

Modern-Day American Church Could Learn a Few Things From the Early Church

Luke 9:55-56 (AMPC) says:

“But He turned and rebuked and severely censured them. He said, You do not know of what sort of spirit you are, for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them [from the penalty of eternal death]. And they journeyed on to another village.”

The unrestrained emotional expressions of anger, hatred, slander and vengeance have seemingly taken our nation captive. The “prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2) is hard at work enforcing his diabolical agenda. In the midst, is the church, called to be the salt, the light and the redemptive voice of God in the chaos. But are we succeeding in our mission? In an era of censorship, would Jesus actually step in to censure our speech and behavior toward those with opposing views?

Luke details for us the hostile reception Jesus and His ministry team received when they tried to enter Samaria on their way to Jerusalem. The response of James and John to this unjust treatment was to suggest that Jesus call down the fire of judgment on these uncooperative Samaritans. After all, that’s what Elijah did, right?

Jesus’ response? Not only did He not call down fire, He sternly rebuked and censured his own disciples! The old covenant was coming to a close. A new day of the Father’s mercy, grace and forgiveness to reconcile His enemies to Himself was breaking forth. Jesus knew that until the spiritual atmosphere in Samaria shifted, His efforts would be in vain, so He simply moved on to the next village.

The lingering lesson for us is that we must move in the right spirit, a spirit of love. We must also learn to communicate in that same spirit if we are ever going to witness a true work of the Spirit. The American church needs to take a collective breath, open our Bibles and take a fresh look at how the early church thrived in the midst of terrorizing emperors and territorial spiritual opposition. Unbridled lips and fingertips that curse leaders, or malign others with whom they disagree, is the surest way to undo the power of all the prayer and fasting to win them.

For more on this powerful topic, listen to *The Kathy Bichsel Podcast* on the Charisma Podcast Network. {eoa}

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