

What Happened to Faith-Based Expressions?

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- "In our sensible zeal to keep religion from dominating our politics, we have created a political and legal culture that presses the religiously faithful to be other than themselves, to act publicly, and sometimes privately as well, as though their faith does not matter to them." (*Stephen L. Carter, Cromwell Professor of Law, Yale University*)

What Happened to Faith-Based Expressions?

- "If we do not recover the language and practice of Christianity, if we do not discover that the kingdom of heaven is our only true home, the place that defines our most essential humanity, then not only can we not contribute to a genuine pluralism, but we will be lost in the wilderness of decayed traditions. Our greatest contribution is to try to be who we are." *(Robert N. Bellah, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, University of California, Berkeley)*

What Happened to Faith-Based Expressions?

- Dallas Willard, PhD, C. S. Lewis Foundation Faculty Forum on the effects of restricting faith based expressions in education forums:
 - The university is denied access to one of the primary intellectual traditions that contributed to its own development.
 - The selective definition of pluralism promotes the expression of all but religiously informed points of view, thus compromising the university's claim to serve as a genuine marketplace of ideas.
 - The equation of religion with "indoctrination" and secularism with "education" evidences a double standard
 - Students are denied access to an education that prepares them to function effectively in a diverse society

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- The first twenty-two words of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution contain three clauses-- the Establishment Clause, the Free Exercise Clause, and the Free Speech Clause: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech.” The First Amendment has been interpreted to apply not only to Congress but also, via the Fourteenth Amendment, to States and their political subdivisions, including public schools; and the word “law” has been interpreted to include not only formal laws, but also government policies and practices.

What Happened to Faith-Based Expressions?

- But it is a waste of time to preach a sermon about the government restricting our use of faith based expressions in the public forum, when most Christians are already too embarrassed to use them anyway!
- This isn't sermon lamenting government taking away our right to freedom of expression of faith; this is about you voluntarily giving it up by not using faith based expressions in your daily life

Are We Ashamed Of The Gospel?

- “Before feeling outraged by the assaults on religious liberty and becoming somewhat self-righteous, consider... you have the freedom to pick up your own Bible and read and study it as often and as much as you like in your home. To what extent are you exercising that liberty? Here is another irony: some of those who most loudly protest restrictions on public prayer and public Bible study, pray and study very little at home in private. I am convinced that a Christian will accomplish far more by transforming his life with prayer and Bible study and thus salting the earth with his Christian influence, than he will by fighting city hall.” (*“Foolish Judges or Negligent Christians?” Paul R. Blake, Sound Words, March 18, 2012*)

Are We Ashamed Of The Gospel?

- Faith based expressions cannot be legislated away in a nation where Christians are determined to use them. If government wins the battle against religious expression in public, it's because most Christians have already surrendered in private.

Are We Ashamed Of The Gospel?

- Shortly before ascending to heaven, Jesus gave the Great Commission
 - Mark 16:15-16 - “And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”
 - Matt. 28:19-20ff - “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...”

Are We Ashamed Of The Gospel?

- It was a command taken seriously by the early disciples
 - Acts 2:36-39 - “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. 37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said to them, Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

Are We Ashamed Of The Gospel?

- Even in the face of opposition
 - Acts 8:4-5 - “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. 5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them.”
 - Acts 14:5-7 - “And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, 6 they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region. 7 And they were preaching the gospel there.”
 - Acts 20:24 - “But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”

Are We Ashamed Of The Gospel?

- The gospel spread throughout the world in 21 years
 - Col. 1:23 - “if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.”

Are We Ashamed Of The Gospel?

- When was the last time you explained the gospel to someone? Not just discussed some religious subject, but actually talked with them about their salvation
- Embarrassed by Jesus and His message?
 - Mark 8:38 - “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

Are We Ashamed Of The Gospel?

- Afraid of appearing foolish to others?
 - 1Cor. 1:18, 22-23 - “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God... 22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness”

Are We Ashamed Of The Gospel?

- No, wait; this sermon isn't about personal work, either.
- It's about why Christians no longer talk like Christians
- No, it's not about using euphemisms or bad language, either.

Are We Embarrassed To Be Christians?

- It's not that we are ashamed of the gospel; it's something more fundamentally damning... we are embarrassed for others to know we are Christians!
 - Acts 5:41 - “So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.”

Are We Embarrassed To Be Christians?

- 1Peter 4:12-14 - “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.”
- Not embarrassed to be a Christian? Then why don't you talk like a Christian?

Biblical Faith Based Expressions

- Rom. 1:7-9 - “To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers”
- Rom. 16:22, 27 - “I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, greet you in the Lord... 27 to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.”

Biblical Faith Based Expressions

- Eph. 1:2 - “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”
- Eph. 6:23-24 - “Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.”

Biblical Faith Based Expressions

- Phil. 1:3 - “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you”
- Phil. 4:21 - “Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you.”

Biblical Faith Based Expressions

- 1Tim. 1:2 - “To Timothy, a true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.”
- 1Tim. 6:21 - “Grace be with you. Amen.”

Biblical Faith Based Expressions

- 2Tim. 1:2 - “To Timothy, a beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- 2Tim. 4:22 - “The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.”

Biblical Faith Based Expressions

- Peter and be at peace in the Lord
- John and my little children
- James and my brethren
- Luke and most excellent brother
- Jude and mercy, peace, and love on all of you

Biblical Faith Based Expressions

- What happened to...?
 - God bless you and keep you
 - Praise the Lord for His help
 - I will pray for you
 - I wish you peace, joy, love
 - Go with the Lord on your journey
- We replaced them with secular greetings
 - Good luck, be safe, have fun

Biblical Faith Based Expressions

- Use Christian greetings in your conversation and correspondence; not just letters, but in the new networking media and means
- “The denominations talk that way, and I don’t want people to think I am in a denomination.”
- Grow up or go get some treatment for that rank paranoia
- God said it first; it doesn’t matter that the denominations misuse His words