

Servants of God: Those Who Bear the Sword and Trust in the Lord
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I am going to pull two thoughts together. This may be a little bit of a complicated sermon, but I hope to do a good job in unpacking it and breaking it down and bringing some application into our lives of this pretty intense passage that Paul has for us here.

Romans 12:19-13:7

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with Good. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to them damnation. For rulers are not of terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

Let's look at verse 19. Christians, that's beloved, don't avenge for yourselves. Don't take matters into your own hands. Don't do that? Why shouldn't I take matters into my own hands when someone assaults or when someone does something to me? Why can't I just take matters into my own hands? He says, but rather, so instead of doing that, but rather give place, create an opportunity for God to do what God does best. Let God be the One that brings wrath into the situation. You don't bring wrath into the situation. I don't bring wrath into the situation. Now, Moms and Dads, I am not talking about discipline. You discipline your children. That is your job. I am talking about adults dealing with adults. Teenagers dealing with teenagers. You don't avenge for yourself. You create an opportunity but rather give place unto wrath. Let God's wrath get in there. This is what he is saying here. When you get into a spat or a conflict and you want to step in and avenge, you want to take charge, you are going to punish them, you are going to afflict some offense back, he says, don't do that. Trust in the Lord. Trust that God can take care of that for you. Trust that God do that. You do not need to do that. Give place, give room, give opportunity for God to get in there. See, what happens is we jump in there full force and we take over. Vengeance is mine, quoting from Deuteronomy 32, I will repay. There is a difference between vengeance and justice. Sometimes you are going to have to pursue justice. Someone breaks into your home and inflicts injury to your family, and your first instinct is, They will pay for this! And that is probably the natural instinct. You are going to have that instinct. Let justice step in. You don't avenge for your family. Let the civil government do what the civil government is there for. Let God use the civil government to bring wrath. You pursue justice when you need to, forgive as a Christian, but let God be the instrument of wrath.

Vengeance, this is the idea of punishment inflicted in retaliation for injury offense. Hey look, I can't revenge without sinning. If I revenge, then I am sinning. If I decide I am going to take matters into my own hands, they are dying for that. When I cross that line, that is sin. There is a civil government in place and it is the job of the civil government to do that. I am going to pursue justice through all the proper channels, but when I take matters into my own hands and decide I am going to shoot someone or cuss them out or give them the this or that because they cut me off on the road, you are not allowing to step in. You are not allowing God to do what

God does best through the civil government. You are taking matters into your own hands. What am I supposed to do? Look at verse 20 and 21. This is amazingly difficult, but you are to do what verse 20 says. *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.* If he cuts you off on the road, give him some more room. If she is rude at Walmart, be kind back to her. Love her back. One of the reasons husbands and wives can't ever get out of these tailspins that you are in is because no one is willing to love back. You said that, I'll say this. You got that, I'll go one more. Remember that? Yes, I remember, but do you remember that? And it never ever stop and you are in these vicious tailspins. You know why? Because you are not doing what verse 20 says. You are not loving back. You are keeping it going. You are avenging for yourself. Let God take care of your husband. When he is rude and short and inconsiderate, let God step in and do something. You don't need to make sure you avenge for yourself. This is very applicable. There isn't a single marriage here that can't understand what I am saying. You are sitting there like, No, that is not us, but that is because you have your shields up. If I could come in your homes I would see this happening. She says that and he comes back and you are not going to get the last word. I am getting the last word in. You know what? You are not trusting in God. Let God bring some chastisement in there. Let God bring some discipline in there. How can you do that? By the grace of God. You have to trust in God. You have to do what Jesus said. You have to turn the other cheek. You have to trust, in verse number 1, that God ordained the authorities. You have to trust that God gave you that husband you have. You have to trust that God gave you the commander that you have. You have to trust that God gave you the boss that He wants you to have. You have to trust that God gave us the president that we are supposed to have. You have trust that God is going to have His will on the elections in November. You have to trust in God.

