

40.5 Friendly to All

I spent most of my “growing up” years in northeast Florida. My dad served two tours at the Mayport Naval Station and retired there before moving us to his hometown in Kentucky. The Jacksonville Beaches are the closest thing I have to a hometown.

In fifth grade, God blessed me with a lifelong friend named “Dean.” We are still friends though we have been separated by miles and years. You might say I have found a “*friend who sticks closer than a brother*” (Proverbs 18:24).

When Dean and I were in High School, he showed me a record of the Mississippi State House of Representatives from 1854. His great-great-grandfather served there with ninety-eight other legislators. He was one of sixty-four Democrats, and thirty-five Whigs made up the rest of the House.

The record showed a variety of denominational preferences. Dean’s ancestor listed his religious preference as “*Friendly to All.*” Officially he and some others were designated “Tolerant.”

“*Friendly to All*” is a lovely moniker in many respects. I have my theological point of view, which may differ from yours. That doesn’t give me the right to be rude, insensitive, or unfriendly to you. Paul points out in Romans 14:4, “who am I to judge another’s servant”? The wise man also reminds us in Proverbs 18:24 (NKJV), “A man *who has* friends must himself be friendly.”

I have learned Biblical truths from various people who have a contrary theological view. We have in common respect for the Bible as the “word of God,” though we approach scripture differently.

The memory of Dean’s ancestor has made me think about our current political climate. In the mid-nineteenth century, the politicians in Mississippi likely had more in common than most today. Though their denominational loyalties were different, they had a similar worldview. Most wanted to honor God and use the Bible as the basis for the laws of the land.

A Whig Presbyterian and a Democrat Baptist might have “crossed the aisle” to cooperate for the good of their state. They had Jesus and the Bible in common though they differed in political ideology. If they were statesmen and not mere politicians, they had the best interests of their constituents in mind.

Today is different. There is more disagreement than denominational preferences or political leanings. We differ in our worldviews. Some hold to a Biblical worldview that places the control of nations under God, as we read in passages like Psalm 2:7-12 (NKJV), which is a Messianic Psalm pointing to Jesus.

⁷“I will declare the decree:

The LORD has said to Me,

‘You *are* My Son,

Today I have begotten You.

⁸ Ask of Me, and I will give *You*

The nations *for* Your inheritance,

And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession.

⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron;

You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.’ ”

¹⁰ Now therefore, be wise, O kings;

Be instructed, you judges of the earth.

¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear,

And rejoice with trembling.

¹² Kiss the Son, lest He be angry,

And you perish *in* the way,
When His wrath is kindled but a little.
Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in Him.

Those with a Biblical worldview hold that laws about life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness have Biblical foundations. The opposing worldview is man-centered. This philosophy rejects God's sovereignty and gives control of the populace to the elite oligarchy. All forms of Marxism reflect this ideal.

We have been eyewitnesses to an overt display of man-centered ideology for the past two years. Mask mandates, inoculation requirements, and restrictions of liberty have been the order of the day. Have you noticed that our political leaders are suddenly lifting requirements and restrictions? Did the virus go away? No, their poll numbers are down for this election cycle, and they realize they need to change their stance. They are running for reelection.

Another tidbit I will throw in. If you do the research, you will find that the death rate in America has not changed over the last few years. Even after the introduction of Covid, the death rate has remained constant. They have been playing on our fears.

We might want to be winsome and "*Friendly to All*" to "go along to get along." It is not always possible. There is a collision of two opposing worldviews at this moment.

If we take a Biblical worldview seriously, there is no compromise with an "other-centered" one. The apostle Paul observes in Ephesians 5:11 (NKJV):

¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*.

When light does its job, it reveals hidden realities. Jesus confronted the dark forces who impersonated the religious leaders of His day and pronounced a series of "woes" on some of them in Matthew 23. He challenged the moneychangers for their deceitfulness in Mark 11. Jesus even stood in silence before the interrogation of the Roman governor in Mark 15. He exposed darkness and refused to compromise eternal principles in each case, even to save His life.

A Biblical worldview will "overcome evil with good," according to Romans 12:21. In our hot-topic world, it is right to do the good and avoid the evil. We confront evil and advance the kingdom of God every time we do good.

We can be "Friendly to All" without compromising the truths of God. We can love our enemies as well as our neighbors, as Paul reminds us in Galatians 6:10 (NKJV):

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Jesus made a dramatic appeal to all of us in Matthew 11:28-30 (NKJV):

²⁸ Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light."

He invites all of us to take on the yoke of His biblical worldview. We find rest when we do. He doesn't add to our troubles. He gives us relief rather than burdens.

Keep The Light of *God's Friendliness to All* Burning!