

THE FREE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL

Michael Pickford

We Should Pay For It. The work of the local church is to sound forth the Gospel of Christ. Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica, “For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth” (1 Ths 1:8). God commands us to lay by in store upon the first day of the week (1 Cor 16:1-2), and He has commanded that those who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel (1 Cor 9:14). Preachers need to be paid, teaching materials need to be purchased, a place needs to be provided to worship, preach and teach, etc. These things cost money. We should be willing to support financially the greatest work the world has ever known.

We Should Pray For It. For my entire life I have heard brethren praying for “The free course of the Gospel.” What a prayer! Don’t ever apologize for praying for freedom of religion in worshipping and spreading the Gospel. Don’t ever let anyone tell you that God doesn’t require it! Paul commanded us to pray for those in authority that we might lead a quiet and peaceable life (1 Tim 2:1-4). In addition to this, while instructing the Ephesians (6:18-20) that they need to be praying, Paul ask that they might pray for him, that he might be able to open his mouth boldly to proclaim the gospel. He was in prison because of his preaching. We should follow Paul’s instructions and pray for the free spread of the Gospel.

We Should Participate In It. Those in Acts 8 lost their freedom to spread the Gospel(Acts 8:1-4), and yet, in the face of persecution, they went everywhere proclaiming the word (vs 4). We have the freedom to do so, are we? We need to participate in sharing the Gospel with those we come into contact with on a daily basis! 🔍

The elements of our worship, as prescribed by God’s word, are as follows:

- **SINGING:** Ephesians 5:18,19; Colossians 3:16
- **PREACHING/TEACHING:** Acts2:42; Eph. 4:11,12
- **PRAYING:** Acts 2:42; Acts 12:5
- **LORD’S SUPPER:** 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Acts 20:7
- **GIVING:** 1 Corinthians 16:1,2; 2 Corinthians 9:6,7

COME WORSHIP WITH US!

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY...9:00
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP.....10:00
SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP.....6:00
WEDNESDAY EVENING SERVICES.....7:00



- www.defendthegospel.com
- 4th Sunday Singing Night: 6 pm
- 5th Sunday Night: Guest Speaker
- Men’s Business Meeting. 1st Sunday evenings following services.



SOUTHSIDE SEARCHER

Southside church of Christ, 1167 South Lowry
Smyrna, TN 37167, Phone (615) 459-7854

“They...searched the scriptures daily...” –Acts 17:11

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RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Michael Pickford

“I was glad when they said to me, Let us go into the house of the Lord” (Psalm 122:1). I love going to services and glorifying God, and praising His holy name with His holy people. I love edifying, and being edified among my brethren. I love the feeling of peace and safety in doing all of this without having to worry about my own government bursting through the doors and arresting me. But has it always been like this? For all time and in all places? Let’s think this morning about religious freedom, or “Freedom of Religion.”

Religious Freedom Restricted. Although I have enjoyed religious freedom my entire life, it hasn’t always been like this. Even in the Bible religious freedom has been limited. Daniel’s religious freedom was restricted and he ended up in a den of lions for violating that restriction (Daniel 6:16). The apostles’ freedom to speak the name of Jesus was restricted by the Jewish leaders. They obeyed God rather than man (Acts 4:17-18; 5:28-29). Christians were persecuted severely throughout Roman History for serving the Lord. Down through history, many have lost their lives for their faithfulness to the Lord (John 16:1-4).

Religious Freedom Respected. I respect our forefathers who, in their wisdom, outlined plans for religious freedom in America. I respect soldiers, including my own dad, who was a war veteran, who put their lives on the line to protect my freedom. I will not take it for granted! I thank God for these men and women often. How can I neglect the assemblies of the saints when some of my brethren are putting their lives on the line to attend services in other nations (Hebrews 10:24-25)? How dare I consider skipping a Bible class or service for a ballgame, a TV program, or some other activity after all that blood has been shed for my freedom. But most of all, how dare I forsake the assemblies after the Lord has shed His blood for the church (Acts 20:28), and given me freedom from my sins.

