

Properly Woke Love

‘A Quaker farmer was milking a cow into a bucket. When it was almost full, the cow moved and kicked the bucket over, spilling the milk. Without a word the farmer cleaned up the milk and tried again. When it was half full the cow moved and again the bucket went flying. The farmer gave a loud sigh, mopped the spilled milk, and started over. Right as he was beginning again, the cow moved a third time and kicked the bucket over. This time the farmer rose slowly to his feet and walked around to face the cow. Grasping her head and looking straight into her eyes, he said, “Friend Daisy, thou hast been a most faithful animal and thou must know that I am a Quaker and cannot harm thee. But I must say that if thou were to kick over the bucket once more, I shall sell thee to the Baptist who owns the farm down the lane!”

I dare say most of us would lack the patience and fortitude of that Quaker. Would you have resorted to some form of violence against that hapless, helpless cow? Be honest! Would you be as loving as that Quaker? Or would you be so “woke” that you’d gently “love” the cow, excuse its behavior, over and over again?

Wokeism. Folks, ever heard that word before?. It’s practically a brand new word. At least in its current usage. It entered dictionaries in 2017, making it officially only 5 years old! The orig-

inal word “woke” is simply the past participle of “wake”, which is centuries old. But the current usage stems first from the Civil War era, when the anti-slavery movement, “Wide Awake”, supported Abraham Lincoln for president. Then in the late 1950s and early 1960s, it was used by the Civil Rights movement in the form “woke”, associated with Black Americans fighting racism. Jump to the present day, and it became ubiquitous in a diluted form to designate awareness and implied sympathy for those suffering any and all forms of social injustice, especially the evil of racism.

So you see, to be woke can be a good thing. But like all “good” things, it can be perverted and become a very bad thing. In its first iterations in the 1800s as an anti-slavery term, it was a very good thing. And while race-based slavery was outlawed in the United States in 1863, slavery as a social institution has been around for nearly as long as humanity has existed on this planet. All races have been enslaved. Slavery is really just the powerful controlling the powerless. In that sense, the current “wokeism” of our day is drawing attention to that very fact, and the need to address it. But, like everything the devil touches, wokeism has now mutated into a means to overturn any and all oppression, real, perceived or simply imagined. And the means has become violent in the extreme, such that wokeism has become the very thing it’s supposedly fighting against. It now tries to oppress all who disagree with any of its forms and tenets. Because, in the new mindset, if anyone does not support any of its ideas, then that

person, by definition, is an oppressor. And the very life purpose of the “oppressed” is to throw off their oppressors. By any means necessary. No Quakers or Gandhis allowed! Pursuing wokeism is necessary to achieve a better world. Indeed, unless we all join in “wokeist” climate change mitigation programs, we’re oppressors and must be changed or eliminated if necessary.

But originally wokeism was a good thing. It’s helped reveal so much injustice and hate that has existed in social institutions for centuries. As much as we in the traditional, conservative evangelical churches, will hate to admit it, much of what we do and how we act is far from showing Christ’s love to others. While we can all justifiably decry vandalism, assaults, and other crimes committed by the pro-choice and militant LGBTQ+, the churches have in some ways, brought such rage upon themselves by the very “hate”, or lack of love imperfect Christians have shown those living “alternative lifestyles”. We’re to love sinners as Lord Jesus loved us, not condoning our sin, instead leading us out of it. The famous example is His dealing with the woman caught in the act of adultery, in John 8. It’s interesting that, while it takes two to tango, the authorities apparently didn’t bother to arrest the man along with the woman. Think there was any corruption at play then? Could it have been that possibly even one of the religious leaders was the guilty man having an affair with that woman, who apparently was Mary Magdalene. If so, we know how she turned out. The Lord told her that He didn’t condemn her. He let her go,

admonishing her to sin no more!

As we know, the law of Moses required that she be stoned to death. In short, she came within an inch of dying that very day. But Lord Jesus protected her with His words, actions, and love. And so those surrounding her with accusations, judgements and condemnations were left with no choice but to drop their stones and slink away, mortified. Christ Jesus showed her love, but did not excuse her sin. She left that place a changed woman forever. For after that encounter with the Lord, she became His steadfast and faithful follower, and indeed, she was the very first human being to see Him after He resurrected! His love had transformed her from “naughty” sinner to first witness of the victorious, glorified Lamb of God, Son of God, risen forevermore!

In that situation, the people who had caught her and condemned her, (I would hazard to say, the ones who set her up!) were the “respectable” people of the day. They were the religious leaders, the “good”, “righteous” people. Sure, many if not most or even all of them, were just using her as a pawn in an attempt to capture Lord Jesus. They really didn’t care if she was guilty or not, for their real target was Lord Jesus. If they could induce Him to condone their stoning of Mary, they could use that to undermine His popularity with the masses of common people, while at the same time, bolstering their own authority and power over them. They, alongside the Roman overlords, were the powerful while the people they ruled over were the powerless. They had

no love, or even sympathy, for Mary. One could say they were even fueled by bloodlust! They were judgemental in the extreme.

Looking back 2,000 years, as much as we can easily and smugly condemn them, seeing ourselves as oh so securely and safely on Lord Jesus' side, in actual fact, we have far more in common with those leaders ready to throw stones, than we would care to admit. For how have most churches, evangelical churches, dealt with those we view as today's sinners? For the past several decades, how have most of us dealt with persons living in alternate lifestyles, namely LGBTQ people? Or how about pro abortionists? Or Black Lives Matter? Or Antifa? Many in those groups are militant and violent, attacking those who get in their way, and badmouthing and even assaulting, to the point of murder, others who dare to oppose them. In God's providence, none have come here. None of us have been personally, physically attacked, have we? If we were, how would we react? Would we give as good as we got? Or something else?

In Matthew 5:44-45, and repeated elsewhere, our Lord says, "love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven". The question begging to be answered now is, do we do that? Do we love our enemies? Do we pray for them? What if some militant drag queens were to walk through that door, angrily shouting and disrupting our meeting? What would we do? Would you try to fight back, push them back out the door and lock it? And call

the police? If our Lord commands us to love them, how do we? What can we do? How do we obey Him? Trying to ignore them I don't think qualifies as an attempt at love, let alone not fighting back. Without going into all the minutiae of every individual person's history, the short answer to what we do is to pray. We pray God's richest blessings on them. To the extent possible, we try to show love to them, not revulsion, not embarrassment, not judgement, certainly not hate! If any will listen, we should try to love on them, speak kindly to them and even embrace them. We should, to the extent possible and proper, welcome them to become a part of our group. To become their friends, while not condoning their sins. I realize this is probably not likely, nor even should we desire. But with the culmination of decades of hate that many Christians have shown the sexually-confused, can we really blame them for the hatred they spew at us now?

To this extent, we need to be "woke", to seek to understand the root motivations of their anger, and seek to love them, as Lord Jesus loves them, and gave His life for them. In lieu of actually conversing with such sinners, which we probably never will, we are to pray for them. This is why prayer is so important, why it's so much more than just asking God for help in our own personal lives. This is why we're to linger in prayer, allowing Holy Spirit to pray through us, and touch others we'll probably never know this side of heaven. Allow properly "woke" love to flow from God through you in prayers. And lives will be changed and redeemed!

