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<http://www.fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

Personal Bible Study-96
Galatians 4:16 – It really is all about Truth.4
(Excursus: God’s timelessness, His will, and our prayers.4)

Galatians 4:16 Have I therefore become your enemy because I communicate to you Truth? (ὥστε ἐχθρὸς ὑμῶν γέγονα ἀληθεύων ὑμῖν;).

There are two parts to this study. First is the application of this verse in a broader context. Consider what happens throughout culture when the whole truth is not communicated. Let’s start with the pastor. Say, for example, he only teaches spiritual truth so believers can have “victorious” lives in Jesus (cf. Benny Hinn and much of prosperity movement of Charismania). This is very attractive and the reason mega churches do so well. The message is totally geared to moving the believer into new blessings that “God is waiting to pour out on him.” It is a very feel-good message as the preacher tailors the message to tell the believers they have enormous inner potentials. There is no mention of sin, evil, or the dangers of lusting for the things of the world. The constant drum-beat is that the Devil, not themselves and their sinful natures, keeps them from getting their riches. This kind of ministry is very effective in achieving several things in these believers (1) feeding narcissism, (2) cultivating superstition (e.g., “blab it and grab it”), (3) promoting infantilism (due to emotionalism), (4) instilling a victimized mindset, (5) retarding understanding (anti-intellectualism), and (6) isolating the believer from making an impact on society in contrast to the mandate in Matthew 5:13, 14, *“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.”* These believers have become, to a large part, irrelevant to the world as they live their isolated lives forever seeking a new power word from another sermon so they can have their breakthrough. To use Christ’s illustration, they have become tasteless and good for nothing (as far as making an impact on society).

But how do believers become salt to preserve a rotten society? By speaking the truth! And it starts with pastor-teacher. In these mega churches you will never hear messages about such cultural cancers as homosexuality. Perhaps that is one reason so many young people today think that homosexuality is OK, even normal. Of course, once one gets away from objective truth, “normal” becomes what the latest Gallup poll reveals rather than what is objectively right or wrong based on natural law or Bible doctrine.

There are many of our young people who are afraid to speak the truth regarding the evils of promoting homosexual marriage. As a matter of fact, many Christians are rather encouraging of their gay friends. Instead of being salt and speaking the truth in love, they have attitudes that “homosexuality is OK, even cute, besides it does no harm to others.” Many of these Christians actually think that homosexual marriage is OK *because it does not hurt others*. With thinking like that we can forget about them being salt and making a good impact on society; they do not even

believe in absolute truth as such: OK is defined by utilitarianism and hedonism. Furthermore, they love themselves and what people think of them more than the Lord and His Word. They have become irresponsible Christians. The very word “responsible” has in it the idea of “responding.” They should respond in truth and with love and concern. For sure, they should not condemn or hate homosexuals as people; but they should not call their aberrancy “good, cute, OK.” They should be principled believers of truth. For them to do less is to destroy their own integrity, which destroys true capacity in life for the good in all areas. The believer who does not have moral principles, which includes moral outrage at evil, is spiritually bankrupt. Without objective principles from natural law and Bible doctrine, the believer becomes captive to the ephemeral social ethics of kosmos diabolicus, like making homosexual marriage good and acceptable, thus making evil “good.” Anytime evil is “good,” then true good is destroyed. Read Isaiah 5:20; Romans 1:12; Genesis 19. Every nation is judged when it gets away from natural law (laws of divine establishment). There can be no doubt that America is currently being judged by God according to principles of Rom. 1:18-32.

“Homosexual marriage is OK because it does not harm others?” ‘Really’? Let’s see (how this disease spreads throughout society and destroys good morals and good people, including children): *Once homosexual marriage is institutionalized as legitimate in a society, it becomes the same kind of norm as heterosexual marriage. This results in new forms of sex education, which includes sodomy, taught to our children in public schools (I am sure that these well-meaning Christians who said it was OK did not have this in mind). This inculcation destroys the consciences of our children by shifting the emphasis away from objective values in natural law to positive (made up) values of society. Furthermore, consider what happens to adults with good moral consciences who must now violate their consciences or pay of fine for not approving of sodomy, e.g., a pastor who refuses to marry a gay couple, or a baker who refuses to make a cake for a gay couple, or a musician who refuses to play at a gay marriage. These individuals due to their own good moral consciences really do not want to be part of the “wedding” ceremony. These good and decent people will be charged with discrimination and perceived as hateful and bigoted simply because they do not want to approve or promote the homosexual agenda. They are not only called all kinds of vile names, they may very well be hit with civil suits, have to close their business, and even find themselves in jail for opposing a state law that gives rights to gay couples to get married. I mean who but an evil, hard-hearted soul could ever oppose “equal marriage?” So now marriage equality has given rights to 3% of the population with the result that 97% are put in a moral and legal bind out of which there is no easy escape. But, of course, it is OK since it does not affect others. Right?*

For the second part of this study (change of subject), let’s move back to what we are studying at FBC regarding prayer and God’s eternity. Only God’s eternity within the metaphysics of concurrence resolves the conflict between God’s certain knowledge of the future and man’s free will. I will explain this in more detail in our next Bible class. The bottom line is that not only does God see all future contingent events, He is very involved in all of those events. He is in absolute control. Your birth, your death, and everything in between is seen by God in one present glance. He is with you already in your last moments on earth.

The only other view prominent view that provides a strong view of God's sovereignty is Calvinism. However, the deficiency in Calvinism is that it does not give freedom to the proximate finite causes. This is in contrast to concurrence where we have two causes: God as the efficient cause of all things who applies the proximate causes according their finite natures. In other words, God is the efficient cause of my being/existence moment by moment and applies my free will, that is, the choices I make.

Let me see if I can illustrate the above. Say I wanted someone to build me a new house. My thoughts of each builder is *immediately* associated with the kind of work I think he will accomplish. Say, for example, I chose a builder, Mr. Nehemiah. I show him the plans and he agrees to do the job. Before the job is done (future contingent), I see both Nehemiah as well as the finished home in my mind at one time (long before the home is actually built). That is analogous to God's at once knowledge

Now let me try to illustrate the difference between Calvinism and concurrentism (Thomism). Calvin would contend that the future is guaranteed by God making Nehemiah agree to build the house and that the house would be built exactly like God wanted because God was actually controlling all of Nehemiah's actions. Concurrentism (Thomism), on the other hand, would say that God's control is much different: He is the efficient agent but there are also proximate causes in the *free* agent. In other words, God controls by giving existence and power to all secondary finite natures. In my analogy, it would be like God giving Nehemiah existence/being and continuously applying his free will activities in building the house. Since God is outside of time and is involved in Nehemiah's work, the results are guaranteed. God sees His own work through Nehemiah long before the work even began. This works with prayer as well: God works out His plan of history through finite causation of prayers. More later . . .

In 'Ehyeh,

Pastor Don