



# Spurgeon Baptist Association Of Churches

Weekly Update ~ October 18, 2007

Volume 3, Issue 41

## Associational News & Prayer Requests

- If you would like to order the set of Paul Washer DVDs from the conference last month, please contact the office at Trinity Baptist Church, 456-8513 or trinityb@wamego.net. The cost for the set of 8 DVDs is \$10, postage paid.
- For information about the Spurgeon Baptist Association of Churches Log College, please visit our website: <http://www.sbaoc.org/logcollege/>.
- If you would like to submit information for the weekly update, please e-mail it to trinityb@wamego.net.

## Thomas Scott, 1795

“I believe that there are many things unscriptural amongst us all that is either defective, redundant, or erroneous, but human nature is very fallible. Ten thousand circumstances produce prejudices which warp the judgment and the Lord seems to illuminate his people but in part.”

## Teen Girls Retreat

November 9th, 10th, and 11th at  
Great Wolf Lodge in Kansas City, Kansas  
For more information, please contact Debbie Jones at  
660-484-3468, Grace Bible Church.

**To view back-issues of the Spurgeon Baptist Association weekly update, visit our website:**  
[www.sbaoc.org](http://www.sbaoc.org)

### SBC Prayer Lines

Use these numbers year round to obtain current missions prayer requests.

North American Missions ~ 1-800-554-PRAY  
International Missions ~ 1-800-395-PRAY

## Beatitudes XXXXVIII: Persecute II

"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."<sup>11</sup>  
"Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me."<sup>12</sup> "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:10-12).

We will continue on in our thinking on the teaching of the blessedness of those who are persecuted for righteousness. In modern America we do all we can to avoid pain by having medication and medical technology go to extremes. We try to avoid all manner of bodily pains and inward pains. That has been translated into "Christian" thought by avoiding inward pain at all costs and do not cause another person pain as well. But Jesus taught that we will be hated and persecuted. Do we follow Christ or avoid the pain?

Persecution has been avoided by watering down the biblical teaching on many things. We avoid preaching on sin because it gets people mad. We avoid preaching on certain doctrines because it will run people off from the church. We avoid controversy because it will either make us feel bad or because it will hurt the feelings of another. When we back away from the truths of the Gospel to avoid controversy, though surely in an effort not to offend, we have offended God. There is an unnecessary offense but there is also a necessary offense. Sometimes it takes the wisdom of Solomon to distinguish between the two. Most of the time, however, the distinction is obvious.

Martin Luther faced a vast amount of persecution and insults during his life. In his commentary on Galatians he refers to the Gospel and conflict. It is very insightful.

Some charge that we break charity [love] to the great hurt and damage of the churches. We protest that we desire nothing more than to be at unity with all men; but accursed be that charity which is preserved through the loss of the doctrine of faith.

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## Beatitudes (Continued)

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In this passage on Galatians 5:9 Luther teaches us that while love is important, it is of far more important to preserve the doctrine of faith. We are told that we are to "speak the truth in love" when hard things are said, though perhaps the context to that passage might have more to do with the way gifts are applied in the church. However, there is no true love apart from the truth. Nothing is true love if it costs us the truth and especially the truth of the Gospel. If we prefer love to the Gospel, despite our stated intentions, in reality we prefer to please ourselves and men rather than God. In our day people are calling for unity from all sides and seem to be willing to let the truth slide in order for there to be unity. Yet Jesus told us very clearly a different story: "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; 23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me" (John 17:22-23). Unity is only found when Christ is in His people and Christ is the truth and love must come through Him. To seek unity apart from the truth on the grounds of love is to deny both truth and love. It may be that one can avoid persecution or insults by doing that, but it is still against Scripture.

Let us allow them therefore to extol charity and concord as much as they want; but on the other side, let us magnify the majesty of the Word and faith. Charity may be neglected in time and place without any danger, but the Word and faith cannot be. Charity suffers all things, gives place to all men. Contrariwise, faith suffers nothing, gives place to no man. Charity in giving place, in believing, in giving and forgiving, is oftentimes deceived, and yet notwithstanding being so deceived, it suffers no loss which is to be called true loss indeed, that is to say, it loses not Christ; therefore, it is not offended, but continues still constant in well doing, yes, even towards the unthankful and unworthy. Contrariwise, in the matter of faith and salvation, when men teach lies and errors under the color of the truth, and seduce many, here has charity no place: for here we lose not any benefit bestowed upon the unthankful, but we lost the Word, faith, Christ, and everlasting life. Let us not be influenced by the popular cry for charity

and unity. If we do not love God and His Word what difference does it make if we love anything at all?

