

Friendly Fire

Military spokesmen and the news media seem to use a variety of phrases in an attempt to sanitize some of the unpleasant aspects of war. From time to time, we hear reports of troops being wounded or killed by “friendly fire.” That somehow sounds better than having to report that the damage was done by one of our own bullets, missiles, bombs, etc.

Sometimes, the evidence indicates that the fire was not so friendly. At times, some apparently take advantage of the confusion caused by the intensity of a particular battle to settle some personal grudge with a fellow soldier (maybe a superior officer).

I have wondered at times how often “friendly fire” damages the Lord’s army. Could it possibly be that some of our wounds and casualties come from our own ranks?

We know that Paul had to deal with “...perils among false brethren” (2 Cor. 11:26). He also warned that: “...if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another” (Gal. 5:15).

Sadly, it seems that some have neither learned from Paul’s experience, nor heeded his warning. Some in the Lord’s army seem more intent on fighting a brother or sister, discrediting them, spreading gossip about them, and/or ignoring them than they are on waging war against our real enemy.

“Friendly fire” among us may cause the loss of two souls. The one “fired at” may be so wounded that he or she never recovers. The one who does the “firing” is most certainly damaged beyond measure until and unless he or she repents.

Jim Faughn, elder & preacher for the Central Church of Christ, Paducah KY. www.centralchurchofchrist.org

Sermon Titles

Sunday Morning: “A Sin Problem” Roman 7:15-25

Sunday Evening: “Let There Be No Doubt” II Peter 1:16-21

Leadership

Elders Hayward Blanton, Jerry Casey

Deacons Clint Smith Sr, Clint Smith Jr,
Robby Stocksdale, Joe Sweeney

Pulpit Minister Eric Welch

Associate Minister Irvin F. Williams

Panama Missions

Evans Campbell

Pablo Sanchez

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Those Privileged to Serve

AM Service

Song Leader Michael Hawkins

Opening Prayer Leon Stocksdale

Scripture Nathaniel Welch

Sermon Eric Welch

Lord’s Supper

Message Irvin Williams

Attendant Art Patrick

Attendant Jerry Montgomery

Closing Prayer Hayward Blanton

PM Service

Song Leader Matt Johnson

Bible Reading Jerry Casey

Selection 44

Prayer Rick Martin

Sermon Eric Welch

Closing Prayer John Keaton

If you are unable to serve,

Call Art Patrick 502-819-9481

Or Harold Tincher 288-5956

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Class 10:00 AM

Morning Worship 11:00 AM

Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 PM

AM & PM Services

Announcements Clint Smith Jr

Lord’s Supper Kevin Blalock

Offering Joe Sweeney

Usher Brandon Montgomery

Count Offering Harold Tincher

Assist Count Marc Owens

Last Sunday

Contribution Attendance

\$2386 76



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“The Proper Order”

And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites: for Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab. He said to them, “You are the heads of the fathers’ houses of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, you and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel to the place I have prepared for it. For because you did not do it the first time, the Lord our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him about the proper order” (1 Chronicles 15:11-13).

Nearly every Bible student knows the story of Uzzah, the man whom God killed for touching the ark. What is most unfortunate, however, is the fact that almost nobody knows the significance of this story. Why did it happen? Why was it recorded? Why has it been preserved for 3,000 years for us to read? Paul says that such things were “written for our learning” (Romans 15:4) and “for our admonition” (1 Corinthians 10:11). What is the lesson that God intended for us to learn from the day that a man died in His presence?

First of all, it is apparent that the Israelites who participated in this event had learned nothing from the ark’s history. The ark had been removed from Shiloh by the wicked sons of Eli, who lost it in a devastating battle with the Philistines. A few months later the ark was seen driving itself back into Israelite territory on a new cart built by the Philistines. While initially it had seemed that God had been unable to defend his people, the opposite was proved when God afflicted the Philistines without the people’s aid. When the ark arrived in Bethshemesh, several men lost their lives for handling it improperly (1 Samuel 6:19). Although the uncircumcised Philistines learned from Israel’s history (1 Samuel 4:8; 6:6), Israel herself failed to do so.

David and his men were treating the ark - the symbol of God’s presence among them - like a common piece of furniture. This is the definition of profanity. At first David failed to understand why God was so upset, and he wondered, “How can the ark of the Lord come to me?” (2 Samuel 6:9)? The answer to David’s inquiry could only come from one source—the Scriptures. God had given detailed instructions regarding how the ark was to be moved (Numbers 4), and those requirements had not changed. David finally realized the reason for God’s displeasure: “we did not consult Him about the proper order” (1 Chronicles 15:13).

Today millions seek to serve God their own way. God’s proper order has been abandoned, and worshipers are copying the common practices of the entertainment industry just as Israel tried to copy the Philistines’ method of moving the ark. When we approach God, we need to realize how serious that is, and we must seek Him after the proper order.

