

RELIGION

Scripture of the Week

Romans 12: 9-13

St. Paul Baptist Church

presents
TRACEY CAREY



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Saturday, November 9, 1991 7:00pm
8101 N. Fiske Street
Rev. James C.E. Faulkner Pastor

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.
Romans 12: 9-13

There's only one way to come out ahead of the pack.

QUIT

American Heart Association
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Christian Preacher Is Unjustly Accused

BY MICHAEL LINDSEY
Dean of North Portland Bible College
the text for Sunday School lesson (International Series) for next Sunday is Acts 21:26-39. We encourage our readers to take their children to Sunday School this weekend make it a family affair!

Sometimes you just can't help it; no matter what you do, somebody is going to accuse you of being a hypocrite, or a sinner, or an undesirable person. For Paul, the Jewish apostle of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, such misunderstandings were almost normal. He was hauled before courts and riotous crowds in Philippi, Corinth, and Ephesus (at least), and went through all sorts of trials and suffering (2 Cor 11:24-27).

In this lesson Scripture, we would hope that the church of Jerusalem would understand Paul a little better. After all, this time Paul was leading a delegation from the various churches of the Aegean Sea area, and together they were bringing a sizable offering to relieve the suffering of the believers in Jerusalem. They did receive Paul and company gladly (Acts 21:17), and were particularly blessed with the reports of Gentiles coming to Jesus Christ in large numbers (v.20).

However, there was one report that really concerned the Jerusalem church. Jews were reporting that Paul was teaching the circumcise their own sons. In other words, Paul was made out to be a renegade, a destroyer of his own Jewish heritage, the worst kind of ungodly man. This is the same charge laid against Jewish Christians, or "Messianic Jews," to this day.

At the church's suggestion, Paul demonstrated his continued respect for Judaism by participating in a ceremony

in the Temple, involving a vow of purification for several Jewish "brothers." He was not making these religious rites a condition of salvation or fellowship; he was simply conforming to the Jewish way of honoring the Lord in worship.

So that's why Paul was in the Temple in Jerusalem when he was spotted by some Jews from Asia (v.27). They assumed that Paul had to be violating Jewish law, by bringing a Gentile named Trophimus into the Temple (v.29). That was an offense which brought an immediate death penalty--and even the Romans would not stand in the way of execution in a case of violation of the sacred place. The Jews from Asia hated Paul, and were quick to spread the worst possible slander about him. And before it was over, Paul was a prisoner, scarcely escaping death at the hands of a mob.

It is really not that unusual for a Christian to be misunderstood, and misrepresented, for the cause of Christ. The early church faced several false charges, and as a result mobs and political leaders across the Roman Empire martyred hundreds of Christians. Historians tell us Christians were accused of immorality, of cannibalism, and of atheism! They were called immoral, because they were secretive about their meetings, and greeted one another "with a holy kiss." They were accused of cannibalism, because in their secret ceremonies they said they ate someone's body and drank his blood. They "had" to be atheists, for they did not worship gods you could see--and worse yet, they wouldn't worship the emperor, even as a symbol of loyalty to the Empire.

Do you see how our ethic of love, our Lord's Supper, and our faith in the

unseen Creator could be misunderstood--or even perverted on purpose? Throughout church history, Christians have been attacked unfairly. One only needs to read the Quran's statements about the Christian church to understand how millions of Moslems have come to reject our faith without examining the New Testament for themselves.

Today, Christians are characterized as narrow-minded bigots (we believe there's only one way to a personal relationship with God). We're called unscientific fools (for believing there is more to life than what people can measure and study). We're told that Christians don't deal with reality (we believe in helping people even when there's nothing in it for us). The persecution hasn't yet come to beatings and prison, but we don't know when it might. And meanwhile, our Christians brothers and sisters in other lands are facing persecution, deprivation and even death because of their public stand for their Lord.

If any of my readers are not convinced of the validity of faith in Jesus Christ, I urge you to read the Bible for yourself, and judge its contents carefully, with an open mind. I think you'll find the common misunderstanding of Christianity will simply slip away.

For us who are disciples of Jesus, Paul's example gives us clear direction. We must not lose heart when we are unfairly accused of wrongdoing. God is our Judge, and he is also our Defender. How can we do better than that? And we don't need to lower ourselves to deception, or name-calling, to attack the unbelievers' views. Our calm confidence in Christ is often our best defense.

For further reading, I suggest: Church History in Plain Language, by Bruce L. Shelley (Dallas: Word, 1982).

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10:30 A.M. and 6:30 P.M.

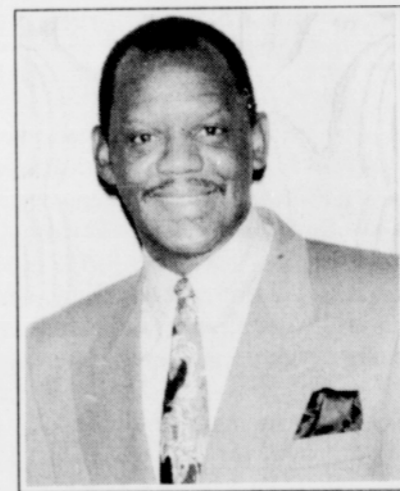
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SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Bible Study

9:30 am.

Morning Worship

10:45 am.

Men's Training Leadership

Women's Bible Class

5:00 pm.

Evening Worship

6:00 pm.

Attended nursery for all

services

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and bible study

7:30 pm.

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Church Phone: 289-0147

Study Phone: 289-1911

Sunday Service

10:45

Sunday School

9:30

Bible Study

6:00

Evening Service

7:00 P.M.



Pastor, Rev. James C.E. Faulkner

Theme: Whatever you're going to do for the Lord, do it now

I Peter 4:11