

Light and Life

The Tough Texts

Many accounts in the Bible would be considered R-rated by today's standards. Lot's experience in Sodom and his relationship with his daughters (Gn. 19), the murder of the Levite's concubine (Jdg. 19), and the drama between Amnon, Tamar, and Absalom (II Sam. 13) are gruesome and horrific stories full of sex and violence. If they were movies, we probably wouldn't go!

But God included those 'tough texts' for a reason! If everyone followed the will of God, there would be no need for such horrible stories in our inspired literature. We aren't supposed to feel comfortable reading these texts! We should be indignant, angry, repulsed, and sorrowful when we read of the horrible deeds of the ancients. And then we should realize that this is how God feels about all sin – including our sin today! (Gn. 6:5-6; Lv. 20:23; Ps. 5:4-5; 7:11; 11:5; Pr. 6:16-19; 15:9; Is. 59:1-3; Rm. 1:18-2:1; 6:23; Col. 3:5-6; II Th. 1:8-9; Rev. 2:6; 3:16)!

The temptation is for us to shy away from texts like these that make us uncomfortable. Rather, we should lean into the discomfort of these texts in order to better understand how God feels about sin! As we grow and attempt to become more "holy like God is holy", then we will begin to feel the same way about sin as God does – and become more righteous in our conduct (I Pe. 1:13-16).

When we are hesitant to study these 'tough texts', we should consider Samuel. He was still a boy when he received his first prophecy – that Eli, Hophni, and Phineas would be killed for their sin (I Sam. 3)! As an adolescent, God expected Samuel to be the herald of a gruesome message!

May we pursue the maturity and discipline to examine the "whole counsel of God" (Ac. 20:27) – even the 'tough texts'!

- Sam Bunyard

Another Perspective

Absalom's Modus Operandi

"When any man had a case to come to the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say... 'See, your words are good and right, but no man listens to you on the part of the king'" (2 Sa 15:1-6). This was the method employed by Absalom to groom the hearts of Israel to rebel against David. Note:

1) Absalom was grooming attitudes for an eventual outcome that those being influenced were too naive to perceive... Beware when a person can't just simply affirm Scripture, but rather their more enlightened perspective. Implications in teaching are a critical aspect of the teaching itself...

2) Absalom groomed attitudes by unfairly characterizing his brethren. You may read about those 'legalistic pharisees who think they're saved by getting everything right'. Who are those brethren? ...Broad, negative generalizations of brethren should be deeply alarming. This kind of poisonous rhetoric is often accepted unquestionably and accompanied by thunderous applause.

3) Absalom turned intimate problems into national problems. I'm sure most of those coming to the king were just dealing with private matters, but Absalom got them thinking bigger. "Don't you know what the problem with 'our tradition' is?" Beware those who constantly talk big when the emphasis of Scripture is to think local...

4) Absalom makes himself seem more noble and compassionate by criticizing others. He seemed more committed to unity than David. But were Absalom's words true? Wouldn't administering God's Law demand that many would leave 'the gate' frustrated or embittered? When you came to the king for judgment, you were no longer dealing with generalizations, but with specifics... Beware those who imply that the particulars of sound doctrine are a deterrent to unity rather than a vital part of it.

- Bryant Bailles (edited for space)

ASSEMBLY TIMES

Sunday

Morning Bible Class 9:30
Morning Assembly 10:30
Evening Assembly 5:00

Wednesday

Evening Bible Class 6:30

Downtown Church of Christ

P.O. Box 447
201 W. Chestnut Street
Rogers, AR 72757
479-636-3575
www.downtowncoc.net



Emotions can override any level of intelligence.

ELDERS:

Otis Hardin
Perry Johnson
Ken Parker
Alan Revier
GW Walsh

DEACONS:

TJ Burleson
Scott Hale
Jason Hill
Chris Johnson
Brock McKeel
Randy Potter
Tim Roberts
Randy Shell

“All the churches of
Christ greet you.”

Romans 16:16

FAMILY NEWS

PRAYER LIST –

Preachers we support: Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Canada, Mexico, Peru, & U.S.

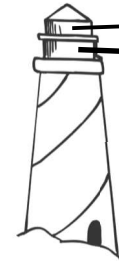
Sick: KFletcher, Swims, JMarshall, RStarr, MiBader

Shut-ins: Billie Pennington, Shirley Cole, Susan Wiese, Virgil Carter, ADosier

Military: Kyler Sullins, Sean Potter

CLASSES – In addition to our regular classes on Sundays & Wednesdays, we have other classes available during the week. Ask an elder or preacher.

SENTENCE SERMON – Do not seek to be understood until you first seek to understand (see Pr 18:13).



DOWNTOWN GOSPEL BEACON

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY THE DOWNTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST
ROGERS, ARKANSAS

August 18, 2024

Foundations of Unity

Unity in the religious world seems an impossible aspiration. And as long as people are driven by motives of the world (selfish preferences, pride, etc.), it **will** be impossible.

No real unity can be achieved without a commitment to God's Word. The prayer of Jesus (Jn 17) makes that abundantly clear: “they have kept your word” v6, “I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them” v8, “I have given them your word, and the world has hated them” v14, “I do not ask for these only, but for those also who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one” v21. This is where unity begins.

But unity in a local church requires more than a commitment to the truth of God's word. Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (4: 2-3). **Attitudes matter, too!**

We may confidently proclaim our loyalty to God and His word, but if our mindset towards one another is anything less than loving and patient and humble and gentle – well, you can kiss unity goodbye. This takes a dedicated effort from **every member** at Downtown – no slackers allowed!
- *WKing*