

Will You Love When the Persecution Comes?

This past week, city councilors in the second largest city in Oklahoma voted for a resolution to make the city “safe, welcoming and inclusive.”

They said it was about “kindness” and it was about “everyone.” However, one of the authors said while it did include “everyone” per their biological or perceived gender, it didn’t include anyone she considered an “extremist.”

Her definition was clear after she called conservative candidates with different political ideologies than herself “Nazi’s, fascists and extremists.” Her definition of “inclusive,” was “exclusive” to those who believed different than she. A total of 17 people showed up to speak against the discrimination in the resolution.

In contrast, the LGBTQ community flooded the room filling the seats and lining the walls. They were hurting and angry and lashed out at us.

When called to speak, I shared my concerns by affirming everyone’s desire for a safe, welcoming city. But then presented erroneous information said to be the reason for resolution. Information such as why a company chose to build a new facility in another state as well as high marks the city had received from a transgender website stating it was already welcoming and inclusive.

Additionally, that all protections in the resolution were already in previous resolutions and ordinances.

In response, I was jeered at, mocked and told to sit down. “You’re just a ‘Karen,’” someone yelled. One of the city councilors made faces as I spoke. No one told them to stop

until after I finished. Even then it continued, but on a much lighter basis toward others who shared concerns.

Let it not be lost on the reader that the resolution was about “kindness” and the group that said they were afraid and harassed were the harassers. The five city councilors who said they would vote against the resolution caved and unanimously voted for it.

What if the church had filled the room? Even though hundreds had been notified of the meeting, only 17 people showed up to speak up. It wasn’t enough.

However, that night afforded an opportunity to see a large group of people who are crying out for help. Like the hippies of the Sixties, they hurting and searching for answers and identity. They are frustrated, fearful, angry, suicidal and sometimes violent. They expect to be rejected and so reject first.

And let’s be honest, the church does often reject them. We need to learn how to love the sinner, even as we reject the sin. Jesus knew how to do that well. He loved first.

The question we need to ask is, “Are we loving well?” What will be our response in situations where we are the ones mocked, belittled, or even attacked as happened in the Oklahoma State Capital recently? LGBTQ activists screamed at legislators, hurled insults and water at them and assaulted a police officer in an effort to stop legislation meant to protect underage children from potentially harmful transgender therapy.

How will we respond? With love? Will we still pray? Or will we respond in kind?

Will we willingly “share in the sufferings of Christ?” Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial that has come upon you, as though something strange were happening to you.

But rejoice that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed at the revelation of His glory. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you (1 Peter 4:12-14).

 In that meeting, I was laughed at, mocked and my name attacked. It was a small taste of how the name of Jesus is mocked and taken in vain every day of the week. In a world increasingly intolerant, are we willing to endure insults and verbal assaults?

May we walk in love and pray not only for the LGBTQ, but all who are hurting, angry, confused, and lacking identity. May we be ready with our response to love even when attacked—because I assure you it is coming.

For a scriptural prayer on how to walk in love and pray after an attack [click here](#). {eoa}

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