Roby Ellis Elizabethton church of Christ Elizabethton, TN elizabethtoncoc.org

Possible People

Eric Welch

While awaiting execution in a Roman prison, Paul wrote his final letter, 2 Timothy, to his coworker Timothy. He wrote to encourage him to carry on the work of an evangelist and to share in any suffering that gospel might bring.

Added to Paul's suffering while in prison were brethren who tried to undermine his ministry. He mentioned four by name: Phygelus and Hermogenes (1:15), Demas (2 Timothy 4:10) and Alexander the coppersmith (14-15). They abandoned him in his time of need and harmed him. Paul warned Timothy about these kinds of people. Suffering for the gospel can come even at the hands of the very people we love. No matter what is said or done, these "impossible" people will oppose the Lord's efforts at every turn. They criticize, complain and slander but lift not one finger to help. How shameful!

However, Paul focused his time and energy on "possible" people. Prison life was difficult and humiliating. The Roman state provided no comfort for the prisoner. No clothes, no cable, no counseling, not even food (cf. Philippians 4:10-14). However, men like Onesiphorus were not ashamed to help a "convict" (v. 16). He was a man who made things happen. He made life easier for Paul by refreshing him with material needs and friendship. Timothy too was a true friend. Paul wanted him to come to him as quickly as he could (2 Timothy 4:9). In the end, the Lord was the only one who stood by Paul as he faced execution (4:17). Paul surrounded himself with "possible" people.

It is tempting to dwell on the negatives that make church life difficult. Instead, seek out possible people who encourage you and lend an ear when things get tough. Pray together and help each other grow. Are you one of the Lord's "possible" people?

Two Opinions

So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word (1 Kings 18:20-21).

There are many valuable lessons to be learned from Elijah's encounter with Ahab and the prophets of Baal. We learn that the majority is not always right, that leadership is not always right, and that two different opinions cannot both be correct at the same time. The law of the excluded middle states that a precisely stated proposition cannot be both true and false at the same time under the same conditions. Consider this proposition: "If you have sinned, you must be baptized to be saved." This proposition cannot be both true and false. If someone says it is true and another says that it is false, one person is right, and the other is wrong. God provides the only way to conclude with certainty which opinion is the correct one.

Modern thinking is causing serious difficulty in converting people to the truth. People once were shocked when they saw the Bible's teaching of the necessity of baptism, but now people don't seem bothered when they see that their own opinions differ with Bible truth. When we share the truth about baptism, it is often perceived as our personal opinion which is no better or worse than anyone else's.

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Elijah believed that only one "opinion" was correct, and he was not afraid to hurt someone's feelings to get this point across. Elijah first made an agreement on the test that would be used to settle this conflict (vss. 23-24). He allowed the prophets of Baal to go first and stood by for hours as they made a spectacle of themselves before the people (vss. 25-26). He criticized them before the people and then called upon the true God, who settled the matter with an answer of heavenly fire (vss. 27-39). If we are honest enough to do it, we can find the right opinion by applying the same method today: let God identify which one is correct through His Word.

Whether the question is regarding salvation, worship, or the church, the only opinion that should carry any weight is the one that heaven supports. When Israel realized which opinion was correct, they didn't choose to keep Baal's prophets around for a second opinion when they wanted one—they destroyed these lying prophets altogether! Once we know which opinion heaven supports, there is no need for a second opinion.

Roby Ellis Elizabethton church of Christ Elizabethton, TN elizabethtoncoc.org

Prayer Requests

Prayer List: MARTIN BONNEY, Larry Coulter (Lou Ann), JAYNE CRAVENS, Jerry Crick (Ann), Esther Davis (Marian), JANICE DIMMITT, MYRNA DIMMITT, PATTY DIMMITT, MILDRED ELLIOTT, Zachary Ferguson, Elma Fielder (Marian), Lillian Foster, Diana Fulks, (Norma), FRANK HARRIS, Pricilla Hudkins, ALLENE HUSTON, Elise Jackson (Christine), Alice Jenkins (Ann), Charles & Marlyn Jenkins (Ann), Arletha Kenty (Nathan), Josephine King (Polly), MERLE & JOYCE KNUCKLES, FRANCES LAWTON, SUE LINNE & Rhea, Shelly Marshall, POLLY MCCLINTOCK, JERRY & SARA MONROE, JERRY & SONJA MONTGOMERY, CAROL MOUSTY, Jerrie Phillips, CHRISTINE RHOTON, Cindy Roeder (Christine), Wendell & Betty Smith (Polly), Lynn Sullivan (Ann), THERESA TEMPLE, ALICE TINCHER (Hank & Cassie), CASSIE TINCHER, FERN TINCHER, Lynn Tincher (Fern), Kedza Turner (Jean), Fulton Wilson (Ann)

Military Service: Stephen Blanton, Cody Felker, Scott Viers, Zach West

Hamburg Pike Happenings

The Elizabethtown church of Christ is hosting a youth rally August 15th and 16th.

A Fellowship meal is scheduled for Sunday August 10th after the morning worship. There is a sign-up sheet in the foyer, see Clint Jr. for details.

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