

The Courage of Evil Men

By Terry Partain

They came to arrest Jesus by night because they were afraid of the public outcry, and "not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people." (Matthew 26:5)

When Jesus asked them, "The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven, or of men?" They were afraid to say what they really thought because, "But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet."

On another occasion Jesus asked them "Why go ye about to kill me?" But they answered, "You have a devil: who goes about to kill you?" No one would speak openly of Jesus for fear of the Jews, but when confronted openly about their intentions, they lacked the courage to tell the truth that they were indeed trying to plot Jesus' murder. They were clearly afraid of something every time they stood before Him.

Jesus told them the parable of the wicked husbandmen which the chief priests and Pharisees perceived that he spoke of them. "But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet."

The wise men observe, "The wicked flee when no man pursues: but the righteous are bold as a lion." (Prov 28:1) Jesus

shamed these cowardly men on the night of His arrest, "Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness." (Lk 22:52)

Now go back a few moments and witness the fear of these men. In John's account, Jesus first asked, "Whom do you seek?" When He answered them, "I am he," they drew back. They flinched, you might say. And they fell to the ground. Can you imagine that? And yet they found the courage to get back up again and arrest Jesus.

Where did they get that courage? Certainly not from the righteousness of their cause! It must have been from the fears and ambitions of the flesh. The forces that kept men from confessing Jesus, **John 12:42**, also drove others to seek His destruction. Are they not afraid? Of course they are! But men are valiant in the battles to justify their sins and silence the voices of truth and reason, the voices of their consciences.

Contrast them with the true courage of Jesus born of His love for us.



Classes This Week

Tuesday 8:00 PM Truth-seekers Campus Study in Room 2310 in Student Center	Saturday 6-8 PM Kids Class 1st-5th graders from 6-8 p.m. at the Longs	Saturday 6:30-8:30 PM Kids Class 6th-12th graders from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Roberts
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Brad Marshall (Allie Hosey's Cousin)	Jesse Godwin (Troy's father and Mac's grandfather)	Virginia Box (Sarah Norman's grandmother)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Terri Sams (Erica's friend)
Terri Moore (Joey's aunt)	Audrey Barnett (Joanetta's sister-in-law)	Betty Bradford	Hazel Gilliland and Sherry Carroll (Toni's relatives)
Tom Davis (Walker Davis' Uncle)	Ermogene Laxson (Sara Lail's grandmother)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	William Smith (Ken Sullivan's brother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Bernice Martin (Will Harris' great-grandmother)	Brian Myers (Kimberlee's cousin)	Eva Jean Cavender (Matt's grandmother)
John M. Rhodes and Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family)	Howard Vaughan (Mary Ann's dad)	Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew)	Ben Raine (baby of Rachel Hobbgood's friend)

March Birthdays

- 1-Amanda Cagle
- 2-Maddie Norman
- 2-Chase Harrison
- 2-Bryan Golden
- 2-Angela Fowler
- 2-Elizabeth Barham
- 2-Connell Hodges
- 3-Shaun Oliver
- 5-Sophie Borden
- 7-Josh Pender
- 8-Carmen Herd
- 9-Richard Zacarius
- 9-Austin Bartlett
- 10-Pepper Humphrey
- 10-Parker Godwin
- 12-Brad Hartsell
- 13-Adam Holliday
- 17-Susan Sullivanne
- 18-MaKenzie Anderson
- 18-Alaina Barham
- 20-Jimmy Roberts
- 21-Carter Hunt
- 21-Rachel Bobo
- 22-Will Hollis
- 23-Sarah Embry
- 25-Sawyer Hall
- 27-Shelby Freeman
- 27-Katie Jasper
- 28-Jacob Hagedwood
- 29-Rachel Simpson
- 29-Makenzie Reynolds
- 30-Amanda Stephens
- 30-York Smith

News and Notes

- ☒ - Lisa Carter, Luke's mom, continues with bi-weekly chemo treatments.
- ☒ - Our VBS will be June 6-9, on the "journeys of Paul."
- ☒ - Baby Everett Nowlin, Erica's cousin, continues to make progress in CICU.
- ☒ - Kevin Simpson, Bob's son, has been diagnosed with an aneurysm.
- ☒ - We will have our monthly singing tonight.
- ☒ - Please remember the family of Scott Perkins in the loss of his father, Joe Perkins. The funeral will be Tuesday in Fayetteville, TN.
- ☒ - Heath Fowler's mother, Reba Patterson, remains in the hospital, but has made improvements and started PT.
- ☒ - Please remember the Hartsell family in the death of Huey Hartsell this week. The funeral was on Saturday.
- ☒ - Please remember the family of Chuck Hahn in the death of his niece Rebecca Davis in TX.

