

Malicious Fools in Black Robes – Psalm 58/Acts 4:8-31

Introduction - On Friday, June 26th, 2015, the Supreme Court of the United States of America, issued its decision that the Fourteenth Amendment guarantees the right of two members of the same sex to be married, and thereby ordered the roughly 30 states which have defined marriage as the union of one man and one woman to immediately begin issuing same-sex marriage licenses. We have already made clear in other sermons on these topics that what I am about to say should never be construed as hating homosexuals or denying that they do in fact have real feelings, attractions and desires while acting as though heterosexuals do not have any desires that also need to be mortified. Homosexuals are welcome to come to the kingdom of God, to come to Jesus, in the same way that all fornicators, all liars, all thieves; all drunkards are welcome to come (1 Cor 6:9-11).

Wicked Judges Judged (Psalm 58) – God’s hymnbook gives us songs to sing to and about our enemies, something that cannot be found in modern hymnbooks. These are not easy songs to sing; they are not easy words to say. But they are the words of God. Jesus sings these Psalms in the courts of heaven. This Psalm easily breaks down into three sections. The ungodly and wicked enemy is indicted (vv1-5). A just judgment from God is sought (vv6-8). And by faith, the psalmist sings the inevitable victory of God and he sings it now, as though the victory had already been won (vv9-11).

The violence of these judges in the days of David pales in comparison to the malicious judges of our day when you consider the greater Gospel light which exists in our age. But are these justices malicious? “...in your heart you work wickedness; You weigh out the violence of your hands in the earth” (v2). “...Their poison is like the poison of a serpent... charming ever so skillfully” (v3) – like a sharp-edged scissor poised to slice the developed spinal cord of a third trimester boy or girl.

And so, the first thing we do as God’s people is – we sing. That is why we have been given such psalms as Psalm 58. We are to sing to God, asking Him to break the very teeth of the rulers who speak with such poison, whose teeth are filled with that venom (v7). Let the actions of their lives result in nothing more than if they themselves had been aborted; let them be as impotent as the trail of slime behind a snail (v9).

Malicious In-Justice Turned on its Head (Acts 4:8-31) – This is just where Peter and John and the first post-Pentecost church found itself as recorded in Acts 4. So-called “justice” had already been decreed: Jesus Christ was a criminal and his story was not to be told. How did Peter and John respond? “...let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (vv10-12). Where did this boldness come from? The disciples knew the psalms. Peter and John are let go, they rejoin their companions and they raised their voice with one accord – most likely in singing – and sang Psalm 2 because they had just seen Psalm 2 happen in their own lifetime.

Boldness – And yet, they prayed for more boldness: “Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word...” (v29). And God granted it to them: “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness” (v31). They prayed for boldness. They prayed for courage. They prayed for strength – to do what? To disobey their rulers.

The church must be given the courage, the boldness, to stand and speak and sing against this and the other horrible sins, most notably the carnage of abortion, to the world. Here is a threefold call to boldness for us all:

Boldness to Worship God Rightly – Throughout the Bible we are taught and shown that worship in the heavenlies changes things on earth. But this means that we must let the Word govern our worship; our worship services must not be governed by our own individual preferences. People are brought to life and people are disciplined for their hypocrisies if they will not let them go. This is the glorious and powerful and terrifying work of the Holy Spirit as God’s Word is unleashed in our midst.

Boldness to Sacrificially Build Godly Marriages and Families – Many writers have emphasized this point in many ways. The best defense of marriage will always be marriage itself. If you are a Christian, this is the time to reaffirm your commitment to sexual purity whatever your station in life, married or unmarried. If you are married, this is the time to reaffirm your vows of faithfulness and proper role-keeping in God’s ordained covenant of marriage.

Boldness to Speak the Truth in Love – Of course, it is going to happen that there will be many more opportunities to speak to this issue and bring the gospel to bear – and that is a great opportunity. The fact of the matter is that homosexuals are just like any other sinner. But to preach the Good News we must not back down on the bad. Everyone comes to God the Father with their sins. Everyone. They either come to Him with their sins in Christ or they come to Him with their sins not in Christ. Everyone comes under the judgment of the law.