Any time we are taking matters into our own hands we are not trusting God. God, You are not capable of dealing with this, so I am going to step in and take care of this. Let God take care of it. Let's go back to 1st Samuel 8. I want to teach you. I hope you will learn today. Israel was having a major trust problem. Israel wanted a king like everyone else had a king. It sounds like a teenager. Come on, Moms and Dads. Everyone is wearing Oakley's. I need a pair of Oakley's. Everyone has an ipod. I need an ipod. Well, Israel was just like this. Everyone has a king, Lord. We are the only ones that don't have a king. Up North they have a king. In the West they have a king. Down South they have a king. Everyone has a king. We are the only ones that don't have a king. And God said, I am your King. You let Me be your king. No, God, that is okay. It is kind of cool You are up there, but we want a king down here on the earth. We want a king on the throne like everyone else. God, is like, that is not My plan. You don't need a king. Let Me be your King. But God, we are going to get attacked. Who is going to fight our battles? I'll fight your battles. But God, it's not the same. You are up there. We need a king down here on the ground fighting our battles. We want a king like everyone else. So that is where we step in chapter 8. Let's step into history. The Bible says that Samuel was old. And he has made his sons judges over Israel. His sons are heathens. They are liars. They pursue money in verse number 3. They take bribes. The people are fed up. *The elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and they said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways; now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.* Now watch that. Do you know we are not trying to be like all the nations? Any time you are trying to be like everyone else there is an issue. Watch that. *But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.* Let's stop. I need you to get this. This is so important. When I step in and I decide to avenge for myself and I am going to manage the issue and I don't give room for God to rule and reign, what I am saying is, God, I don't need you. I got it, God. And what I am doing without even realizing it is I am rejecting God. God, You can't take care of my small business. You can't fight for me. You are not going to take care of me with my husband. I will take matters into my own hands. I got this one, God. And we think that we are doing God a favor, but what we don't realize is we are in fact rejecting God's reign over us. What we are saying is You can't handle this, God. I will take over right now. That is exactly what the Israelites were saying. God, we want a king like everyone else. God said, I will

be your King. No, God, we don't want You to rule over us. We want him to rule over us. So God says, Okay, give them what they want, but give them a warning. Speak to them solemnly. Listen to what he gets ready to say to us. This is so applicable today.

According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto their voice; how be it yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them. Give them a warning. Tell them what life is going to be like. Look at verse 10. And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king. So God knows that there is an issue with the federal government. But He uses the federal government as He sees fit. God is not blind to the fact that the government has federal corruption in it.

And he said, this will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: he will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to the his officers, and to his servants. This sounds like the federal government in the 21st Century. What is your point? Because He knows these governing authorities are flesh. They are not perfect. They have issues. They are not doing right. Give them a king. But just be aware that when you get this king, you are going to regret it. This king is going to ask for your daughters and your sons and your granddaughters and this king is going to tax you to death and this king is going to take a tenth of this and a quarter of that. And it is not going to end. While we say that God ordains the governing authorities which is exactly what Romans 13 says, let's all realize that sometimes the governing authorities are wrong. Sometimes the governing authorities are not doing the right thing. In fact, sometimes there will be a necessity for civil disobedience and I want to talk about that this morning. When is it appropriate to disobey the government? Because if we read Romans 13 it looks like no matter what they say, we obey. So I want to know where is the exception clause?

Because it seems to me that the federal government is getting out of control taking more and taking more. So I want to know is there any end to their authority or can they continue on and on? And will I always have to conclude, They are the governing authorities. Or can I look at some cases and points in which there is some civil disobedience and it is appropriate.

Let's make sure that the purpose of the federal government and state government and local government is good. He is a minister for good. It is supposed to be good to have a government. It is supposed to be good to have local government. It is supposed to be a positive thing. But the fact of the matter is they are filled with sinners. And as long as civil government is run by sinners you are going to have a potential for a problem.

Every single time a governing authority does something it doesn't mean it is God's wrath.

