

The Bible Tells Me So

II Timothy 3:12-4:8

I want to say some forceful words in defense of the Bible. It has been deliberately squeezed out of our culture, bit by bit, so smoothly most people did not know it was happening. This is no accident. In our text today, Paul explains why. “People who live godly lives will suffer at the hands of those who hate Christ Jesus. In fact, evil men and false teachers will become worse and worse, deceiving many because they themselves have been deceived by Satan”. In another text, Paul asserts that there are principalities and powers battling for control of our minds and our allegiance.

He nailed it. In my own lifetime I have watched dramatic shifts in our culture. When I was a child, the public schools mandated Bible reading at the start of every day, with no exception. Today that same Bible is outlawed.....a total reversal. I find it odd that such a transformation could take place without bloodshed and violence. Somehow the principalities and powers prevailed, while people who revere the Bible simply kept silent and did nothing. I have watched our culture become more and more god-less with every decade. The process continues. Is this a good direction? Obviously many people would say “yes”. They are convinced that taking the Bible out of public life shows our culture to be more tolerant and intelligent than we were eighty years ago. I disagree.

Two centuries ago the Constitutional Convention was held in Philadelphia, with representatives from each of the thirteen colonies in attendance. After days of debate, there was simply no consensus about what should constitute the primary law of the land. They had almost decided to go back to their homes and form thirteen separate nations when Ben Franklin made this short speech. “I have lived a long time and the longer I live the more convincing proof I see that God governs in the affairs of mankind. If a sparrow cannot fall without his notice, is it probable that a nation can rise without his aid? Without God’s help we shall proceed no better than the builders of Babel”. An earnest prayer meeting followed and out of that came the United States Constitution which governs our nation to this day. Franklin saved the day and saved the nation. He was not known to be overtly religious, but even in his skepticism his reverence for God outshadows our pale public religion today.

Later one of America’s greatest scholars, Daniel Webster said, “If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering. If we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell what catastrophe will overcome us and bury our glory in profound obscurity.” If Webster is correct, then how can our people abide by the principles taught in the Bible if they never hear it read? I begin to wonder: Do the zealots who banish God and the Bible from our culture really want to destroy our nation? It is a question to ponder, and to answer intelligently.

Without question, the Bible has done more to bless our society with brotherhood, happiness, peace, liberty and justice than any other book, or all other books combined. Even the most cursory glance at our national history proves this truth to be self-evident. Between the pages of the Bible one can find glowing eloquence, noble sentiment, beautiful poetry and sturdy wisdom. One of the great writers in the eighteenth century declared, "If everything else in our language should perish, the English Bible alone would suffice to show the whole extent of its beauty and power." For more than a half century I have been made keenly aware of pitiable ignorance among our younger scholars. They have zero knowledge of the ancient Bible stories. This vacuum means they cannot possibly understand the works of Shakespeare and other giants who made countless references to scripture. Right there is one good reason for exposure to the Bible, and it has little to do with religion. It has to do with simply being informed and with gaining knowledge. No one can claim to be truly educated without some understanding of the Bible.

Jesus held the Bible in great respect. (His Bible was our Old Testament). He said more than once, "mankind shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." The Bible surely contains some words of God. It is the bread of life without which our spirits are undernourished. If your body is denied food long enough, it will weaken and shrink. Your soul will do the same without nourishment.

Some claim the Bible is difficult to understand. Yes, parts are admittedly obscure. But Mark Twain got it right when he said, "people are bothered by those passages of scripture they cannot understand, but I have always noticed the passages I do understand give me the most trouble."

The Psalms tell us that a man is blessed when he meditates on the law of God day and night. He is like a tree planted by the water, which brings forth fruit, and his leaves do not wither. Every responsible human being on planet earth wants to be a sturdy fruit-bearing tree. The Bible tells us how. To outlaw the proven wisdom found in the Bible strikes me as cultural suicide.

Listen to this moving tribute written by evangelist Billy Sunday as he takes a journey through the pages of the Bible: "I entered through the portico of Genesis and walked down the gallery where pictures of Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Isaiah, David and Solomon hung on the walls. I passed through the music room of the Psalms where every reed of the celestial organ responded to the tuneful harp of David. I entered the chamber of Ecclesiastes where the voice of the Preacher was heard. Next came the conservatory of Sharon where the lily of the valley spiced and perfumed my life. I entered the business office of the Proverbs, then into the observatory of the prophets where stood telescopes of various sizes, some pointing to far-off events but all concentrated upon the bright star which was to rise above the moonlit hills of Judea. I entered the audience room of the King of kings and passed into the correspondence rooms where sat Matthew, Mark, Luke and John writing their gospels. Beside them sat Paul, Peter and James penning their epistles.

Finally I stepped into the throne room of revelation. There sat our Lord in all his glory. Let us bring forth the royal diadem and crown him Lord of all.”

Throughout our beautiful country, people are asking how shall the young direct their way? What light shall be their perfect guide? With confident authority I assure you such direction is still available. It is found between the covers of millions of Bibles in our land. We need not grope in darkness. Our children need not grow up with parched souls. Yes, there are imperfections and contradictions in the Bible. But shining from its pages is more light and inspiration than any other source offered in human history. Read it to your children. Let them absorb the time-honored words. The Bible steers their feet into the way of happiness. This old book could be the secret for preserving our nation.

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