

Dearly Beloved of God,

I love that salutation, because it speaks a truth. Wherever you are; whatever you are in, you are beloved of God.

The other day I was reading this e-mail blog written by the son of one of the ministry ;leaders in our church. Mark has a wonderful gift of taking Scripture and applying it to every-day situations we face in our world. His article, in this case, was entitled "In the Name." In that article he noted how "Whether in flippant indifference, anger, fear or arrogance, the name of Jesus is the "swear word" of choice *even in societies that do not have a significant Biblical influence*. The names of Allah, Muhammad, Buddha, Confucius or any other religious or spiritual figure are not used in this manner. It is an insult unique to the Name above all names."

He went on to illustrate how very intolerant people who claim to be tolerant are of Christ, the Bible and Christians. Usually it is only the off-beat "Christian" who does something weird, dangerous or stupid who makes the headlines. Seldom do the millions of kind and beneficial acts done by millions of "average" Christians attract any attention, much less headlines. The headlines usually blare, or at least imply: Beware of anyone who believes the Bible or follows the Lord Jesus.

So today, I want to join the ranks of the intolerant. In fact, I will say that I am intolerant, and I will give you a few examples of intolerance that are appreciated by most of you. Some of you will hear this verbally in a couple of weeks - that's O.K. - it's worth repeating. For the rest of you, here goes.

I for one, appreciate medical doctors who are intolerant about disease and affliction taking up residence in my body. Who wants to go to an open-minded doctor who has signs in his waiting room that read: "Give Bacteria a Break." "Have Some Sympathy for Staph." "Life or Death, I Have Equal Respect For Each"?

And I'm not to interested in getting on a plane where the pilot comes on the intercom and says, "Welcome aboard Lame Duck Airlines. I know that some of you like to fly high and some of you like to fly slow, some of you like to fly fast and some of you like to fly slow. They're all good in my opinion, so we'll be doing some of everything in our flight to L.A. today, which means that it's hard to give you an ETA. That should make no never mind; after all any old time is fine. So put your seat in the full recline position, hang tight to your carry-on luggage, and we'll be taking off just as soon as I cut that 747 off." I think we'd all be looking for the emergency exit.

How would you like to go to a tolerant mechanic who just hated to speak in absolutes. "I don't like to use the words 'safe' or 'unsafe' when it comes to brake shoes. I like to think of them all as just having equally good, despite the mechanical diversity." George Foreman, where are you?

How much tolerance would you have for your child's math teacher if she said, "Well Jimmy, if two plus two is five for you, then who am I to place any moral judgments on your mathematical world view?" And along these lines, how many of us would tolerate tolerant parachute packers, nuclear plant operators, or driver's education instructors? ("Stop signs are arbitrary restrictions on our personal freedom. Who's to say that stop is any better than go. And by the way, I think that either side of the yellow line has merit.")

So, when it comes to my kids, and to all of those under my shepherding responsibility, because I love them (you) I can be downright intolerant. I am very narrow-minded toward everything that's harmful to their physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being. I'm very judgmental about things like strep throat, evolution, illegal drugs, nicotine, grudges, same-sex marriage, and any sex locker rooms. Yep, I'm intolerant and will say that total tolerance makes no sense. Therefore, I propose the following resolution (maybe some brave legislator will pick this up and put it in a bill):

"Whereas our society has adopted a position of tolerance in virtually every area of life; and whereas in many cases, tolerance can prove harmful or deadly physically, socially, mentally and spiritually; and whereas in His Word, God has given us specific actions and attitudes that He will and will not tolerate:

"Be it resolved that our church be tolerant in those areas that God is tolerant and intolerant in those areas that God is intolerant."

There will no doubt be a few tolerant people who won't tolerate that. God bless you.

Yours for His Purposes,

Pastor Les

Thank you Jim Watkins for stirring up some of these ideas through your article in the May/June issue of REV magazine.