

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning

Week 31 (July 26-August 1, 2015)

The recent ruling by the Supreme Court requiring all states to perform gay marriages necessitates the answering of the following question: “What do Christians do when the laws of the country violate the laws of God?” That will be our topic for the next few weeks.

Sunday, July 26 (read Acts 4:1-4)

They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. (Acts 4:2)

The confrontation between the apostles and the Jewish ruling authority was inevitable because the men were proclaiming the **risen** Savior to the people. Government officials do not interfere with the churches that are merely doing social justice ministries by helping the poor and needy. It is when we proclaim the **resurrection** of Jesus that they become antagonistic and combative with those who stand on the Word of God without compromise. After all, if the Lord has risen, then all other religions are false! In the midst of the persecution, God still works mightily to save the hearers who respond to the message (v. 3-4). Expect persecution to come soon to all ministries that boldly preach His Word.

Monday, July 27 (read Acts 4:5-12)

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven, given to men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

The high officials in liberal denominations as well as government officials still want to know, “By what power or what name did you do this” (v. 7b)? Anyone who has God’s Spirit will respond in some form, “It is by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, but whom God raised from the dead” (v. 10b). Most people have rejected Jesus, but to us who believe, He is the cornerstone of our faith (v. 11). I know that churches and denominations disagree on many issues, but can’t we at least agree on the fact that **Christ alone** offers salvation to the lost, according to our printed verse? Many denominational differences are not Heaven or Hell issues, but this one definitely is!

Tuesday, July 28 (read Acts 4:13-17)

*When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had **been with Jesus**. (Acts 4:13, emphasis mine)*

Today’s printed verse appears on my tombstone just in case the undertaker gets me before the “Uppertaker” calls us all home in the rapture. I want to be remembered as one who **walked with Jesus** and not by my personal accomplishments. God can use **anyone** who is committed to following His Son, regardless of education and background. A true follower of Christ will, like Peter and John, be able to bear fruit in the form of a changed life that will be undeniable to others who observe (v. 14). Our politically correct society will demand that we refrain from speaking in the Name of Jesus, because it has bought into the lie that all religions are basically the same and all roads lead to God (v. 15-17). What are we to do when our calling conflicts with our government? That is the topic of tomorrow’s devotion.

Wednesday, July 29 (read Acts 4:18-22)

*But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have **seen** and **heard**." (Acts 4:19-20, emphasis mine)*

Jesus is the **only** name that upsets the current government leaders in our country, because He is the only One who is real for salvation! "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Not only does our **government** forbid this exclusivity, but many **denominations** are also doing the same thing. Who will you choose to obey, government or God? "But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). The government may take away our Bibles in their effort to be inclusive, but it can never take away our testimonies. Go out and tell others what you have **seen** and **heard** (v. 20). The threats of men will never outweigh the **promises** of God (v. 21)!

Thursday, July 30 (read Acts 4:23-31)

When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. (Acts 4:24a)

When the threats of our government leaders get closer to where we live, what are we to do? The answer is always the same as we can see from the printed verse: We are to lift our united voices to God in prayer! The Bible prophesies, not only these persecutions (v. 25-26), but also God's solution to end the government of man and replace it with the rule of His Son (Psalm 2:4-12, Isaiah 9:6-7). He is sovereign over all the government of man (v. 28), so we need only to follow Him and continue to speak His Word boldly (v. 29). He will take care of the results if we are faithful to the cause. Are you willing to proclaim what you have seen and heard so that you can be salt and light to a lost society?

Friday, July 31 (read Acts 5:17-26)

*"Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the **full message** of this new life." (Acts 5:20, emphasis mine)*

An **evangelical** preacher will always arouse the jealousy of leaders in the mainline denominations who have "forsaken their first love" (Revelation 2:4) and embraced the politically correct doctrine of inclusiveness (v. 17-18). This happens because evangelical churches are flourishing while mainline churches are declining. The persecutions have already started, but so far, they are only in words and threats. Can it be long before the reality of jail comes to Bible-believing pastors in our country? As I write, America is negotiating a peace treaty with Iran, a country that holds an American citizen in a dirty jail cell simply because he is a born-again Christian. Pray that God will once again open up the prison cell for this brave soldier of the cross (v. 19-26). Our miracle-working God is still on the throne!

Saturday, August 1 (read Acts 5:27-42)

Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!" (Acts 5:29)

Read this entire text today and rejoice that we are living in a time when history is being repeated. Our sovereign God still has the whole world in His hands! Just remain faithful and continue to obey God rather than men whenever the two conflict with one another (v. 29). Knowing that these political trials are upon us, pick your battlefields carefully, particularly within the church! If you fight against **methods** instead of against **principles**, you may find yourself fighting against what God is using to reach this generation (v. 38-39). Think about such differences as method of baptism, frequency of communion and style of music as you ponder this warning. How important are they when compared to preparing the children of God for the persecutions ahead? Stay close to God and remain in His Word, no matter what threats come your way (v. 27-28). Instead of griping, try rejoicing that you have been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name (v. 41). Don't stop "proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ" (v. 42).