

WD July 22, 2024

“Written On Our Hearts”

Last Saturday, July 13<sup>th</sup> a terrible thing happened with the attempted assassination of former President Trump. The country has reacted with relief for President Trump and to horror over security and especially over the death of one husband and father who simply attended the rally, sitting in the stands with his family behind the Former President.

The reaction, however, that I would like to underscore today is the response put out by Ken Ham from Answers in Genesis. I was sent a link that I have included here. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wmO8q4svuak> Knut, thanks for sending it to me. Ham asks simply how do we know that this was a terrible act? How do we know that this act of violence is, in the words of President Biden, “Unacceptable?” Evolution after all teaches, “a survival of the fittest.” Who then gets to decide who is fittest or what evil looks like? Ham points out that in his visit with Bill Nye at the Ark Encounter, that Nye says good and evil are decided by “the will of the tribe.” It’s subjective and therefore, interpretative. We know that doesn’t work. Judges often says, “the people did what was right in their own eyes.” That only got the Israelites into lots of trouble. It doesn’t work. As Christians this not consistent with the scriptures on what good and evil looks like and who gets to determine good and evil and what to do about good and evil. At one time George Washington was a hero of the revolution. To the English he was an insurrectionist. Right now, we are calling an attempted assassination evil and wrong but how do we know this?

Romans 2:12-16 gives us the answer. <sup>12</sup> All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. <sup>13</sup> For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. <sup>14</sup> (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. <sup>15</sup> They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.) <sup>16</sup> This will take place on the day when God judges people’s secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

Two things; first no one who hears the Law is righteous. There are absolutes. God is absolute. His Law is absolute. Jesus’ death is also absolute. The last one is huge because it means our salvation in Jesus is absolute. However, with these absolutes one must obey the Law for righteousness, not merely know the Law. This is not a salvation by works thing. It is a “by their fruits” they display their faith thing. Romans 2 convicts too many Christians who only hear the Law but then do not obey it. For example, Christians know they are to Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy but don’t go to worship.

Disobedience of the Lord’s will in the eyes of the Lord is called evil. In 1 Samuel 15 Saul becomes the poster child of disobedience for not obeying the Lord. In verse 22-23 Samuel equates disobedience to the evils of divination and arrogance to idolatry. Between Romans 2 and 1 Samuel 15 it is important to be honest about ourselves and with the Lord and realize that we should do better than we do and not simply know better. One doesn’t have to know a lot. One simple is called to do what they know is right in the Lord.

Back to our point on this. What is good or evil is not for us to decide. It is God alone through His Law that has determined right and wrong. This is an absolute. He has also defined righteousness as doing His will over our own. Jesus, routinely expressed being about the Father’s will in his public ministry. Jesus was the strongest defender of the Father’s will in the Garden of Gethsemane for example. Our call in Philippians 2 is to be as humble as Jesus who was obedient even unto the cross.

The second part of this is closely connected to what we have already said. The Law is written even on the hearts of the Gentiles or the unbeliever. The Law is known at some level even to the unsaved. How else would it be said by secularists that we cannot tolerate violence of any kind. On the conscience of many there is still a knowledge that violence is at least a negative thing and should not be tolerated.

Let’s go a bit further then. How about hatred? There is a lot of talk about hatred toward this group or that group. Hatred is a political weapon these days. For at least one twenty year old man there was enough hatred in his heart to act with careful planning and determination to attempt an assassination of Trump. Hatred has as its logical end such a goal. Jesus Himself in Matthew 5 teaches that if we are angry or worse, hate our

brother in our hearts we are in fact a murderer and subject to judgement. It is not a healthy thing to harbor bitterness toward others. At its least it results in belittling someone with our words and at its worst it seeks harm. Hatred is never positive and is in fact evil.

Jesus was abused worse than any other. If anyone had a reason to harbor anger toward others it was Him. But His words were, "Father forgive them" and "Today you will be with me in paradise." What was written on Jesus' heart was a love for humanity expressed in His sacrifice on the cross. There are plenty of evil things in our world to be disgusted with. That doesn't mean we have to let that disgust become a houseguest in our hearts. It is also important that our conscience remains free of those lingering things that can sour our spirit toward others, even someone we deem politically unfavorable.

Let me conclude with something we should be doing that I hope we can all agree on. Please pray for the candidates. Pray for safety for the Trumps and the Bidens. Pray for our election process to be fair and safe as well.

Pray for our government that a wave of repentance might return us to the absolutes of God's Word. Pray that we as a country move from a Romans 1 nation to a Romans 8 nation. Pray for hearts and minds to turn to the Lord more fully. Lord knows personal ambitions have spoiled our country and moved us far from the Lord. Let us check our own selves carefully before the Lord as well. I would even suggest a prayer for how we may feel toward one or the other candidate so that our own attitudes may be godly. Neither candidate for president is a saint. God in His judgement can handle both just fine without any of us. Our job is to keep our attitudes godly toward each of them.

Please pray for the health of the candidates. President Biden is clearly struggling with something big and life altering. If he were merely a member of our congregation, he would probably be on our prayer list.

Pray finally that God's absolute will would be accomplished for the good of our nation and for His people who live here. And may the Absolute Gospel of Jesus be our ultimate answer above our politics.

Pastor Matt Woods  
John 3:30