

Has the Sweet Land of Liberty Gone Sour?

“For he [Apollos] vehemently refuted the Jews publicly, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ” (Acts 18:28).

As most of our eyes turn toward presidential debates, we are reminded that our own witness of the gospel often runs into fierce headwinds. It happened to Apollos in Ephesus, as it happens to us. This is doubly apparent when opposing parties start pointing fingers at the use and abuse of our freedoms.

Not surprisingly, the same concerns we invariably deliberate during every election cycle directly affect our corporate well-being on Earth as it is in heaven. We dare not claim ignorance of the battles being waged in high places. They far eclipse the oratory of this fall's disputes.

As with any contest, there are old-school status-quo candidates versus those who insist on change. We all long for a wizened individual with hands-on experience, maturity, integrity, and honed public speaking skills, one who embraces the best of the past with a glorious view of our future.

Yet even meeting these criteria, we quickly recognize that voters lacking a biblical worldview will miss the big picture. Because believers have a different perspective on freedom!

To envision our lives in this “Sweet Land of Liberty,” let's examine our understanding of freedom. The foundation of freedom is shifting right in front of our eyes. Its focus is leaning away from an appreciation for God's gift to humanity and more toward a humanistic lack of restraint. Liberty is being retooled to absorb an ever-expanding number of options, all the while ignoring the framework cast for its consequences.

For upcoming generations, freedom is emerging as an “anything goes” proposition, whose mantra insists that more choices inevitably culminate in better results.

This principle holds true when shopping for technology or Tofutti, but there is no empirical evidence that “more is better” is a universal gauge for alternative lifestyles. History points us in the opposite direction as such behaviors signal the imminent erosion of favor for such nations.

Too little consideration is given to the possibility that our new generation could possibly have gone wide of the mark. Nor is there adequate reflection that the American experiment in democracy, which leaves room for opposing points of view to be aired and heeded, far exceeds every other government in the history of humankind in allowing the expression of personal freedom. Women vote and run corporations. African-Americans sit in the White House and on Supreme Courts. Even the Chicago Cubs can win the World Series!

We are dismayed to discover that principles for privacy, decency and appropriate boundaries are overshadowed by a newfound desire to express our emotional needs as a prerequisite to freedom. The fruit of such endeavors yields hypersensitive racial rhetoric, non-gender-specific lavatories and unpatriotic platitudes that undermine the very fabric woven into our star spangled banner.

Allowing humanistic tendencies to diminish God’s endowed creation brews an intoxicating cocktail resulting in prideful raised fists or a false humility of bended knee. This could not take place without the misplaced presumption that, like our Liberty Bell, the foundation of America is cracked. Such seemingly political statements find their roots in academic circles that incite overt demonstrations by skewing our faith-inspired history. One wonders if the books written of our age will be any more forgiving of our ability to stay the course?

Where does this misguided thinking lead us? The mentality is that if you don't approve of your roommate, your flag, your gender, your professor or even the climate, take action and, if necessary, use violence to make yourself heard. We face far more than a political tangle; this rebellious beast is straight out of the pit.

Dare we alter society's standards for morality? That is an extreme sport with life-threatening risks. We are confusing athletic prowess and an ability to pass a screen test with godly wisdom. Employing vacillating values to manage our freedom is unraveling our stars and stripes. Protests on football fields and movie sets are public displays of our lack of affection for what we have been given by God Almighty.

Not too long ago we defined restraint by insisting that anything we did behind closed doors was acceptable. We didn't necessarily agree with these practices, but we protected ourselves by keeping them out of the public eye and off television screens. But now, the doors of bedrooms and restrooms have come off their hinges. Reverence is passé. Gender choice now supersedes both public and private sanctuaries.

But you can't beat the perks. By changing the rules, we get to lie, cheat and steal without sacrificing our health care, college degrees, food stamps or subsidized housing! The Ten Commandments need no longer apply.

Watching the debates on TV only reminds us of how far we have fallen. So much ill will has accumulated that politics is both polarizing and paralyzing the very culture that supplies our freedom. Freedom of choice was first introduced on our soil as the freedom to choose God. That initiated the spirit of America.

Freedom is not free. We paid a price to bring freedom to our shores. We paid a price to step away from a repressive

government. We paid a price to keep our nation from dividing. We paid a price to grant this freedom to all Americans. And yes, our Lord paid the ultimate price for freedom.

Allow your witness in this debate to be the testimony that stills the winds of resistance and wins those whom God elects.

“Now when Joshua was by Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him. In His hand was His drawn sword. Joshua went to Him and said, ‘Are You for us or for our enemies?’ He said, ‘Neither, for I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come.’ Then Joshua fell with his face to the ground and worshipped. Then he said, ‘What does my Lord wish to say to His servant?’” (Josh. 5:13-14).
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