So the second purpose of government is to bear a sword. The civil government is the one that carries handcuffs. The civil government is the one that has the stun gun and the prison cell and even ultimately the death penalty. And all that is by God's ordained purpose. He says, this person, this minister, this committee, organization or judge is there to revenge and execute wrath. Now I want to be careful to say right away here that doesn't mean every single time a governing authority does something it is God's wrath. Remember, God uses them. It doesn't mean that every time they do something that it is God's wrath. Sometimes it is. Sometimes it isn't. We don't know. We don't know when they are sinning and when they are being used of God and when they are sinning and being used of God. Let's make sure you understand what I'm saying. When a person who is guilty of killing someone is executed that is not sin. That is God's

wrath on someone who is guilty. When a leader goes into a country and starts mowing down people in genocide that may or may not be God's wrath. We don't know. Look back at your Old Testament. There is some incredible things that are going on. God tells the children of Israel to go in and wipe every single person out. Why? They are all idolaters. Now that is clearly God's wrath. That doesn't mean that every single case of that is God's wrath. Sometimes you are dealing with a corrupt leader who is out of control and God will punish them in His due time. And you and I never know. Only in eternity will we clearly understand perhaps when it was God's wrath and when it was an out of control dictator doing whatever he wants.

Sometimes Christians are agents of the state. We have some law enforcement officers in our congregation and you in fact become agents of the state to execute wrath. You lock people up. You punish evil doers. You pull them over when they are driving out of control. You are an agent of the government doing God's will. You serve that. Christian law enforcement officers are ministers given a certain degree of authority by the state. But they are also governed by a higher moral code of conduct. So if you are a Christian law officer in here or pursuing it, you will have a code of conduct from the police organization that guides you, but you also have a higher code of conduct because you will answer to God as a Christian law enforcement officer. You will not be able to get by with the boss told me to do that. You have a higher calling.

In this room, especially in this church, you have soldiers who can be ministers of God. So here is what I want to tell you. According to Romans 13 sometimes when you deploy somewhere with your M4 by your side, you are a minister of God executing wrath. Let's be clear, this is very important, that doesn't mean that you don't have a higher code to answer to also. So as a Christian soldier when you go in there executing wrath and you decide I am going to cross the line and get into vengeance you are now sinning. You are not there to do whatever you want. You are under the authority of the state. And you go as much as you want under the state. But when you see someone surrendering and you mow them down anyway you have crossed the line. You have moved into vengeance. You are not giving room for God's wrath. You are taking matters into your own hands and when you do that you will stand before God and account for that. I am not saying that you will lose your salvation or anything like that. It is sin like all other sins and you need to confess it and repent of it. Are you understanding what I am saying, soldiers? This is a huge responsibility. You are agents of the state executing wrath according to God's will. And yet you don't have a free hand to do whatever you want. You can't go into that city raping and pillaging things and determine that you are executing wrath. No. You operate under the code of conduct of the governing authority but you also have a higher code of conduct.

Two reasons to obey. Number 1, fear of wrath from the state. What is the second reason to obey? To have a clear conscience before God. I want to talk about conscience for a minute or two here because this is an important idea. The conscience is the self awareness that judges whether something is right or wrong according to your moral standard. The moral standard that you should have as a Christian is God's word. Now let's make sure that we all understand this morning that the conscience is the greatest evidence that evolution is a wicked lie from the pit of hell. Where are you getting that from, Preacher? Some of you have seen that propaganda slide from the pit of hell that shows someone like this, then the next one is a little more like this, and then this one has some hair, and this one has less hair. You know Satan originated that propaganda slide. Finally the guy has an ipod in his ears and he is walking upright. Have you seen that one? This is what I want to know. If that is the case, and if that is true, can you tell me when did the guy get a conscience? Was it here, here or here? Because the difference between an animal and a human being is human beings have a conscience. I can manipulate an animal to do anything that I want. I can manipulate an animal under punishment and reward to do anything. We train all kinds of animals to do anything. You have a conscience. God gave you a conscience. You can account for a clean conscience before God. Paul said, I have lived my life in such a way that you can say, Men and brethren I have lived in all good conscience before God. You need to live in a way that you have a clear conscience and when your conscience speaks to you down range, deployed somewhere, in your marriage, at work, you better listen to that conscience, God gave you that for a purpose. When this doesn't feel right, it is not right. You stop and listen to your conscience. I don't know why I am doing this, you better hold

back and check yourself. Teenagers, learn to listen to your God given conscience and check it against the Word of God at all times. Remember, please Jeremiah 17:9 says that the heart is deceitfully wicked who can know it. So don't think that your conscience is leading you to divorce. Don't think that your conscience is leading you to have an extramarital affair. Your conscience never leads you that way. That is your flesh. The Christian knows that behind the conscience is a God who is personal, ethical, self-revealing, the creator, sustainer and the moral Governor of the Universe. Can I remind you of this great text from Romans 2:14.

