



No doubt the series will be pregnant with controversy. But will it be fatal?

A few weeks ago I met with the deacons for our monthly meeting. Among other things, I went to them with the idea of doing a sermon series in October. As I introduced it, Steve Sivells (our Vice-chair of deacons) began to doodle on a piece of paper. I finally came to a pause and said "Well, what do you guys think? Give me some feedback." Steve held up the piece of paper on which he had drawn in front of my face. It was a target. You see, the sermon series is on the church and the government. His message was clear.

He's right. I don't think Steve was insinuating that we have some people in our church or will have visitors who will become hostile over the subject. But his message was agreed upon by everyone's laughter and my 'gulp'. The issues we face today are not black and white,

and to discuss them usually leaves people black and blue, at least inwardly. But what we cannot do as a church is be silent. Passivity, or more accurately apathy, is not an option.

Jesus is often painted as a political pacifist because he told Peter to put his sword down, he was silent before Pilate, and held thousands and thousands of angels back as the Romans pulverized his body. But does that make Jesus a pacifist, politically speaking? Scripture uses other language when it describes Jesus. For one, "The Lord is a warrior, the Lord is his name" (Ex 15:3). In fact, Jesus' death on the cross is described by Paul in this way: "This [our sin] he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him" (Col 2:14-15). An aside, the Romans were not the only ones doing the nailing that day. But finally, when Jesus returns he will do battle! John

saw a vision of Jesus in Revelation 19:15-16. "From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords." Jesus will not return to the earth with passivity. His silence before Pilate was not passivity. His refusal to call down his angelic soldiers while on the cross was not passivity.

Still, we must ask ourselves, "How then should we act?" Today we seem to draw a target on our backs, and each other's, (continued on page 3)

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July 4th Community Parade

The parking lot was filled with 200 red, white and blue balloons. 12-15 volunteers came to decorate the church van and pass out the balloons. It was great to see how the Milwood community views our desire to serve. Several expressed thanks for our willingness to host the parade. Praise God and let's hope our church family grows in influence in the community for the sake of Christ's name!



"We thank you so much for your generosity to the residents of our neighborhood! We could not continue to host events for our community without your ongoing support and look forward to a long future of working together for our neighborhood." -Walnut Crossing and Milwood Neighborhood Associations

Comments from parents of kids who attended VBS:

"At 3:30 this afternoon, my daughter was ready to go to VBS! She is so excited about the memory verses, leis, and fundraiser. This year's VBS seems to be an extra big hit with the kiddos. Thank you all for the tremendous effort and energy you put into it."

"Thank you so much. My kids had so much fun. They said time flew every night. I love that they think God and church are fun. You guys do an amazing job!"

Vacation Bible School

In the weeks leading up to Vacation Bible School, there was an extra sense of excitement and anticipation among the VBS team that this year, something big was going to happen. There was also some stress and anxiety as the team prepared and staffed for the week. Looking back, God fulfilled the same promises to us that we shared and taught the kids during VBS:

I Am With You
I Care About You
I Will Give You What You Need
I Will Answer You

Praise God! Our God is an awesome God and we should expect big things and not be surprised by them. Here is what He did:

- We had close to 50 volunteers that loved and invested in kids all week
- A 2nd grade girl accepted Jesus as her Savior
- We had a record amount given, \$2,100.32, for our Missions offering which enabled us to sponsor 5 children in Haiti for one year with the food, clothes, shelter, medicine and education they need in order to survive.

We are so blessed that God allowed us to be a part of the amazing things He accomplished through VBS!

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as soon as we begin any political conversation. So usually we don't. Christians, that doesn't cut it.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said something like, "When the government persecutes the church it loses its most faithful servant." What would be worse is a government finding its most faithful servant asleep.

But the question for us is much more than "What should we do?" We must ask, "What are we willing to become?"

Eric Metaxas spoke at the National Prayer Breakfast in 2011. In front of President Barack Obama, the Vice President, the Speaker, and many international honored guests, he painted a picture of what Christians must be willing, not only to do, but what we might need to become. He

spoke of William Wilberforce who helped abolish slavery in England. "Now he [Wilberforce] fought politically. He fought hard. And did you know that the only people really fighting with him at this point were the fanatical Christians? Did you know that? All the churchgoers, all the religious people, they were not alongside him. Who was alongside him in those days? The born-again nuts. The Quakers. The Methodists that people made fun of...Everyone else was just going with the flow. All the people who just went to church, as I say, they got it wrong. They had not seen Jesus."

For us to engage in a way that pleases God may cause us to be viewed as 'fanatical' and 'born-again nuts'. The Romans may actually mock us as we

carry our cross. Who would have thought?

The deacons, including the target artist (who drew his picture as a funny portrayal of reality and in sport), are in support of this being addressed from the pulpit as the political circumstances reach feverish temperatures. Just as a fever makes you want to lay down, for many, the political scene begs them to pull the covers of silence over their heads.

The sermon series will begin in October and be entitled, "From Cavalry to Capital Hill". Please pray for me as I prepare. Please pray for our church to respond to God and government in a way that pleases God. Pray for our nation, its leaders, and the upcoming election.

