January 12, 2020

Viewpoint from the
Valley Grove Church Of Christ

Self-Defense

By Joe R. Price

The tragic murder of two worshipers last Sunday at the West Freeway Church of Christ, Fort Worth TX was unprovoked evil. Two innocent lives were taken from family and friends, and others were injured. Preacher Britt Farmer said, "Today our home was invaded by evil" (khou.com). The heroic actions of another member defended the innocent and stopped further mayhem.

Does the Lord approve Christians using methods of self-defense (including lethal forms) to protect themselves and others? We believe He does.

Some answer "no" because Jesus said, "I tell you not to resist an evil person" (Matt. 5:39). In Matthew 5:38-42, Jesus taught against personal retaliation, not against personal defense. There is a difference. He taught when injustice is forced upon us not to respond with vengeance. He was not addressing self-defense here (A fuller study of this is found in Romans 12:17-21). If no self-defense is ever warranted, then consistency demands never locking a door, never building a wall, and never doing anything to defend oneself from evil (real or potential). Yet…

1. Jesus approved self-defense. In Luke 22:36 Jesus said to His apostles on the night of His betrayal, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." The word Jesus used (machaira) is of a short sword or dagger (see Lk. 21:24; Heb. 4:12). The implication is that of self-protection as He sent them out to preach (Lk. 22:35). They had two swords, which was enough (Lk. 22:38).

2. Paul protected himself. When his life was threatened by his enemies he sought protection from the Roman centurion (Acts 23:11-23). Later, he used legal rights to safeguard against death threats (Acts 25:11).

Self-defense is not vengeance. We should not confuse the two

Visitors — We pray that you benefit spiritually from our worship together and hope to see you again.

"You're Judging Another Person's Salvation"

By Joe R. Price

May we examine a person's personal belief about their salvation without "judging" them? More specifically, is it possible to identify an unbiblical view a person has about their salvation? Can we use the Scriptures to explain to a lost person he or she is lost? Or, are we judging that person by doing so?

Recently, a pastor of a megachurch told me I was judging another person's salvation. (I wasn't trying to condemn anyone. After all, sin condemns us.) My sin? I told him people who believe they were saved but have not yet been baptized into Christ are still lost (Gal. 3:27; 1 Pet. 3:21). To him, that made me guilty of judging their salvation. (When he tells a sinner he is lost, is he guilty of judging that person?) How could anyone ever teach the sinner he is lost under this definition of judging (Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38)? Yes, we can teach people who think they are saved that the Scriptures say they are lost without being guilty "judging" them.

The apostles told people on Pentecost who thought they were saved that they were lost. Many Jews confidently trusted in being sons of Abraham (they were God's chosen people). Yet, they had murdered Jesus, the Son of God. Were the apostles guilty of "judging" these people? No, God's word rendered the judgment, and they spoke God's judgment to the people (Acts 2:22-35, 36). About 3,000 souls were saved that day (Acts 2:37, 40-41).

Jesus and Ananias told a man who thought he was saved that he was lost. Saul of Tarsus boldly persecuted Christians, thinking he was serving God (Acts 22:20; 26:9-11). Would we accuse Jesus of unrighteously judging Saul? After Saul had prayed and fasted in blindness for three days, Ananias told him to "arise and be baptized, and wash away you sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Saul was still a sinner in need of cleansing from his sins by the blood of Jesus (Rom. 6:3). Shall we charge Ananias with "judging" Saul's salvation for telling him so?

Peter told a Christian he was lost because of his present sin. Simon had been saved by the gospel, but became caught up in sin (Acts 8:13, 18-24). Should we charge Peter with unrighteously "judging" Simon's salvation for rebuking his sin?

The truth is, we are not "judging" people when we let God's word speak, then make the application to their lives so they can see their sin and do God's will to be saved. We are sharing God's judgments, revealed to persuade sinners

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to believe and obey the truth of the gospel for the salvation of their souls (Heb. 5:8-9; Lk. 6:46).

David said of God's word, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether" (Psa. 19:9). Jesus said, "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (Jno. 12:48). We do not sin when we speak God's judgments (from the Scriptures) to sinners to warn them. We are trying to warn them and bring them to salvation.

The charge of "judging" a person's salvation may be an attempt to evade the force of truth. God knows. Regardless, false charges against truth-tellers have certainly been used in the past to escape the strength of truth (Acts 6:9-11; 16:19-24; 17:5-9).

Let us always speak the truth in love and humility (Eph. 4:15; 2 Tim. 2:24-26). By doing so, we draw attention to God's judgments so the lost can believe, repent, and be saved.

Why Do You Wait?

By Kyle Campbell

An oft sung phrase is "Why do you wait, dear sinner, Oh why do you tarry so long?" Christians should see the urgency of obedience and godly living. Perhaps we can understand why someone who has no spiritual training does not urgently obey Christ. Yet strangely and sadly, some Christians never see the urgency, either. Why is it that the very ones who have "every spiritual blessing" in Christ must be pushed and prodded to love Him above all else (Mk. 12:29-31)?

Why do you wait to give your best to the Master? God is deserving of the very best we have to offer Him, whether it is our time, our energy, our attitude or our possessions. We are to present ourselves as living sacrifices to God (Rom. 12:1).

Why do you wait to get involved in the work of the congregation? There is plenty of work to do. Every member can make positive contributions toward the spiritual strength and welfare of this church (Eph. 4:16). Everyone can pray for this church. Everyone can worship God together. Everyone can show brotherly love and kindness. There is much to do.

Why do you wait to forgive one who has sinned against you? None of us are without sin. Why then do we demand that everyone must always be perfect in their treatment of us? And when they aren't, our attitude toward them is forever changed — hesitant, reserved, suspicious. Such unmerciful treatment of others will surely reap a lack of mercy for us in the day of judgment (Matt. 5:7; Jas. 2:13). When your brother sins against you, or when you know your brother has something against you, reconcile quickly (Matt. 5:23-26; 18:15).

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Why do you wait to develop godliness in thought and deed? Spiritual growth comes through dedicated effort. We must choose to be nourished by the gospel of Christ (1 Pet. 2:1-2; Heb. 5:12-14; 2 Pet. 3:18).

Why do you wait to become a Christian? There is no greater joy than having your sins forgiven in Christ. Seize the moment to be saved, to no longer be lost in sin. Your sin will bring you to eternal death. You have no guarantee of tomorrow. Now is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2).

"Why do you wait?"

Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

— 1 Thess. 5:14-18

January Birthdays:

The 17th Bonnie Brown; the 22nd Jennifer Collins; The 23rd Paula Brown; the 25th Jacqueline Pryor; the 25th David Justice; the 27th Johnny Little; the 28th George Malone; the 29th James Brown.

This Bulletin is a weekly publication of the Valley Grove Church Of Christ, Southaven, MS

Sunday
Bible Study . . . 9:30 A.M.
Worship . . . . . 10:30 A.M.
Worship . . . . . 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday
Bible Study . . . 7:00 P.M.

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