When the Gentiles which have not the law do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves. I am going to break it down. Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another. Let me take a moment and explain this scripture very clearly. This is what Paul is saying. When people we find in Australia, South America, the back woods of Russia, in the hills all over the world, when we go into their cultures and they don't speak Hebrew and they have never seen the Torah before and they have never seen the Old Testament, when we find them living toward a moral standard of You should not steal, we say to ourselves, where does that come from? Where did that moral law come from? They have never read the 10 Commandments, they don't know Hebrew, the Bible wasn't delivered into their language but yet we find them living according to a moral law which is this is mine, it is not right for you to steal. If you steal, I am going to take it back. I have a right to defend what is mine. Now all cultures across the world have that general moral law and I want to know if we are all from a bunch of monkeys where did that moral law come from? How is it that we find across the board in all sub cultures without regard to languages, without regard to social influences or other cultures, we find tribes in the deep woods living unto a moral code of conduct. Where did that come from? According to the Word of God, it was written in their hearts by God.

The greatest evidence there is a God is people all over the world in the deepest woods are living unto to a moral code that according to the Word of God, it was written in their hearts by God.

The greatest evidence in the world that there is a God. There is a God and every single person is going to stand before that God. There isn't anyone exempt. So as the moral governor of the Universe, God is the One that establishes good and evil, not the one in authority. The governing authorities does not establish good and evil. The governing authority is to obey God in executing wrath according to God's moral standards. Now the people of God have always struggled with obeying God who God has established as a king. When is it lawful to disobey? They have always struggled with that. How much authority does the king have? When does the king's authority stop? We don't have time to look there, but write this down.

Let me tell you this great story. King David was struggling with this whole idea. He wasn't the king at the time. David was struggling immensely with this. Saul was the first king. Remember they said, Give us a king and he gave them Saul. David comes forward. Remember David and Goliath? He knocks the giant out and David starts getting all the glory. All the sudden Saul is as jealous as can be. They are talking about 10,000 to 1,000 and Saul can't stand David. So Saul begins to pursue David with a passion to do what? To kill him. It is my competition. That is how they take care of it back then. They didn't have a vote. They are just dead. If they are dead they are not competition any more. David is running for his life and they are hiding in some caves and in the inner most part of the caves and Saul goes wandering in to do what you do inside a cave, to take care of his business. So he was wandering inside a cave to take care of his business and they are hiding up against the wall and he goes in there to do it, and the men start saying, Look, David, and they realize God has delivered Saul into our hands. They is their perception. This is our opportunity to execute vengeance. This is our opportunity to avenge. God is setting this up, David. You are going to take care of your problems right now. God has orchestrated all this. All you have to do right now is kill him and that will be the end of it, David. We can rule and reign. Our political party takes over. And David no doubt goes through an ethical dilemma right there. It wasn't easy for David. The wheels are turning. His conscience is thinking. Moral law

from the Torah is running through his mind right there. What should I do? I have an opportunity right now to kill Saul, take him out and David chooses not to disobey. David cuts a little portion of whatever was there some robe, just enough evidence to show that he could have done this if he'd wanted to.

It reminds me of ranger's school, those of you that have been to rangers school. They find you asleep and they write a little note. That fell on dead ears. Oh, you never fell asleep. I did, alright and I'm honest too. Here is what happens after going through this incredible decision making process, he lets the Lord lead him, cuts off a little bit of the robe, and comes out, hey, Saul, you see this? This is the corner of the robe. Saul looks down and sees the perfect 90 or 45 degree angle cut off and recognizes, Oh, my goodness. David is the better man. And David tells the men, That is the Lord's anointed. I will God take care of that. So does that mean it is always the Lord's anointed and we will always do that? Are there other situations?