The Auburn Beacon



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

The "Market Driven" Approach and Cultural Influence

By Gary Kerr

Many preachers are discouraged. We live in an age of thirty-second sound bites and thirty minute TV programs. Modern advertising techniques have glamorized everything from drinking beer to mopping floors to cleaning toilets. How does this contribute to the discouragement of preachers? Simply stated, modern culture has put pressure on preachers to become super salesmen, and to market both themselves and the local church in a way that will appeal to the modern mind.

This cultural pressure is apparent in two ways. First, preachers receive criticism about preaching too long. The brethren say, "Make us feel good... and do it in thirty minutes!"

Second, preachers are pressured to make the local church appealing to the masses. Thus, we cannot condemn sin because that might offend people and drive them away. We cannot practice New Testament discipline, because that would make us appear unkind and unloving in the eyes of the community. We cannot preach topical lessons on doctrinal subjects because we do not want to appear legalistic in our approach. Brethren in many places have fallen in with the times. They demand that we "market" the church so that we can appeal to today's mind and "win more souls to Christ." In dealing with these problems, I will refer to a book entitled

I believe that problems such as the "market driven approach" are the direct result of cultural influences. We got these ideas from the world, not from God's Word. What is the solution? This may sound simplistic, but we must take a firm stand on the truth of God's Word and refuse to compromise.

Ashamed of the Gospel by John E. MacArthur, Jr. I recommend this book with some hesitation, because MacArthur is a Calvinist, and there is some Calvinism in the book. However, he is dealing with the same things that local churches of Christ are confronting. What is happening among our brethren is neither new nor unique with us.

The book deals with what MacArthur calls the "market approach to Christianity." This is the idea that a local church must organize, work and worship in such a way as to appeal to the surrounding community. One method that is currently popular is the survey method. Go door to door and take a survey in the community. Ask such questions

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Thoughts to Ponder

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers.

(2 Timothy 4:3)

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Sunday
Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM
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as, 'what do you want in a church?' Take the answers and make the church fulfill those wants. Brethren call this the "church growth movement."

George Barna has popularized this approach in many of his books. In recent years several magazines and papers published by brethren have advertised Barna's works. They have recommended one entitled "User Friendly Churches." Although some of Barna's material is interesting and helpful (his statistical tables, for example), he advocates a "market-driven church."

Many brethren have adopted the "market driven" philosophy. We say, for example, "If you preach longer than 30 minutes, you'll drive people away!" Or, "If you condemn specific sins or mention the denominations by name, you'll offend people and not convert them!" Brethren, whether we realize it or not, those attitudes are a pivotal part of the "market approach." We must alter our method of preaching, liven up our worship (cf., do away with the "old-fashioned" songs and replace them with modern ones that will appeal to the young people), and be careful to watch the clock to provide an atmosphere that will appeal to the community. The preacher becomes a salesman who must project a modern and appealing image to the community. Yes, brethren, in many places, we have succumbed to the allure of becoming "user friendly churches."

MacArthur (p.xi) quotes Charles H. Spurgeon to this effect: "Everywhere there is apathy. Nobody cares whether that which is preached is true or false. A sermon is a sermon whatever the subject; only, the shorter it is the better."

Although originally written over 100 years ago, doesn't that sound like the attitude in some local churches of Christ today?

MacArthur goes on to say (p.xii): "Bad doctrine is tolerable; a long sermon most certainly is not. The timing of the benediction is of far more concern to the average churchgoer than the content of the sermon. Sunday dinner and the feeding of our mouths takes precedence over Sunday school and the nourishment of our souls. Long windedness has become a greater sin than heresy." Many among us have adopted the "use whatever works" philosophy in the name of bringing people in and converting them. MacArthur says (p.xlii), "Traditional methodology most notably preaching is being discarded or downplayed in favor of newer means, such as

drama, dance, comedy, variety, sideshow histrionics, pop-psychology, and other entertainment forms. The new methods supposedly are more 'effective' that is, they draw a bigger crowd."

