

Then Sings My Soul (use the image we're using for this upcoming series)

The Gospel in a Changing America

“It will be used to vilify Americans who are unwilling to assent to the new orthodoxy...the majority attempts, toward the end of its opinion, to reassure those who oppose same-sex marriage that their rights of conscience will be protected.”

“We will soon see whether this proves to be true.”

“I assume that those who cling to old beliefs will be able to whisper their thoughts in the recesses of their homes, but if they repeat those views in public, they will risk being labeled as bigots and treated as such by government, employers and schools.”

--Justice Samuel Alito

The Gospel as Counter-Cultural
Acts 7:54-55

Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. - Acts 7:54-55

Our challenge as Jesus followers is to align ourselves with the truth of the gospel over the claims of our culture.

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. - 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. - Acts 6:1

“Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.” - Acts 6:3

And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit... - Acts 6:5

And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. - Acts 6:8

Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. - Acts 6:9

But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. - Acts 6:10

And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council - Acts 6:12

These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth."

"And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods."

"And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship." - Acts 19:25-27

And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. - Acts 19:17

Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.

For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living. - Revelation 18:2-3

Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. - Revelation 14:6

"In a world where everything revolves around yourself—protect yourself, promote yourself, comfort yourself, and take care of yourself—Jesus says, 'Crucify yourself.'"

"Put aside all self-preservation in order to live for God's glorification, no matter what that means for you in the culture around you."

- David Platt, "Counter Culture"

And they made a calf in those days, and offered a sacrifice to the idol and were rejoicing in the works of their hands. But God turned away and gave them over to worship the host of heaven. - Acts 7:41-42

“Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law of angels and did not keep it.” - Acts 7:52-53

And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep. - Acts 7:59-60

Our challenge as Jesus followers is to align ourselves with the truth of the gospel over the claims of our culture.

The gospel is counter to every culture.

People and churches that fully embrace the gospel will be at odds with their culture.

“A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross.”

-Richard Niebuhr

The gospel will find a way to break through every culture.

The way of the gospel is the way of love.