is a potential debate topic.

It's no secret that a lot of people have an axe to grind and no one would accuse them of having an open mind. When it comes to biblical issues, I feel I can make a pretty strong argument that doing so has done more harm than good. Inevitably, at some point, many of these “discussions,” take an

ugly turn — too often the responses become uncharitable and divisive. Some will claim they are just being “passionate” about what they believe. “Passionate” is that convenient cover for “contentious.”

I'm not in the habit of putting my most profound thoughts — on the rare occasions I actually have one — on social media. In other words, if I was really trying to make a point for homeschooling, I wouldn't have posted it on Facebook. I didn't intend to start a firestorm. Again, Proverbs speaks:

For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases. *Proverbs 26:20*

It wasn't long after this post and the reaction to it that I all but quit Facebook. I peek in once-in-awhile to see if I have a message and I'll post a pic of one of my grandkids now and then, but that's about it. I hasten to say that I'm not judging anyone who has decided to make that a part of their daily routine. There's certainly some good in it. I think we can all agree that social media can gobble up a lot of your day if you don't watch the time. And, if it consumes too much time, then we need to heed Paul's warning in Ephesians 5:15-17,

Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

“What was the nature of this controversial post? What is a Dodgers v. Giants thing? Or something about Donald Trump? Or a remark challenging some sacred cow? Was it an out-of-box interpretation of a Bible passage? Nope...”

Neither “Quench,” “Grieve” nor “Insult” the Holy Spirit

FIRST THESSALONIANS 5:19 READS “DO NOT QUENCH THE SPIRIT.” It is important to note that the context of this statement refers to both miraculous and non-miraculous activities. In the first century, an exhortation not to “quench the Spirit” applied whether one possessed an “extraordinary” gift of the Spirit, or the “ordinary” gift. In either case, the analogy of quenching the Spirit is equivalent to throwing water on a fire to kill its flame. This figure of speech would speak powerfully to first-century Christians. Fire was necessary for warmth and for cooking. It was the only source of illumination at night. If the fire was quenched, people would be left cold, hungry and in darkness. This figure should not be lost on twenty-first century Christians, either. There are several ways to “quench the Spirit.” Consider these obvious ways of putting out the Spirit’s flame—

- *Through ignorance of God’s word, the Spirit is extinguished.* The only objective means of knowing what the Holy Spirit wants us to do is to read and study the book He inspired.
- *Through unbelief.* Some know what the Bible says, but they are not convinced it was actually inspired by God’s Spirit.
- *Through indifference.* Among those who are aware of Bible teaching are those who do not care about it, nor show any interest at all in following the teachings of the Spirit through His word.
- *Through disobedience, people throw water on the Spirit.* Some deliberately disobey instructions given in God’s word. In the language of Romans 8, they are “walking after the flesh, not after the Spirit.”

“Grieving” The Holy Spirit

In addition to quenching the Spirit, it is also possible to “grieve the Holy Spirit.” Ephesians 4:30 says, “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” We all know the pain of being grieved by someone we love. We wanted to help them, but they rejected our assistance and counsel. This common experience should help us understand something of how the Holy Spirit feels when children of God ignore His word and refuse His help. Perhaps we will all be amazed at Judgment to learn just how many ways we grieved the Spirit of God. Isaac and Rebekah were so disturbed by their son Esau’s choice of wives, that the text says these women were a “grief of mind” to them (Gen. 27:35, KJV). If this is any indication of the Holy Spirit’s feelings when we grieve Him, perhaps we can understand what this means.

We May Also “Insult” The Spirit

The Hebrews penman wrote that Christians who “go on sinning willfully” (10:26) have “insulted the Spirit of grace” (10:29). No one likes nor desires to be insulted! Neither does the Holy Spirit. However, if we persist in living contrary to the will of God, that is exactly what we do. It is as if we say to the Holy Spirit, “I know this is not what You want me to do, but I’m doing it regardless of how You feel.” Effectively, we are erasing the Spirit’s influence through His word and choosing to chart our own destructive course. Christians must be very careful not to insult the Holy Spirit of God.

How May We Please The Spirit?

Instead of quenching, grieving and insulting the Holy Spirit, let us seek to please and honor Him. In Ephesians 5:18, Paul wrote, “And do not be drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.” Several contrasts are obvious in

this verse. Instead of filling ourselves with alcohol, we should be filled with God’s Spirit. Instead of allowing an inebriating substance to control us, we should be controlled by the Holy Spirit. Instead of depending on intoxicants for coping with stress, we should depend on the Holy Spirit’s word. As we consider the words “be

filled with the Spirit,” is it possible that Paul is making a play on words?

The word, “Spirit” (Greek, *pneuma*) is also the word for “wind.” Paul’s readers were familiar with sailing ships which were dependent on wind for propulsion. For a ship to be propelled through the sea, its sails had to be “filled” with the wind, so the ship could move forward. In Romans 8:5-6, Paul emphasized our minds need to be set on the “things of the Spirit.” When our minds are set toward the Spirit, the Holy Spirit can “fill” our lives, even as the wind fills ship sails which are properly set.

Simply stated, if we want the Holy Spirit to fill our lives and help us be all that Christians should be, we must have a disposition of mind and heart (a *mindset*) that desires, above all else, to do God’s will! Only then can we truly be “filled with the Spirit” and achieve the level of spirituality we both desire and need to be successful Christians. The test of whether this is occurring is to see evidence of the “fruit of the Spirit” growing in our lives (Gal. 5:22-23).

MARK W. WHITE

“...if we want the Holy Spirit to fill our lives and help us be all that Christians should be, we must have a disposition of mind and heart (a *mindset*) that desires, above all else, to do God’s will! Only then can we truly be “filled with the Spirit...”