

## **It's Time to Speak Up**

Harmony M.B.C., November 9, 2014

**Acts 5:17** Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,

**Acts 5:18** And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.

**Acts 5:19** But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,

**Acts 5:20** Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

**Acts 5:21** And when they heard *that*, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

**Acts 5:27** And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council: and the high priest asked them,

**Acts 5:28** Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

As we can tell by this account, the apostles found themselves in a threatening environment for preaching. The powers-that-be, and actually the law of the land was against them speaking out about the gospel of Christ. It wasn't like those hyper-religious Jews were against them teaching about religion...it was about the message they carried. If they had been teaching out of the law and the prophets that people were supposed to be faithful to the Jew's religion and all its regulations and statutes they would have been allowed to continue. But they were teaching about the first advent of the Messiah and were naming Him. In their teaching they were, of necessity, pointing out that the hyper-religious of the day had rejected and killed their Messiah. In other words, they were teaching that the Jewish community of the day had rejected the truth of God in favor of a twisted, legalistic, plainly erroneous interpretation of that truth. This is the thing that these religious leaders of the day could not stand.

In any generation, and in any culture which creates a man-made religion...like we have in America today (the so-called mainstream Christian religion in America today is man-made folks!) those religious practitioners who are out of step with the culturally acceptable religion are considered rebels and anti-socials...if not downright cultists. Naturally, then, they are going to run afoul of cultural expectations and sooner or later will be confronted by the law. And sooner or later, the authorities will say something like this to them, "Didn't we harshly order you not to say those things around here?"

Just now, in America, we have religious restrictions, coming from a number of social and special interest angles, that are being instituted and enforced. Just now, mainstream religion is being drafted into adopting and enforcing these restrictions. Here are some examples I am talking about, starting with some of the most recent:

- Example 1: Suddenly, the mayor of Houston, TX thinks that she has the right to order the area pastors to turn over their sermons and talks to her office for inspection to see if they are

speaking “hate speech.”

This act by this mayor has two elements of antichrist in it - one, it is an infringement on the prerogative and power of God, who ostensibly inspires and directs men of God to preach what they preach. Number two, it is a rebellion against the principles of God who teaches us that homosexuality is just another wickedness like murder, rape, robbery, etc., rather than it being a privilege that Christians must not only approve of, but accept without opposition.

An excerpt from “The Quiet Gay Rights Evolution” by the Atlantic, an online news and opinion source: “Polls show majorities of major Christian denominations -- including American Catholics, despite their church's staunch opposition -- support legal gay marriage. Leaders of some of the most conservative sects, like the Southern Baptists, have moved away from the vitriolic rhetoric of yesteryear and toward a more compassionate tone. Mormons march in gay-pride parades. A sitting Republican senator, a Methodist from the heartland state of Ohio, says the question was settled for him by "the Bible's overarching themes of love and compassion and my belief that we are all children of God." A new pope says, "If someone is gay and he searches for the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge?"

- Example 2: In another great example of how there is an effort to draft American religion into the twisted, or legalistic, or plainly erroneous misrepresentation of the truth of God, early this year, Democratic Sen. Ed Markey of Massachusetts introduced legislation calling for the government to investigate "hate speech" on broadcast, cable, and Internet outlets. This effort has been put forth because of people who have been telling the truth about Islamic violence and about Islamic doctrines, promoting violence. Another element which has brought this on is that some folks have stuck with the biblical perspective on homosexuality, speaking out against it. This movement has become worldwide and in every place it has been brought up it is linked to an effort by Muslims who are infiltrating and taking over nations in what I call “peaceful jihad.”

This movement has two elements of antichrist in it: one, it is a conspiracy by Muslims to suppress the truth about the true nature of Islam...that it is a false religion founded on violence and denying the divinity of Christ; and two, it is designed to open the door for Muslims to promote Islam as a religion. I need not remind you that the objective of Islam is to subdue and subjugate all religions on the planet to Islam and its totalitarian rule.

I have recently mentioned the rise of a profane religion called Chrislam that is supposed to be a blending of Islam and Christianity. This could be the direction we will see mainstream Christianity in America go.

- This excerpt from [www.allaboutreligion.org](http://www.allaboutreligion.org) in their article on the subject of Chrislam: “Chrislam is trying to focus on a connection between the Bible and the Koran. In the attempt to blend these two religions, Chrislam has itself become a new religion of sorts. Some churches have been joined by others in placing the Koran next to the Bible in the church pews. Then there is a reading from both text, both being recognized as Holy Text.”
- I have here a list of 71 “Christian” churches in the U.S. which have agreed to accommodate Chrislam and sponsor Chrislamic services.

- The antithesis of this is found in the Lord's charge to the Lord's disciples: "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life."
- Example 3: As early as 2000, cities and states around the country began to make laws that established "free speech buffer zones" around abortion clinics. This put all protesters at a given clinic within a confined area that might be called a free speech cage. At first glance, this kind of thing appears harmless and sensible. In fact, governments claimed they were doing this for reasons of public safety. But what was this really? It has at least two antichrist components to it: one, it provided a shield for women going into the clinic and prevented many of them from being told that they were going into the building to commit murder. Two, it provided a kind of special dispensation or privilege to murder clinics of the kind that God considers an abomination (that is when a nation or culture approves of and assists in the killing of its young).

Now, I gave you three examples of how the American people are being inducted into accepting things which are totally contrary to the spirit and truth of the gospel message. Of course, we all realize that when I say American people it must also include all those (Americans) who profess to be Christians. So, in essence, here is a trend to pervert Christianity and bring forth a lying religion that will be called Christian, but will be absent of any spiritual power or vigor because it will have been rejected by the Lord. And this is where I wanted to bring us before I read again the charge of the angel to the apostles: (v. 20) "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life."