For His Glory,
Nathan Loudin

Follow Nathan's blog, The Sober Mind, by going to thesobermind.wordpress.com

Milwood students en-route to Colorado and on top of Mount Antero



Milwood Students

I cannot believe that summer is almost over. I hope to give you a glimpse into what God has been doing in our students over the past few months.

Mountain Trek

In June, 17 students and adults trekked to Colorado for our biennial backpacking and whitewater-rafting trip. This is the 5th group we have taken to the mountains. This week is used to help our students understand what Christ-like leadership looks like and for students to spend time away from their normal routines and fully experience God's creation. Around the campfire each night, along the trails with our packs on, under crew flies while cooking meals and in our tents as we tried to sleep on the not-so-comfy ground-conversations about who God is and what He is doing in our lives were shared. John 16:33 was a focal verse for the week: *"...I (Jesus) have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I (Jesus) have overcome the world."* God also revealed himself to us in our three hours alone with him in silence and solitude as we pondered what our legacy would be. For many students, the lessons learned on the way to the summit of Mount Antero and the trip back down to Austin, are still being processed; however, it is evident that God

used that week to spark some life into our group and I pray we can continue to fan that spark into a flame as they return to school in the coming weeks.

Milwood Intern

We have been blessed to have an intern this summer, Austin Jones. Austin has been instrumental in planning and promoting events this summer and was the initiator of our Mid-Week Bible Study. Most Tuesday-Thursdays he has helped lead an hour study through the Sermon on the Mount. This has been a great way to engage our students through God's word and has challenged them to start digging in on their own. The fruit of this study will be long lasting and impactful for those who have made the commitment to come. This summer we have also wrapped up a study of Colossians and we're in the middle of the Explicit Gospel video series.

Prayer

I hope you will join me in prayer for this next generation of students at Milwood. Pray that they would learn to listen to and obey the Holy Spirit. That they would be disciple-makers on their campuses. That they would not settle for Jesus filling a void in their lives, but that they would give everything they have to live for Him. Pray that they would be bold in sharing the Gospel to their friends.

Student Scholarship Fund

The student ministry at Milwood has been blessed by the continued support of the church family. We have been able to host many great events and ministry efforts because of the financial support and encouragement from Milwood.

In order to help students and their families pay for these events, we have set up a scholarship fund. The money given to this fund pays for full or partial scholarships to students that need help attending our events. Over the last year we have been able to help many students because of these funds. For that we want to thank you.

Will you consider giving to this fund? We have been able to bless many families this year through this fund, but we need your help to replenish it so we can help more students and families. You can give toward this fund at any time by marking your gift - Student Scholarship Fund.

Thank you again for your support and encouragement of the students at Milwood. You are helping us tell the coming generations about Christ and teach how to follow him.

Joyce Leonard on the Beth Moore Living Proof Live Retreat

"The Beth Moore Conference was for certain a spiritual revival within each of us in our own unique way. Beth taught us from Psalm 43 that the human soul at full stretch would go from totally cast down on one end of the spectrum to ecstatic joy on the other. We were reminded that God can use those cast-down moments to lead us to ecstatic joy if we will only stop blaming God and start claiming God. Our escorts to ecstatic joy are light and truth; we are thirsty and dry and all our fountains are in Him. What a blessing to experience such worship and joy in the presence of a very special group of friends. I think we all would agree that it was indeed an incredible weekend."

Here is what's happening in our community and adult ministries

Community

Reaching the neighborhoods that surround Milwood, including Walnut Crossing and Milwood Neighborhood Association, has been very important to us for several years now. We just finished our 3rd summer of Family Fun Nights and another summer of being the starting point for the neighborhoods' 4th of July parade. We have received several cards, emails and direct testimonies from church members and our neighbors about the positive impact these events are having in our community. Some have seen neighbors that wouldn't come to a regular service, come to a Family Fun Night. Others have heard neighbors share how much our community events mean to their families and their hope that we will continue to plan community events. We will continue to find new ways to engage our community with the Gospel and the love of Christ. Be on the look-out for information about our Block

Parties coming in September and our Fall Festival on October 31. Both will be great ways for you to initiate discussion, build relationships and share the Gospel with your neighbors and friends.

Ladies' Ministry

The Ladies' Ministry kicked off the summer with a dinner on Sunday, June 3rd. We had a wonderful time of prayer and fellowship!

We are currently studying the book of Ephesians on Monday nights at 7pm. We have loved digging deeper into God's Word and focusing on our relationships with Him. We have made new friendships and strengthened existing ones.

In our study of Ephesians, we have looked at important questions like these: "How do we live a life worthy of our calling?" and "How do we find out what pleases God?" We have been truly blessed by our study as we continually see how essential it is to spend daily,

quality time in prayer and God's Word.

On July 13-14, many were able to attend the Beth Moore Living Proof Live Retreat. See the box above for some highlights from Joyce Leonard.

Men's Ministry

This summer, several men in the church gathered early Saturday mornings to study *Tempted and Tried* by Russell Moore. The study was based on Jesus' temptation in Matthew 4. It was challenging! There were about 8 to 10 men on average who attended each week.