Religious Freedom Requested. Phrases like “Religious freedom,” and “Freedom of religion” are not found in the Bible. But the concept certainly is. And we are told to pray for it! To request it of God! Paul tells us to pray “For kings and all who are in authority, that we might lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence” (1 Timothy 2:1-2). “Quiet and peaceable life” means the same as freedom of religion. We are fools if we think our religious freedoms aren’t being challenged in this nation! Pray for our leaders. Make requests to God often that our freedom might be sustained. And pray that it will spread, pray for relief for our brethren abroad. When I was a boy, I can remember the older men often praying that the Gospel might have free reign throughout the world. Then that great wall fell! Prayer is powerful. As we go into the house of the Lord today, let us Pray, and let us pray that others might pray, for religious freedom! 🔍

Evangelist & Editor: Michael Pickford, 615-471-1612, mpickford3@comcast.net

www.defendthegospel.com

OBEYING THE GOVERNMENT

Michael Pickford

There's always some concern among Christians about their relation to the Government. The Bible isn't silent on this issue. Paul wrote in Romans 13:1, "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God." To this, Peter adds, "Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God..." (1 Pet. 2:13-15a). This mandates that we, as children of God, are to obey the laws of the land.

There are some who want to ignore certain laws, dismissing them as silly. But, in order to be faithful to God, we must submit to them. There are some who ignore stop signs, exceed the speed limit, or decline to pay certain taxes, simply because they see no use for them. It is not ours to question, we are to obey the laws, and those who do not will have to answer for it.

Some suggest that because our government is "evil," we are therefore exempt from submitting. Nothing could be further from the truth. Consider the type of government in power during the time Peter and Paul wrote the above words. It was a wicked government indeed, one that encouraged idolatry and man worship. Nevertheless, God said to submit. I would dare say that in relation to the Roman government of the first century, our government is rather fair and sane.

But the question is inevitably asked, "What if the government requires me to do something that God would not want me to do?" Or, "What if the government decrees that I refrain from doing something that God has commanded me to do?" The Bible has allowed for these instances. John and Peter were arrested once for preaching the Gospel. They were commanded not to speak in the name of Jesus again. We might call this commandment "the law of the land." Peter and John answered, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge." (Acts 4:19). Later, in Acts 5:29, Peter said, "We ought to obey God rather than men." So, our question is answered. We should always obey our government whenever their laws do not conflict with the commandments of God. Even if some of them conflict with God's commands, we should still go on obeying the ones that do not. Even if the Government creates one law which I, as a Christian, cannot obey, this does not give me the right to disregard all other laws of the land that in no way conflict with God's will.

The government derives its authority from God. As such, we must obey the laws of the land no matter how silly they may sometimes seem to us. We are only exempt from obeying those laws which contradict God's will. 🔍

HEART CONDITIONS

Michael Pickford

- A Foolish Heart Denies God: Psalm 14:1.
- A Broken Heart Confesses Sin: Psalm 51:17; 1 Jn 1:7-9
- A Pure Heart Sees God: Mtt 5:8
- An Open Heart Receives and Heeds God's Word: Acts 16:14-15
- An Obedient Heart is Freed From Sin: Romans 6:17-18
- A Purposed Heart Continues With The Lord: Acts 11:23
- An Evil Heart of Unbelief Departs From God: Hebrews 3:12 🔍

DUTY LIST...

SUNDAY MORNING

- Announcements.....Michael Pickford
- Scripture Reading...Glenn Isbell
Reading: Ecclesiastes 8:2-8
- Song Leader.....Tony Jenkins
- Opening Prayer.....Kenny Johnson
- Lord's Table:
Lead.....Michael Pickford
Serve.....Kenny Todd
Serve.....John Nelson
- Closing Prayer.....Sam Miller

SUNDAY EVENING

- Song Leader.....Tony Jenkins
- Lord's Table.....Tony Jenkins

WEDNESDAY EVENING

- Song Leader.....Kenny Todd
- Invitation.....Kenny Johnson

Thank You For Serving!

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

There is only one true saving plan of Salvation outlined in Scripture. No substitutes will do. Have you really been saved? Get out your Bible and study the plan below.

- Hear The Gospel: Romans 10:17
- Believe: Mark 16:16; John 8:24
- Repent of Sin: Acts 2:38; 17:30
- Confess Faith: Romans 10:9, 10
- Be Baptized: Mark 16:16;
Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21
- Remain Faithful: Rev. 2:10

Obey Today!

**Home Bible Studies
Available Upon Request!**