

Pt. 12 THE CHALLENGE AND THE DEFENSE

Acts 4:5-23

And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. – 1 Corinthians 15:14

ILLUSTRATION:

In his book *The Jesus Revolution*, pastor and author & president of National Association of Evangelicals... Leith Anderson shares a story about the tension that sometimes comes between obeying God and obeying the law of the land.

1. A number of years ago, he and three others were traveling to a Communist country where Christians were regularly being persecuted.
2. They did not have a direct flight to their destination, so they had to stay in a neighboring country for one evening.
3. That night, while having dinner with a few fellow Christians in that country,
 - Anderson and his companions were approached about smuggling in some Bibles for the underground church.
 - Anderson immediately refused to do so, pointing out that it was illegal.
 - The Christians in that country would not take no for an answer, though.
 - They told Anderson they would return in the morning with the Bibles and that Anderson's group should "ask God what they should do."
4. Anderson writes about the tough decisions that would follow:
 - Overnight, I made a decision.
 - A Bible or two might be risky, but not impossible.
 - However, I wasn't prepared for the following morning's delivery.
 - It was a small library of Bibles, books about Christianity, study tools, and videos.
5. I truly can't explain why we did what we did.
 - We divided up the Bibles, books, and videos among the four of us and loaded up every available space in our suitcases, carry-on bags, and purses.
 - It was not a comfortable experience.
 - When nearing our destination, the flight attendants distributed customs forms representing our names, passport numbers, and the answers to pointed questions. Were we bringing guns, narcotics, or literature into the country?
 - The four of us sat paralyzed over what to write. If we said we were not bringing literature, we were lying. If we checked that we were bringing books and Bibles, we were in serious trouble. ...

6. It was one of those moments when the Holy Spirit gave a simple solution that we would not have thought about ourselves.
 - We didn't answer the question. We left it blank.
 - I can't say that we were confident in our choice, but that's what we did.
 - As we passed through immigration surrounded by armed guards and immigration officers, our forms were carefully scrutinized and all four of us were waved through.

7. What I next remember is the secret night meeting when we turned over the Bibles and literature to Christians from the underground church. Their faces still remain with me all my life.

8. You may want to criticize my lack of courage or condemn my actions as dishonest.
 - For me, I was suddenly in the sandals of Peter and John who said, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

1. THE CHALLENGEActs 4:5-7

2. THE DEFENSE.... Acts 4:8-12

*Houston Mayor & Pastor's
 Natural Marriage in Idaho
 Navy & Bible
 Baseball Brothers & HGTV
 Bridal Boutique in PA
 Intimidation in Military*

3. THE RESULTS.... Acts 4:13-14

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. – 1 Corinthians 1:27

But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. – 1 Corinthians 4:19

Acts 4:15-18

Acts 4:19-23

Acts 4:24-31

Notice 3 Things

1. Vs 13.....They had been with Jesus

6 Steps to be closer to Jesus

Step #1 Talk to Jesus

Step #2 Spend time with Jesus

Step #3 Share your inner most thoughts with Jesus

Step #4 Fall in Love with Jesus

Step #5 Have quiet time with Jesus in His Word

Step #6 Worship Jesus faithfully

2. Vs. 31.....Filled with the Spirit Eph 5:18

3. Vs. 31.... Boldness

Pastors Launch Offensive Strike: Flood Houston Lesbian Mayor's Office with Bibles and Sermons

A report is out, in the wake of the city of Houston's [demands that area pastors hand over their sermons and communication with their members](#), saying that there is a national movement of American pastors who are going on the offensive. These pastors are banding together in a theme reminiscent of the Star Wars' saga's "[The Empire Strikes Back](#)." Their movement is called, "The Pastors Strike Back."

Pastors from across the fruited plain have decided to come together and voluntarily send [Bibles](#) and sermons to Mayor Annise Parker's office.

Former Governor Mike Huckabee [called on every pastor in America](#) to do this recently.

"I hope she gets thousands and thousands of sermons and Bibles," said Huckabee on his Fox News show Saturday.

Author Eric Metaxas also did the same thing. He [told](#) reporter David Brody, "*Never in our history has religious freedom been so brazenly defied. A bold red line has been crossed. The Houston mayor's inexcusable demand to see the sermons of pastors is an outrageous and shocking affront to all Americans and to liberty itself. If the American church does not rise up and stand against this, there is no American church.*"

Apparently though, this issue that has been stirred up by the sodomite mayor and her administration has fired up pastors around the world. According to Brody, reports are the pastors from Australia, Germany and Canada will also be sending their sermons and Bibles to the Mayor.

