ON THE HOME FRONT

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Worship is so important to every Christian! In addition to the Psalmist David’s words that “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard” (Psa. 19:1-3), again he said, “Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light” (Psa. 148:1-3).

There has been great excitement over the recent occurrence of the “Eclipse” when the Moon passed between the earth and the sun. It was indeed a phenomenal happening! But sadly, there has been very little if anything said about the One True God Who created heaven and earth, the sun, moon, and stars, and Who made the eclipse to happen! Most of our world seems to deny God His rightful place and even refuse to believe that the Creator exists! Of course, the Bible calls these “fools” (Psa. 14:1), because they act contrary to right reasoning! Paul wrote to some who acted like this at Rome! He said, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools (Rom.1:18-22). Let all Christians continue to worship as God has desired of us (Jn. 4:23-24).
The works of the flesh are of the Devil, opposite and opposing to the life that should be lived. These “works” stand in distinction to the works of righteousness which the Christian is to perform in obedience, “which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them,” to be saved by God’s grace (Eph. 2:8-10; Rom. 1:16-17). Paul says “the works of the flesh are manifest,” or are open for all to see. Even the world knows that faithful Christians do not do these things. The works of the flesh do not refer entirely to sins of impurity, but also to sins of vain worship, sins against our fellowman, and sins against our person. Let us notice these:

1. SINS OF IMPURITY, adultery and fornication are sins of illicit sexual relations with one who is not our marriage partner (I Cor. 7:2). Many are living in this sin today. Also in the list is uncleanness, which is indecent and impure desires (Eph. 4:19). Lasciviousness is the sin of indecent bodily movement with no shame (I Pet. 4:3-4). Dancing falls into this category.

2. SINS OF VAIN WORSHIP, idolatry is placing anything or anyone before our devotion to God. It may be in the form of images which are reverenced, or our bank account, our job, or even our family (Matt. 6:24; 10:37; Col. 3:5). Witchcraft or sorcery are the pretenses of those who fascinate with their pretended powers, claiming they possess special miraculous gifts from God (Acts 8:9-24; 19:19).

3. SINS AGAINST OUR FELLOWMAN, such as hatred or deep-seated ill-will as Cain had toward Able when he rose up and killed him (Gen. 4; I Jn. 3:15). The sin of variance is the carrying out of our hate toward those about us (I Cor. 3:1-3). Then comes the sin of emulations or jealousy. It is envy at work as one resents that blessing and talents of another. Wrath is anger out of control. The Bible says we are to “be angry and sin not: let not the sun go down on your wrath” (Eph. 4:26). Let us be careful to control our anger that it does not ferment into wrath. Strife is another word for faction and describes a spirit of partisanship and division (Jas. 3:16; Gal. 5:15). Seditions and Heresies are the results of strife, which destroys unity (Psa. 33:1). Envyings and Murders go hand in hand! Envy caused the death of Jesus. The brothers of Joseph sold him into slavery because of envy (Gen. 31:4-5, 20-21; Acts 3:17).

4. SINS AGAINST OUR PERSON are seen clearly in drunkenness and condemned in every category of sin in the Bible (I Cor. 6:9-11). Revellings is another word for dancing which causes lust in those who participate. And such like includes other sins of like character.

Let us make up our mind to repent of sin so that we may go to Heaven!
It is generally my practice to avoid political matters in my article. I remember the Lord’s statement that his Kingdom is not of this world and that we as citizens of that Kingdom are pilgrims passing through this land. With all this said, I try to dwell on spiritual matters in my article. But, unfortunately, events in our society sometimes threaten our walk with our Lord and threaten our freedom to worship and live our faith in this country.

In 2015 Joe Kennedy, a football coach in Washington state, took a knee on the 50 yard line following the game, and offered a prayer to God. As punishment, the school district suspended him. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals just recently ruled the district was justified. The 9th circuit wrote: “When Kennedy kneeled and prayed on the 50 yard line, immediately after games where in view of students and parents, he spoke as a public employee, not as a private citizen, and his speech, therefore, was constitutionally unprotected.”

Now, I have no idea what coach Kennedy’s religious affiliation is, but the action of the school district and ruling by the court offends me on two levels: first as a Christian and second as a citizen of this country.

Some might say, upon hearing about coach Kennedy’s plight, that perhaps he is not a member of the Lord’s church, or he is a long way off in Washington state. Therefore, this court action doesn’t affect us. All New Testament Christians and people who value our freedom of religion and our freedom of speech need to be alarmed at this turn of events. The purpose of this article is to warn of apathetic viewpoint that ignores the history of our country.

Allow me first to quote a statement by Martin Niemoller titled “First They Came for the Jews”:

First they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for the Communists and I did not speak out because I was not a Communist.

Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak for me.

Many people, including the judges of the 9th Circuit and the school district exhibit ignorance about the U. S. Constitution and the history of our nation. First, they believe the myth that our Constitution puts forth and endorses “separation of church and state,” a phrase that is nowhere found in the Constitution. Yet, people erroneously quote this phrase as being in the Constitution.

Many in our land are also ignorant about our nation’s religious heritage and history. They forget about the first settlers, who came to these shores to avoid religious persecution. They choose not to remember that the majority of our founding fathers were men of faith and God fearing men. To correct revisionist history, they were not all deists. In George Washington’s farewell address, he stressed the importance of religion to our nation. John Adams, second President and signer of the Declaration of Independence, stressed the importance of morality and religion to our government. Space will not allow me to list numerous examples of American leaders throughout our history who valued God being a part of our national fabric.

I conclude this article with an observation by a historian concerning George Washington, the father of our country. The historian states that Washington prayed often publicly, and every time he prayed he took a knee. I have to wonder if the members of the school district and the judges of the circuit court had been alive during Washington’s time if they would have attempted to censure and suspend George Washington from office.