

Safford Church of Christ

3888 S Hwy 191, Safford, AZ 85546

18 January 2015

Topics

A.M. Bible Class:

The Battle Belongs to the Lord! (Ephesians 6:10f)

A.M. Lesson:

The God of the burning bush (Exodus 3)

P.M. Lesson:

Sowing generously (2 Corinthians 9:1-15)

Wednesday:

Baptized *INTO* Christ (Romans 6)

Pulpit Evangelist

Ken Knowlton: 428-3494

Elders

Greg Briggs: 428-8756

John Cunningham: 428-0895

Sunday Bible Class	10:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship	11:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship	6:30 P.M.
Wednesday Evening Class	6:30 P.M.
Thursday Ladies Bible Class	10:00 A.M.

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!" Psalm 122:2

Rules of the road to life

N. T. Wright

The rules and guidelines for Christian living are not there because God happens to like squashing people into a particular shape whether or not it's good for them, whether or not it will make them happy. The rules are there because they are the rules of the road, and it matters which road you take. One road will ultimately lead you to life, life in a new dimension, life in all its fullness.

This, too, is easy to misunderstand. People have often supposed that the threat of ultimate death, and the promise of ultimate life, work simply on the principle of the carrot and the stick. God, on this model, treats us like ignorant donkey, waving carrots over our noses ('Eternal life! How about that! Now then, get a move on!'), or, if we seem reluctant, giving us a swish with his stick ('You'll feel ashamed! You'll die! Don't do it!'). Maybe it does feel like that sometimes, but, if so, it's probably because we are looking at it wrongly. The point is quite different. As we

saw in Romans 1, if you choose to live in certain ways you are choosing behavior which is, in its own character, destructive both to those who practice it and to those whose lives are affected all around. If (to take an obvious example) people regularly get drunk and go around smashing things up, they are damaging themselves and the world around. It isn't so much that some arbitrary standard declares that such behavior is wrong and deserves punishment. Such behavior already shows the signs of its destination. It has the smell of death already upon it. The ultimate punishment is not arbitrary, like putting someone into prison for failing to pay a tax bill. It is much more like what happens when someone drives recklessly over a cliff and falls to their [*sic*] death.

Conversely, when people behave in the patterns set out in the gospel and the early Christian teaching, there are signs of life already at work. The life of the age to come is not an arbitrary reward, like someone being given a medal for rescuing a child from drowning. It is much more like the reward that a father receives when the child he has rescued is his own beloved daughter.

Paul for Everyone. Romans: Part One. WJK: 2004. 115-116.

The Instant Gratification of #JeSuisCharlie

Jennifer Grant, <http://www.christianitytoday.com>

Like the rest of the watching world, I remain appalled by what happened on January 7 at the Charlie Hebdo offices in Paris. Yet, I haven't embraced the phrase "Je suis Charlie."

Truth is, I can't say I know exactly what it means. Of course, I can translate those words into English—easy enough, even if I hadn't taken French in high school. But what does it mean? I've never held an issue of Charlie Hebdo in my hands, and I don't recall even hearing of the publication until the vicious attack a little over a week ago.

Am I, like so many of us in the West, a staunch believer in free speech?

Did the murders of cartoonists, editors, columnists, police officers, and others horrify me?

Was I inspired when the grieving city of Paris marched together and proclaimed that extremists would not hold it hostage with fear?

Yes, yes, yes on all counts. But, "am I Charlie"?

For the record, I wasn't comfortable using the #iammalala hashtag either, though it had a much clearer meaning—an indicator of support for education as a human right, as Malala stood up for girls in places where they have traditionally been denied schooling.

As inspiring as I find Ms. Yousafzai, the young Pakistani Nobel prize winner and human rights advocate, I don't feel comfortable saying I'm "her," despite being in awe of her intelligence and bravery. I share her conviction that all of the world's children are entitled to education, but I'm wary of assuming this trending hashtag. (I have given her book, also titled *I Am Malala*, as a gift multiple times).

With #jesuischarlie, more than 5 million

tweets have included the phrase—making it among the most popular news-related hashtags ever, trending on both sides of the Atlantic.

Even with such widespread popularity, hashtag activism is too easily to adopt and its issues du jour too easily forgotten. The stakes are low: no money is spent, no dialog ensues, no sacrifices are made in support of a people or cause. Sure, quickly claiming the legitimacy of an act of injustice or the pain of a tragedy to which we've just been introduced may make us feel part of something significant. It can let us articulate, using social media, that we recognize and pay attention to matters more weighty than cute cat videos or silly memes. Trending hashtags can raise awareness to introduce us to important causes. But most times, social justice-related hashtags serve as an immediate ego boost because we get to associate ourselves with likeminded, well-meaning people. Hashtag activism might even make us feel a rare and truly human connection with our favorite celebrities.

News

Esther Martin and Hattie Hedrick are having health issues. Hattie is currently living in Oklahoma.

Dan and Rose Keele request prayers for **Tina Zonnie**, Rose's sister. She has stage 3 cancer. Many here know Terry Oliver and Deanna (Oliver) Short. Their mother, Pat Oliver, is currently hospitalized with a nasty case of pneumonia. Fellowship meal today after morning services.

Prayer List:

Joy Gibson, Tatyana Knowlton, Ken Cocke, Janet Radar, H.L. Boling, Mike and Sandy Cavasos, Nic and Ani Self.