Let's jump forward in church history and go to the year 1521. Now we have another God ordained authority according to the Word of God and the guy's name is Charles V. He is in charge of the entire holy Roman empire of Europe. And he looks Martin Luther right in the face and he says, No more Luther. I am giving you an order. Stop. You will recant. You are not writing any more. You are not talking about the churches injustices. You are not talking about indulgences. You are done, Martin Luther. We are going to burn everything and you are coming back under the authority of the state. Now remember in those days the church and the state is merged into a mess. No separation. So he is speaking on behalf of both institutions when he says this. So, let's ask ourselves as we think through this, should Martin Luther follow David's example? Because at that point David obeyed and chose not to take the Lord's anointed. This is what Luther says and I believe it is very instructional for us today. This is Luther, Unless I can be instructed and convinced with evidence from the Holy Scriptures or with open and clear and distinct grounds of reasoning, then I cannot and will not recant because it is neither safe nor wise to act against conscience. Boy that is good. I want that to sink in. If you can't show me where I am wrong from the Word of God, governing authority, I have to follow God. I have to follow God. If you can't show me from the Word of God where I am wrong, I have to go with the Word of God. Now, I am going to respect you as the governing authority but when the governing authority of the land crosses the line and now gets into the business of the church and begins to instruct you as to how you are going to conduct your life, what moral code you are going to take, how you are going to value things, whether you are going to preach against homosexuality or not, whether you are going to preach against abortion or not, when the governing authority decides he is going to cross the line and get into your business as a church, you draw the line in the sand and you say that unless you can show me from Scripture where I am wrong when I declare this issue, I have to do right. Now notice please, he says this with fear in trembling. Notice what it says, then he added, here I stand and I can do no other, God help me. Martin Luther was afraid that he would lose his life right then and there. When he gets captured and taken away he thinks he is captured by the holy Roman empire and he believes he is on his way to death. He has no idea that God has Sovereignly intervened to preserve his life so that he can translate the Bible into German. He has no idea at this point. Only until they pull that mask off. You can just imagine how his mind is racing. You can just imagine the ethical dilemma his is in. He knows he is going to get ready to face his Maker and he is running through in his mind, did I do right, is that what I should have said? He is striving to have a clear conscience before God. What I am telling you that when we cross these lines of civil disobedience, we have to make sure that we are right. This is not something that we do flippantly. When we cross these lines, this is a difficult area and we have to say I trust the Lord.

If you can't show me from the Word of God where I am wrong, I have to follow God.

As a chaplain, this is very similar to what you would have if you ever have a commander that tells you that you cannot pray in the name of Jesus. Hey, Boss, it is not a lawful order. I have a higher authority that I have to answer to. I am not allowed to do that. You are going to have to take a stand. And when you take a stand you are going to have to trust God for that stand. Let me give you another one.

This is William Tyndale. The year is 1523. The church of England has separated from the Roman Catholic church and they have their own church. Tyndale is just intense on giving the people their own Bible in their own language. And the bishop, a governing authority from Tyndale's perspective, says no you will not translate the Bible from Greek to English. You will not study the Latin and get it right in English. The common people will not have an English Bible. What should he do at that point? The governing authority has told him to stop doing that. Should he obey or is this a point where he should disobey the governing authorities? Tyndale says, No, I have to move forward. This is what is God's will for my life. I have to give the English people. We have a Tyndale Bible because of that. How does Tyndale die? He is burnt at the stake. Burnt at the stake. This wasn't a scenario where God rescued him and delivered him and exalted him in front of everyone. That is not what happened at all. He lost his life for taking a stand in civil disobedience.

There is no denying that there is a resurrection.

Acts 4. This will be our final passage to look at. Preacher, you talked about Martin Luther, about William Tyndale, can you give us a biblical example, Preacher? Could you give us something more biblical? Acts 4 will be my biblical example that I am right. I want to work through this very quickly and I want to show you exactly what I am talking about when sometimes it is appropriate that we cross the line. I will give you a little history. Acts 2, the church is formed in its full state. 3,000 are added to and we have a legitimate body of Christ in Jerusalem in full force in Acts 2. The Apostles start preaching this Jesus. And the governing authorities, the Jewish governing authorities are having a fit with this proclamation of Jesus. So chapter 4 begins.