"On November 2nd, The Family Research council is hosting a huge [simulcast event](#) in Houston at a big church," wrote Brody. "Guests will include Mike Huckabee, Phil Robertson, the Benham brothers, Dr. Ronnie Floyd and others. In South Carolina, the South Carolina Pastors Alliance is staging an event called, "The Stand" to be held on the statehouse grounds."

This is exactly what needs to be done on a number of fronts.

Americans need to come together to defeat the tyranny that is growing in our society. These pastors get my support for their willingness to stand up and launch an offensive on behalf of their brothers in Texas.

The city of Houston [did take a step back from their larger subpoena](#) that demanded sermons and communications of pastors to removing sermons from the request. However, that didn't fly with senior legal counsel Erik Stanley from Alliance Defending Freedom.

Stanley said, "The city of Houston still doesn't get it. It thinks that by changing nothing in its subpoenas other than to remove the word 'sermons' that it has solved the problem. That solves nothing. They must be rescinded entirely."

No doubt, this is what has provoked the pastors to take this initiative.

There comes a time when men must [take a hard stand](#) and that time is now. [Texas preachers have already taken a stand](#). While I'm not sure that sending all those Bibles and sermons in will actually do anything, I do think it at least sends the message that Christians are not going to back down simply because there is intimidation by those elected to office who ignore the law and then attempt to impose immoral legislation on their citizens like Houston's "[bathroom bill](#)."

Natural Marriage in Idaho: Give It Arrest!

If homosexuals get their way, Pastor Donald Knapp won't be behind the pulpit -- he'll be behind bars. That's the stunning development in Idaho, where the day liberals promised would never come is already here. Two ministers -- a husband and wife team -- have been told by their city government that refusing to "marry" a same-sex couple will send them straight to jail.



After 25 years of owning The Hitching Post wedding chapel, Donald and Evelyn are being faced with a situation neither of them thought possible: being imprisoned for their faith. Like the flood of state amendments steamrolled by activist judges, Idaho's fell earlier this month. And with it, religious liberty. Fearing the worst, the Knapps reached out to Alliance Defending Freedom, concerned that their chapel would be targeted. Less than a week later, the battle was at their front door.

For Donald and Evelyn, there was never any question what the duo would do. Unapologetically Christian, the husband-and-wife team is overtly religious, marrying couples with faith-driven vows, and even offering marriage sermons on CD to newlyweds. That doesn't matter to city officials, who had this marriage message for The Hitching Post: Conform or be punished. And not just any punishment, but 180 days in jail and up to \$1,000 in fines for every day the ministers refuse to perform the ceremony.

Navy Clears the Decks for Bible Regs

This summer, the U.S. Navy made plenty of waves with its decision to pull Gideon Bibles from its lodge room drawers. After the public outcry was too much to ignore, branch leaders walked back the decision, choosing to [reinstate the books](#) until they could agree on a final policy.



Now, over the next couple of weeks, bases like Patuxent River Naval Air Station are going room by room to put the Bibles back after the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) demanded them purged. At Pax River, a base chaplain had been ordered to box all the books up -- until this month, when the Gideons plan to have a

Baseball Bros Not Safe at Home and Garden TV

As major league baseball players, David and Jason Benham were used to a level playing field. In Hollywood, they're finding out that for Christians, there's no such thing. The twin brothers, who were set to launch a home-flipping show on HGTV in October, found out this week that their program is being canceled before it even started!



W.W. Bridal Boutique in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania is being forced out of business because its owners are faithful Christians who believe that marriage is solely between one man and one woman. They have been intimidated to the point that their web site is **now blank**.

Christians Face Culture of Fear, Intimidation in U.S. Military Today

"It's become increasingly difficult for believers to openly express themselves out of fear of the potential consequences to their careers," a soldier says.

Another [soldier says](#) the powers-that-be in the U.S. military are "bound and determined to eradicate the military and its heritage of any references to our Christian heritage and Christian beliefs."

"In recent years we have witnessed our servicemen and women being attacked for holding to the fundamental truths of their faith," the text about the video on FRC's [militaryfree.org](#) states. "As these attacks increase, there are many who are taking a stand to defend their religious freedom and that of their comrades."