I. First, let it be said that the words of this life that the angel is talking about are the only words that can save a people who are descending into, or have already descended into, a profane religion.

- The first thing I want to do with this thought is point out that the angel said "**all** the words of this life."
- Illustrate: say, "Folks,...parking...different...day."
- Did you understand the message I was trying to get across when I said this broken sentence? Undoubtedly not.
  - ▶ The whole sentence would have been, "Folks, out there in the parking lot are several different colors and types of cars that people drove to church today."
  - ▶ You certainly did not get that from the broken sentence. Now, let's just call that broken sentence a partial, incomplete gospel message and call the whole sentence the whole gospel message when compared to the first one.
  - ▶ This is the difference between a phony gospel message that hides most of the truth and a true gospel message that speaks all the words of this life.
  - ▶ Today, in America, we are hearing a lot of broken gospel messages. It is because American religion is being transformed by the antichrist movement that comes to us with many different kinds of faces. I have only given examples of three of those faces.
- I want to take those three faces now and see examine the need of the hour for America. We will do this by considering "all the words of this life" alongside the 3 pits of corruption that American "Christianity" has fallen into.

II. Now, referring back to my first example in which corrupting of Christian doctrine is occurring:

- Let's address the new morality that says a person can actively oppose God as a blatant sinner and yet still be in a saved condition. Now, let's illustrate this:
- I am a murderer. I go out every night and kill me a fresh victim. I come to church and say that I believe in Christ and want to be baptized and become a member and that afterward I will continue to go out every night and kill a new victim.
  - ▶ I am a thief. I go out once a week and break into houses around the neighborhood and steal expensive stuff which I sell on the black market to make money. I come to church and say that I am saved and want to be a member of the church and that afterward I will still go out once a week and stock up on somebody else's property which I will sell to make money.
  - ▶ I am a drunkard. I come to church and announce that I am saved and am serving the Lord although I get drunk every night and sometimes in the daytime also. I announce that I want to be a member of the church, and that after becoming a member I will continue to get drunk every night and sometimes in the daytime also.
  - ▶ In all three of these scenarios, let's ask the question, "Does that fit with the biblical description and profile of a born again believer?"
  - ▶ If your answer is "no" then I say that if someone comes declaring that they are saved but that they are a practicing homosexual, then they are in the same category with these I have named and their profile does not fit with the biblical narrative. But this is exactly what the pressure is all about, as culture and the law attempt to force us to adopt the idea that we must swallow a new definition of a saved person and accept that in this one instance a practicing sinner is in fact not a practicing sinner. All the words of this life that we have in Christ teaches differently.
  - ▶ **John 8:34** Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth (*continues to practice*) sin is the servant of sin.
- So, despite the modern day push to silence the truth of the gospel, we know that the words of this life which the apostles went forth with are words about the salvation of human creatures from the damnation and enslavement of depravity.
- This is an important part of the gospel message because it explains that the salvation of Christ really does free us not only from the penalty of sin but from the bondage of sin.
- Christ's sacrifice...his payment of the penalty for sin...was not for the purpose of leaving people in their sins, nor was it for the purpose of establishing a foundation of grace from which people could continue to be the same rebels against God that they had been before salvation found them. "Sin shall not have dominion over you" is the great declaration of God for saved people.
- This truth is corrupted in religion when religious doctrine teaches that a person can be a practicing sinner, without remorse or consequences, and without pangs of conscience, and keep practicing their sin and still be in favor with God. Today, our culture is inducting, even demanding that mainstream Christianity teach just that in regard to homosexuality, among other things.
- If we teach all the words of this life, we **MUST** teach that unrepentant sinners have no place in the kingdom of God, and we **MUST** teach that there is a list of behaviors and practices among humanity that God unequivocally calls sin. It's that simple!

II. Second, all the words of this life teach that Jesus Christ is **the** way, **the** truth, and **the** life, and that there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

- We are seeing social pressure, government pressure, and antichrist religious pressure upon the Christian religion today to adopt a doctrine that says, “There are a number of ways to be saved and a number of ways to serve God and go to heaven and a number of types of heaven, and a number of ways that are right ways. We all worship the same God.”
- The force of Islam on mainstream Christianity today is only a facet of this pressure...Satan’s most powerful tool just now.
- All the words of this life in Christ include words like this:
  - ▶ **(John 14:6)** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.
  - ▶ **John 8:24** I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.
  - ▶ **Acts 2:36** “God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”
  - ▶ **2Peter 2:1** But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

II. Third, I think some folks have a hard time tying in the suppression of free speech by proliferators with something that is relevant to all the words of this eternal life that our text is talking about.

- But, let’s see that there is a definite connection.
  - ▶ Let’s start by reminding ourselves that societies that have hardened themselves to the point that they have lost a conscience about killing their children are soon destroyed by the Lord. Listen what the Lord had to say about Israel and their practice of this: **Psalms 106:37-40** Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, **38** And shed innocent blood, *even* the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. **39** Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions. **40** Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.
  - ▶ But, let’s bring that closer to home. Let’s envision a society that calls itself Christian which approves of murdering unborn infants. Do you see that such a society has actually totally corrupted Christian doctrine by such thing?
  - ▶ Now, add in pro-life witnesses and the gospel message of Christ. The gospel message places sanctity on life and the pro-life activists continue to remind women who go into those clinics that they are doing violence to their own offspring, transgressing the law of God and doing violence to their own consciences.
  - ▶ These people **MUST** be silenced if this thing is to ever gain the national acceptance it needs to have to be universally embraced by the so-called Christian religion in America. So, without all the words of this life, there is no voice of conscience to act as a convicting force.

“Go, stand and speak...to the people **all the words of this life.**”