And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them (John and Peter and the other Apostles). Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. Glory to God there is a resurrection of the dead. Glory to God to say that you are not dying and going to a pine box. If something happens to you and I never see you again, I am going to see you on the other side of glory. Why? Because there is a resurrection. So this is what they are preaching. There is a resurrection. People are going beyond the grave. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day. What happened? They were arrested. That is not beyond the possibilities in the 21st Century. Go up to Canada and preachers are getting arrested for preaching the truth. It is not beyond the possibilities of happening in America. So the preacher is snatched up and arrested by the God ordained authority. Follow me. The God ordained authority has now arrested the preacher and told to shut up. Many of them which heard the word believed; 5,000 are added. It came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, the high priest, John, Alexander are gathered together and they put these guys in the middle. So visualize with me this morning, you have John and Peter in the middle and they are surrounded around in this open room by all the leaders. And there is this paralyzed dude is not healed. He is now up and walking. Then Peter said filled with the Holy Spirit, You rulers of the people, God ordained leaders, he calls them rulers of the people, if we this day be examined of the great deed done in the impotent man, by what means is he made whole? Be it known unto you all and to all the people of Israel by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom you crucified, can you imagine their ears right now? If you had a blood pressure monitor right now on their hearts they are fuming right now. Whom God raised from the dead. There is a resurrection of the dead. God raised Jesus from the dead. Even by him does this man stand here before you whole. So you can just visualize it, Peter and John together and they are looking at this man and they are saying the reason this man is whole, the reason he is up and walking and physically able to do what he is doing, is because God raised Jesus from the grave and God gave us the power to give him life. That is what has happened. And this stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. You rejected the Messiah. They got it. They knew it just like that. They knew exactly what he was saying. It was piercing to their hearts. This stone that you rejected has become the head of the church. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given

When you get threatened see it as an opportunity to trust God.

among men, whereby we much be saved. Now when they saw the boldness of Peter of John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. What a great phrase. I have one simple question: Does anyone know that you have been with Jesus? At your place of work, would anyone be able to identify that you have been with Jesus? The way you conduct your small business would anyone know that you have been with Jesus? The way you conduct yourself on the job or anywhere does anyone know that you have been with Jesus? Would anyone notice if you got examined, man you have been with Jesus. Or if I came and hung out with you for a week at Ft. Bragg would we say that there is no evidence that you have been with Jesus. The way you conduct yourself, the jokes you laugh about, would there be any evidence that you have been with Jesus? Your work ethic. Because they noticed he had been with Jesus. *And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.* They can't deny it. What are you going to say? The guy is walking. What are they going to say? You're not healed? You can't deny it.

But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, Saying, What shall we do to these men? For indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. You can't deny the resurrection. You can't deny the miracle. You can't deny these things. *But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, and they speak henceforth to no man in this name.* You know what. When you get threatened you are going to have to trust in God. Threatening is an opportunity to trust in God. When the state gives out a threat that is an opportunity to trust in God. When your boss says No praying in Jesus name or else, you just got a threat. What he just gave you is an opportunity to trust in God. When she says, If you go to church one more time I am going to walk out on you, you just got a chance to trust in God. That was a God opportunity to trust in God.

So let's see what happens with these two men. *And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.* So the guards bring them back in and put them back in the middle and they say No more preaching that Jesus stuff. No more talking about the resurrection of the dead. No more telling people they can have their sins forgiven. No more. Shut your mouths. They threatened them. *But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* Wow, that is great. You decide whether you would obey God or yourselves. *For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.* We have no choice. Folks, in this room we have no choice. We have to live for Jesus. God is not going to give us a buy. You have got to tell them about Jesus. You have to speak the truth. It doesn't matter whether it is not welcome. You have got to speak the truth. Sometimes you are going to have to take a stand with civil disobedience. Martin Luther did. William Tyndale did. Others have done it. And we can do it in the 21st Century when necessary.

We have no choice but to speak the truth.