I hope that this quote from Luther is clear. If we have to choose between love and the Gospel, we must take the Gospel. However, if we choose the Gospel it will be true love though it will not appear to be that to many. True love is hated as demonstrated by the hatred of the world and religious people of love incarnate as it was in Christ. When we choose love over the truth and the Gospel we have denied the Gospel as surely as if we hated it. Many deny the Gospel and true blessedness when they want unity in the name of love and yet water down essential truths of the Christian faith. One can interpret that as fear of persecution and insults and hiding under the umbrella of love. In reality it is not true love and so true love and the truth have been cast aside in order to avoid persecution and insults. It is easy to hide under a biblical umbrella while denying Scripture the whole time. But in seeking an easy peace and unity all the while thinking that blessings are located there, true blessedness has been cast off.

No matter what the popular cry is for love and unity or where it comes from, whether from the world or a denomination, that might be nothing but a cry that will require of us to give in at some small point on the Word. We might think that it is but a small point, but Luther instructs us again: "Small faults grow into big faults. To tolerate a trifling error inevitably leads to crass heresy. The doctrine of the Bible is not ours to take or to allow liberties with. We have no right to change even a tittle of it." The Gospel has no trifling parts and to deviate from any point of it at all is to deviate from true love and true unity. No matter what persecution, lies and insults this may bring, we must never deviate from the Gospel.

Bernard says that the Church is in its best state when Satan assails it on every side, by subtle slights as well as by violence; and contrariwise, that it is in worst case when it is most at ease....Wherefore Paul takes it for a most certain sign that it is not the gospel if it is preached in peace. Contrariwise, the world takes it for a most certain sign that the gospel is heretical and a seditious doctrine, because it sees great uproars, tumults, offenses and sects following the preaching of

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## Beatitudes (Continued)

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the gospel.

What we see here is a picture. The world thinks something is wrong with the Church when there is a lot of trouble following the Gospel. Yet in times past the greatest times of the Church and the greatest men of the Church teach and show that the Gospel will be followed by trouble and division. We can test our own thinking by this. Do we desire peace at all costs in a church and the denomination? Are we willing to compromise on things that are absolute verities for the sake of peace? Isn't it interesting that the call for peace and harmony in the Church is often the same thing that the world is seeking. While we must seek peace and unity, it must never be at the expense of the truth of the Gospel. Persecutions and insults will always follow being true peacemakers though the world, churches and denominations will think we are being stubborn and unloving. True love is not always seen as love while pseudo forms of peace are thought of as true love. Scripture must take precedent over worldly views on this.

The cross immediately follows the doctrine of the Word. Now the cross of Christians is persecution with reproach and ignominy, and there it is very offensive. First they suffer as the vilest criminals in the world; and so did Christ Himself...Moreover, murderers and thieves have their punishments qualified, and men have compassion on them...As long as the Church teaches the gospel purely, it must suffer persecution. For the gospel sets forth the mercy and glory of God, and it discloses the trickery of the devil, painting him in his right colors. Nothing so stirs up the devil than the preaching of the gospel, for it strips away his disguise and shows him to be the devil and not God. Wherefore as long as the gospel flourishes, the cross and the offense thereof must follow it, or else truly the devil is not rightly touched, but slenderly tickled. If he is rightly hit, he begins to rage and to raise up troubles everywhere.

There will never be a time when the cross or persecution will not follow true doctrine. There will be few if any churches where there will be little trouble. There will be

no denomination where there will be no trouble over the Gospel, though it may be called a different name. If churches never have trouble and if a denomination never has trouble, that church or denomination is not preaching the Gospel. Unity in a large denomination is not a sign of the blessing of God, but the blessings and work of the devil. Liberals are very tolerant toward most anything but the true Gospel. Pharisees are intolerant of many things, but they especially hate the Gospel of the grace of God though they use different terms. There are many that love what they call the gospel of grace, but in reality they hate the true Gospel of grace that is opposed to free-will and sin. Many want a Gospel of grace that delivers them from hell but not one that delivers from sin. Many want a Gospel of grace that saves where their free-will ends. But the true Gospel of grace delivers from sin and says that the teaching of free-will in effect denies the Gospel.

The SBC is at a major crossroads. It wants to have peace within as well as peace with the world. All of the calls for civility and graciousness are to some degree true, but they can also be seen as cries for peace to avoid persecution and to be friends with the world. When there are cries for civility it is usually said that the world will see these things and mock. The world hates God and mocks God when the true Gospel is preached no matter what is done. The true Gospel will always be hated and if we are so civil and gracious as to remove the edge from the Gospel we have just become like the world instead of being like Christ who preached the Gospel with an edge. In fact, a gospel with no edge is not the true Gospel. While some see building bridges as a positive thing, it might be that a bridge is simply a way for the Gospel to be watered down enough for there to be unity and peace. If Luther was correct, when the Gospel is watered down enough for there to be unity and peace in larger groups, then it is watered down enough to make the devil happy. "Let us not be influenced by the popular cry for charity and unity. If we do not love God and His Word what difference does it make if we love anything at all?"

Richard Smith