

Eternity Past

Eternity Future

The LandBetween

M I N I S T R I E S

The mission of the LandBetween Ministries is to equip leaders to fulfill Christ's Great Commission of heart-focused discipleship in a broken world.

Newsletter

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"For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son."

— John 5:22 (ESV)

JESUS SAID: "GREATER LOVE HAS NO ONE THAN THIS, THAT SOMEONE LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS."

— JOHN 15:13 (ESV)

JUDGMENT, HATE, & LOVE

"Stop being so *judgmental*."

"You are full of *hate*...you *hater*."

"If you *loved* me, you would let me do it."

Judgment. Hate. Love. These words and their meanings are important to God, as they appear throughout the Scriptures.

Today, there is a powerful "progressive" agenda that is hijacking these three words, lying about them, and using these words to oppress and attack Christians.

As we take a brief look at these three words, the meaning of truth is essential.

Over the years I have enjoyed interviewing and discussing current events and theology with a wide variety of people. During one interview I was discussing the topic of truth with a former prosecuting attorney, who ran a private law practice.

I asked this attorney about presenting truth to a jury. He said that in today's courts, truth and facts themselves are not important, but the *perception* of truth is what matters. Likewise, our "progressive"

society is using bullying tactics through a variety of venues in order to change the *perception* of judgment, hate, and love to incite hatred against those who love God.

JUDGMENT

In a 2013 article on christianpost.com, pastor Greg Laurie made an astute point that, in his view, John 3:16 is no longer the best-known verse, especially by non-believers.



Rather, it is what Jesus taught in Matthew 7:1, "Judge not, that you be not judged."

In today's world, when Christians stand for wholesome values, the "progressive" culture pontificates, "Stop being so judgmental." These enemies of truth falsely equate disagreement with judgment. They try to silence Christians by claiming the expression of biblical values is equivalent to disobeying Jesus's command to not

judge. Faithful believers like Stephen and Paul expressed disagreements with anti-Christians but were not judging them.

In the Bible, "judgment" is often related to punishment. To "Judge not..." can mean leaving the punishment of rejecting Jesus in God's hands, not ours. If someone rejects Jesus as their Savior, they are bringing judgment on themselves (John 12:48).

Judgment is not saying something is "wrong" as some in our hypersensitive culture claim. Rather, one of many examples of judging is stating that someone will, "Never get right with God." This is judging sinfully because saying, "never" is making a final charge (aka curse) they will never receive Christ as their Savior when that decision is between them and God.

So, if someone says to you, "Stop judging me" they might be falsely accusing you.

HATE

Over the past decades, there is a growing trend in the West to create "hate crimes."

On the surface, it seems like a good idea to criminalize "hate"; but, what is the end result of these subjective laws?

In places like the UK, hate crimes have resulted in punishing religious freedom of speech; especially, targeting Christians.

For example, if Jesus was teaching at a church in the UK He might be charged with a hate crime for saying what He did to some religious leaders of His day:

"You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies." (John 8:44, ESV).

That is all you have to say to be charged with a hate crime. Christian pastors who never incite violence or wish ill will on anyone can still be charged with a hate crime for simply pointing out truth as Jesus did. Ironically, other religious leaders and atheists can say all sorts of horrible lies about Christians and even call for violence. And, our Western leaders often allow them to attack Christians with relative impunity.

A general definition of "hate" in the Bible is "varying levels of dislike toward someone or something" or "having malicious feelings toward things or people" (*Mounce's Complete Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words*, pp. 321-322).

In Jesus' integrity and honesty He predicted the onslaught of hate against His followers, *"And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved."* (Mark 13:13, ESV).

LOVE

Jesus' life is the epitome of love. Jesus never murdered anybody; He chastised Peter for his attempted murder of a Roman guard; and, other than John the Beloved, most of Jesus' disciples were killed for their faith.

The life of Jesus contrasts greatly with other major religious leaders who have, and still do, leave a legacy of violence in their wake.

Recently, the Director of the Centre of for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR), reported to Vatican Radio that Christians are the most persecuted religious group in the world.

Some of the oldest continuous Christian communities for the past 2,000 years in Iraq, Syria, and other nations have been

destroyed since 2003. Yet, non-biblically oriented power brokers of the United States have hardly allowed any of these suffering Christian refugees in to our country. The majority of those killed for their love of Jesus in 2016 were evangelical Christians in Asia and Africa.

Jesus said in John 13:35, "By this all people will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (ESV)

But if we in the West truly loved our sisters and brothers facing persecution, would we not do more for them? Why has Western leadership left Christians in places like the Middle East in worse condition than before they engaged in these regions? The answers to these questions are complex; but, here are some reasons:

- 1) Christians in the West can sympathize with other believers being killed, but feel powerless to stop the violence.
- 2) For all the sermons and Bible studies on "love" Western church leaders may see there is little social or financial gain in caring for those believers victimized by hate. Monetary issues are more significant than often admitted by leadership.
- 3) Western leaders may fear that working for persecuted Christians will result in their own suffering.
- 4) Christians may suffer hate due to Western leaders pretending to be Christians in order to get elected, but in their hearts do not truly love Christians.

The media shows people with signs saying, "Love wins." What does that mean?

In many cases, today's cultural perception of "love" can include agreeing with all forms of sexual identities or sex acts. But, if a Christian, no matter how polite and kind, expresses disagreement with anti-biblical values they are preached at, "Didn't Jesus say to, 'love one another'?"

Some Christian small business owners and others answering hypothetical questions about values receive death threats if they simply disagree with those who pride themselves on "tolerance." But, in reality many of these "tolerant progressives" are simply regurgitating the same old hatred and, at times, violence that stems from Lucifer's heart.

Yes, Jesus did say to "love one another." But, while never resorting to violence or murder, Jesus loves others enough to express disagreement with their false beliefs and sinful actions. Jesus expressed disagreement with the religious leaders of His day for many reasons, including their false belief that part of salvation was through giving money to organized religion; and, He called out religious leaders who were full of "...greed and self-indulgence." (Matthew 23:25, ESV).

Jesus expressed love through firmly revealing the hypocrisy of the religious leaders who were ready to stone a woman to death (John 8:1-11), but were too proud to admit their own sin and need for Christ's forgiveness.

It was Christians like Britain's MP William Wilberforce who fought for decades to successfully end the British slave trade. President Abraham Lincoln was inspired by the work of Wilberforce in striving to end America's slave trade. Millions of Christians in America expressed God's love by giving up their lives to end the slave trade.

In the poorest countries of the world, Christian-run hospitals are doing more than other groups in bringing healthcare and God's love to the sick and dying.

Yet, in the West today, an anti-Christian agenda is trying to shame believers into silence by making it sound like Christians are not loving. This anti-Christian agenda is unhinged from truth. Though not perfect through history, overall, believers in Christ are the ones who have brought this broken world the true love of God.

In the midst of this painful and stressful world, there is good news. Though tens of millions of Christians have been killed for their faith, especially in the last 100 years, millions more are finding true love, joy, and peace in Jesus. As Paul wrote...

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13, NIV)

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