

Standing Bold and Humble for Christ in a Lukewarm Era

So many of us were appalled at the prayer offered at the opening of our current Congress where the prayer was lifted up to Brahma and was closed with the words, “amen and awoman.”

Much has already been written about this moment, so I don't need to say more. However, I ask the question: “Why did it seem like this would be an appropriate way to pray when, instead, this ‘prayer’ was genuinely disdained among so many Christians?”

That, to me, is the question of the day. Why did Congressman (and pastor) Emanuel Cleaver think that this would be OK? (Though, perhaps, it was OK in many circles.)

For a great number of us, however, the nod to Hinduism with the use of the title Brahma and the flippant use of the made-up word “awoman” to give attention to identity politics was not appropriate. And it was extraordinarily peculiar behavior by someone who would call himself a Christian pastor.

For many of us, we could hardly call this utterance a prayer. Instead, it was a cultural statement meant to connect and be cool with the “woke” crowd.

In this day and age, there has been a slip-sliding away of “church” in so many places which result in communities far removed from the Bible, the gospel, and the power of God. Instead, too many churches have become places of “fitting in” and “keeping up with the Joneses,” the Joneses being the contemporary culture shapers.

Some leaders have become people pleasers, trying to do and say what they think a contemporary crowd desires. Rather than being bold, convicted and convicting preachers who have their

eye on the Bible and their ear to God, many have become far too fearful of popular culture and, as a result, have kept trying to adjust to and blend in with it.

Fearful of losing members, money and popularity, some leaders have lost their ability to be tone setters. Instead, they are overly influenced by what is happening in the outside world. Constantly trying to make sure they please the crowd and don't lose any one, they continue to build a lukewarm and largely faithless environment. The irony is that people often drift away from that anyway.

But it is a difficult time in which we live.

There is almost a "mob" constantly ready to pounce in this world. If our words, social media posts, sermons and more don't please the political correctness judges, suddenly the chance of ruin arises.

If you are faint of heart, you shouldn't scroll down too far in the comment section beneath many conservative pastors or leaders' posts, or any conservative person, if they post strong biblical messages. The attacks can be withering.

Nevertheless, there is an urgent need in this hour for fiercely biblical content and strong moral stands. If we are to see the revival we speak about so longingly, the messages that will bring it forth will not be messages of compromise. They will be messages so firmly grounded in the biblical text and in a pure presentation of it.

The world needs to hear of its sinfulness and of the solution, Jesus and His gospel of grace. The world needs to know who the Holy Spirit is and experience Him. We need to speak without obfuscation the message of the Bible. And many times, we need to take principled stands against the ways of the world and even the ways of authorities. Boldness is the need of the hour.

Christians are not meant to be at all times gentle or to get along with all things and all people. There are moments when great holy boldness is required. The fact that Jesus is portrayed as both the Lion and the Lamb should say something to us. There is a time for gentleness and a time for fire. Letting God help us discern what is the needed response in the situations of our lives is important.

In this episode of the *Rooted by the Stream* podcast, I explore when we need to take a bold stand and when we need to be submissive in order to be aligned with God's will. {eo}