When we do things like building gymnasiums, we are trying to provide what people want in religion rather than standing for what the gospel says and teaches. He goes on to say (p.35): "There are thousands of supposedly evangelical churches worldwide that cannot stomach sound doctrine. They would not tolerate for two weeks strong biblical teaching that refutes their doctrinal error, confronts their sin, convicts them, and calls them to obey the truth." What MacArthur sets forth in this book, and what I recommend for your consideration, is that this attitude arises from the market church growth philosophy, not from adherence to the non-negotiable terms of the gospel. For example, he quotes statements that he has found in church bulletins (p.47): "There is no fire and brimstone here. No Bible thumping. Just practical, witty messages." And, "You won't hear people threatened with hell or referred to as sinners."

"The goal is to make them feel welcome, not drive them away." "He (talking about their preacher, GCK) doesn't even use the 'H' word. Call it Light Gospel. It has the same salvation as the Old Time Religion, but with a third less guilt." "The sermons are relevant, upbeat, and best of all, short."

Brethren, it would be naive to deny that we face some serious problems in local churches today. I believe that problems such as the "market driven approach" are the direct result of cultural influences. We got these ideas from the world, not from God's Word. What is the solution? This may sound simplistic, but we must take a firm stand on the truth of God's Word and refuse to compromise.

There are some things we may compromise without sacrificing any of the truth. We might change our service times to adapt to the needs of the community. On the other hand, there are some things we must not compromise for any reason. Our attitude must be, "This is the truth of God's Word, and we are going to stand for what we believe to be right and in harmony with that Word!"

In closing, I believe MacArthur expresses in a clear way the pressing need in many local "churches of Christ" in our day. "Fearless preaching is all the more necessary in such dangerous times. When people will not tolerate the truth, that's when courageous, outspoken preachers are most desperately needed to speak it." (p.35)



A Broken and Contrite Heart

By Bryan Gibson

A holy God cannot abide with sin, cannot dwell with those who are in sin, but He can abide with those who have sinned, but have a broken and contrite heart.

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart—these, O God, you will not despise" (Psalms 51:17). "The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit" (Psalms 34:18). It's a shame that something so highly valued by God is often not by man—for several reasons. When self-esteem becomes the "end all, be all," it's hard for anyone to actually mourn their sin. Guilt and shame—avoid those feelings at all cost. Add to all this the many excuses we make for sin, the less offensive labels we put on it, the all too popular mantra, "don't judge me," and you can see why a broken and contrite heart is too often replaced by hard and impenitent one (Romans 2:4-5). But exactly what is this "broken and contrite heart"?

A heart that hates sin, just like God does, a heart that understands both the nature and consequences of sin. "For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight" (Psalms 51:3-4). It's a heart that says to God, "I have rebelled against Your authority"; "I have betrayed Your love"; "I have denied the purpose for which You created me"; "I have brought dishonor to Your name." It's "godly sorrow," because first and foremost, it's an offense against God (2 Corinthians 7:9-11).

A heart crushed, or shattered to pieces by sin. "The LORD...saves the crushed in spirit" (Psalms 34:18, ESV). That's exactly what the Hebrew word *dakka* indicates—crushed, pulverized, "smashed to smithereens." Here's what a crushed spirit sounds like: "My life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away" (Psalms 31:10). "I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are full of inflammation, and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble

and severely broken; I groan because of the turmoil of my heart" (Psalms 38:6-8).

A heart, then, that wants to be mended, that wants to feel joy again, the joy that comes with forgiveness and restored fellowship to God. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities...

restore to me the joy of Your salvation...deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God...and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness" (Psalms 51:7-9, 12, 14).

A heart willing to repent, a heart that doesn't want to break God's heart again, a heart that desires to serve God more faithfully. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you" (Psalms 51:10-13, ESV). "For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation...what diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all these things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter" (2 Corinthians 7:10-11).

A holy God cannot abide with sin, cannot dwell with those who are in sin, but He can abide with those who have sinned, but have a broken and contrite heart. "For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isaiah 57:15). May God help us to have such a heart!

