



Men of Valor

#9

-----Stories from the Field-----

There is a Gathering Storm over religious liberty. Religious freedom, freedom of speech and freedom of the press are all being threatened. A new regime of invented rights threaten to replace the rights that are clearly enumerated within the text of the Constitution. The most basic liberties enshrined in our Constitution are being confused, contorted and sometimes even condemned!

There is a continual effort to coerce Christians to surrender to the new regime of sexual rules, gender, identify, intersectionality and identify politics. **Liberty and self-government are based upon the affirmation of human dignity and human rights that only make sense within and can only be sustained by a Christian worldview.** Religious liberty is the first freedom upon which every other liberty depends. Once dignity is grounded in something other than the Divine creator, human dignity withers to whatever dignity humanity can grant itself!

Religious liberty is now described as religious privilege – which is not a right!! Religious Liberty represents hypocrisy, as long as it remains code words for discrimination, intolerance, racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia, Christian supremacy or any form of intolerance. We are now witnessing a great and inevitable collision between religious liberty and newly declared and invented sexual liberties as exemplified in the Obergefell case – legalization of same sex marriages.

Religious liberty simply evaporates as a fundamental right grounded in the US Constitution and recedes into the background in the wake of what is now the higher social commitment- sexual freedom. The Equality Act (passed by the house) amends the 1964 civil rights Act by including sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes. **In short, the Act explicitly codifies the Christian world view as hatred, bigotry and is no longer valid as seen by the American legal system.**

There is an interdependence of liberties. So Religious freedom risk pulls with it freedoms of speech and press. Religious liberty is based on God, Truth and Liberty. **God-** there can be no sustained defense of religious liberty without the intellectual respect and belief in God and cultural respect for religious devotion. **Truth-** truths get replaced with “rights,” whereby politics collapses into an endless success of battles over contested rights! **Liberty** – the proper function of government is “to secure these rights,” not invent them or create them or even discover them!

Our founders claimed an authority higher than themselves and natural rights and liberties that were pre-political, pre-constitutional, and pre-governmental. **The first Amendment:** *Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances – it will not save us, but it now falls to us to save the first amendment!!*

Talk about it:

Question for contemplation and discussion: What did God enlighten to you in the text?

KNOW | What does God want us to know

Romans 13:4

For the one in authority is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no

reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

- **Self-government is predicated on unalienable rights.** Romans gives us a clearer picture of the God-ordained role of government: **to punish evil deeds, reward good deeds, and render justice.** *Enforcing a particular system of worship is not among them. Only governments rooted in Judeo-Christian values allow such broad freedom.*
- **First - God Himself extends a “freedom of religion” to people.** In [Matthew 19:16-23](#), the rich young ruler “went away sorrowful,” choosing not to follow Christ. The salient point here is that Jesus let him go. God does not “force” belief in Him. Faith is commanded but never coerced.
- **Second - Part of God’s likeness is man’s volition, i.e., man has the ability to choose.** If God allows us to choose, we should allow others to choose.
- **Third- the freedom of religion acknowledges that it is the Holy Spirit who changes hearts, not the government** ([John 6:63](#)). Only Jesus saves. To take away the freedom of religion is to empower human government, with its fallible rulers, to determine the eternal destiny of every soul.
- **Fourth - the freedom of religion concedes that, in the final analysis, it’s not about religion; it’s about a relationship.** God does not desire an external form of worship but a personal relationship with His children ([Matthew 15:7-8](#)).
- The framers of the Constitution were God-fearing men making a sincere attempt to establish a new nation on biblical principles, including equity, justice, and liberty. One of the liberties they recognized as “inalienable and sacred” was the freedom of religion. Praise the Lord for such wisdom. (GQ)

Biblical Principle: *No amount of government control can produce a personal relationship HUA*

?Question: How do you see the government overreaching its biblical mandate?

BE | How does God want us to become more like Him?

Revelation 2:4-5

But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.

- **Men have forgotten God!** He tells us to do three things that are important when recapturing our relationship: remember, repent, and return.
- **Remember** the glory that you saw and the Savior that you sang to when you were filled with “joy unspeakable.” Remember the time you invested in eternity when you met with other believers (founding fathers) to worship him.
- **Repent** from the conviction that comes from realizing where you once stood. Go (as a nation) to your Savior in the blood of his Son and cry out for mercy, confessing your coldness to him and asking him for grace. Repent to your God for not loving him as he deserves. He stands ready to forgive and restore. Your High Priest will sympathize with you, therefore, “Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” ([Hebrews 4:16, KJV](#)).
- **Return-** He calls us back to that fresh fire of love towards him and neighbor. It is a call to action. It is a call to return to the habits of grace. It is a command to keep ourselves in the love of God ([Jude 21](#)). You can choose to change how you think and act. But, Love isn’t a feeling, but it creates feelings — sometimes enormous feelings. **But love is a choice. It’s a commitment to put someone else’s best interest over your own (inalienable rights over social rights). Anything other than that isn’t love. God couldn’t command it if it were a feeling.** When we lose the seriousness of our sin (abandoning God’s truths), we lose the thrill of our forgiveness! We have knowledge without passion – both are necessary to if we are to keep our love for God intense.

Biblical Principle: Work for God must be motivated by our love for God or it will not last. HUA

?Question: What does God want you to understand and apply to today's culture?

DO | What are you going to do about it?

Psalm 33:12

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord".

- **Our founders claimed an authority higher than themselves and natural rights and liberties that were pre-political, pre-constitutional, and pre-governmental** The endgame of removing the Bible from education and politics is to return us to a time when nations believed that individual rights were granted by kings or the government.
- This was the belief and practice in most of the world until ideas described as "Classical Liberalism" were developed in England and led to the restriction of the absolute powers of the king. ***This 17th century movement whose principle ideas were limited government, individual rights, private property and a free market system was the source for many ideas that were enshrined in the American Declaration of Independence and later on in the U.S. Constitution.*** Simple ideas that revolutionized the world at that time by unleashing the power of individual liberty and opportunity for which the United States became famous, or as some say, exceptional. In other words, the U.S. is exceptional because it is based on these ideas, not on culture. As Thomas Paine observed, "The cause of America is in great measure the cause of all mankind."
- The danger we face as a nation is that there are forces at work in our country that would eliminate the connection between the Living God and the U.S. Citizen. **If people can be convinced that there is no God and the Bible is not His word, it is a short step to usurping His role as giver and guarantor of human rights and freedoms and assigning this role back to the elites who gather and wield power in the form of governments or worse.** Take a quick look at what the world was like under this system in the past and see how precious the freedoms are we now have.

Biblical Principle: The work of the church is to maintain belief in God and Christ not only for salvation's sake but also to support our survival as a free nation. (Bible Talk TV) HUA

?Question: What does a nation under God's judgement vs blessing look like?

Application: Debate – take notes on Christian WV vs WV!