THE PARABLE OF THE THREE POLITICIANS

There were three political candidates who were running for the same office in an election year. Two of the politicians, candidates #1 and #2, had similar platforms while the third, candidate #3, promoted a campaign undergird by a completely different and diametrically opposed ideology. The race was very close and as the election drew near, no candidate significantly separated himself from the others. Thus, in an important constituent town, at a crucial time right before the election, candidate #3 decided to hold a political rally and give a public speech. There were many who attended the rally, including candidates #1 and #2, but as candidate #3 spoke his speech appeared to alienate much of the audience. As candidates #1 and #2 listened intently they concluded both the content and manner of candidate #3's speech essentially spelled political suicide and might aide their bid to win the election. Candidate #1 left the rally without speaking to candidate #3, but candidate #2 confronted candidate #3 and told him that his political strategy was ineffective and counterproductive. Which candidate, #1 or #2, acted consistently and wisely?

THE ANSWER

The answer is candidate #1. Whether candidate #3's speech was detrimental to his election chances or not, this was the stated conclusion of candidates #1 and #2. Consequently, candidate #1 acted in accordance with this stated rhetoric, quietly allowing his opponent to essentially undermine his own campaign. On the other hand, candidate #2, contrary to his stated belief, attempted to dissuade candidate #3 from what he professed to believe would spell his political opponent's doom. This is inconsistent with his stated conclusion and proves he actually considered candidate #3's speech as a viable political threat.

THE APPLICATION

"Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." —Acts 5:34-39

We are often told by our philosophical enemies (*Atheist*, *Humanists*, *Marxists*, *Baby Killers*, *Various Perverts*, and *Liberals* of every sort) that our open-air preaching is abrasive, and our evangelistic methods are unprofitable and futile. This is an interesting practice and is an indicator that they do not believe what they say. If our message and methods were truly counterproductive why not leave us to ourselves, seeing we're alienating the same audience they are apparently interested in persuading to their respective views? The reality is this—as *light* confronts and exposes the *darkness,* there ensues

a bloody clash between the *redeemed* and *fallen* realms in the spirit. The hearts of the wicked become inflamed with indignation because latently hidden deep within in their seared consciences, they sense God, His Word, and His people are indeed a formidable threat to their kingdom of rebellion. Though they may intellectually deny it, their actions expose their dishonesty. It's all too funny watching students tell us, '*This doesn't work!*', while they skip classes spending hours engaging us then often following us to our vehicles, dialoguing with us via e-mail and FB for months afterward, and even sometimes visiting us from hours away. The power of provocation is often the greatest influence in conveying a message.

—B.W.

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