**Offering Service to God**

Based on [John 15:26-16:4](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Jn15.26-16.4)

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The Seventh Sunday of Easter ~

Exaudi

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Does anyone who does evil really think they are doing evil? It is a good question. Men can always justify their actions as being for some greater good. Divorce is evil; God hates it…but many go through with it anyway as better than staying in a toxic relationship. Abortion is murder; God detests it…but many say it is more merciful that giving birth to an unwanted baby. And these are the obvious sins that are so public they demand an official account. Infinite are the subtle excuses of the mind for private sins. Nobody, it seems, frames their actions as “evil”, but rather as “the lesser of two evils”.

It seems ridiculous to think of obviously wicked people as actually thinking they are good. But it is also ridiculous to think of this or that person committing themselves to the abstract cause of evil…to think of them waking up in the morning and saying “Let’s go out and do some evil today.” No they call evil good, and good evil. As the Prophet Isaiah said, “**Woe to those who call evil good and good evil**” (5:20).

So Jesus says to his disciples, “**the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God**.” That is an amazing statement. Those who murdered the apostles, and murdered Christians, they actually thought they were doing what God wanted! This is as relevant in our post-nine-eleven world as it was back then.

On the one hand, this might make us more sympathetic towards those who think differently than we do. It might make us suppose that evil intention…in the end…is really just misunderstanding. *Maybe it’s just a failure of education. If we simply enlighten the world about Christ, the world will convert to Christ. Maybe if we just get our terms right and our facts straight; maybe if we try out new and less restrictive interpretations of the bible, maybe if we reinvent the church and worship to suit the world, the world will see that we are on God’s side, and like us and spare us the shame and humility of a cross.*

Dear friends in Christ, I have some very good advice for you. Don’t try to be more merciful than God. Don’t try to love your enemy more than Jesus. Don’t try to outdo the Holy Spirit in winning souls for Christ. Realize that most of humanity will die in their sins and be cast into eternal hell. Do you think that any of them would have ended up in paradise if only they’d have been better educated? Understand that those who die in their sins were destined to do so by their own hardness of heart. If you believe and teach as though it were otherwise, then you are making God out to be a liar. He says he desires that all would repent and come to a knowledge of the truth. The reason they remain blind is because they resist the Word and Spirit; because they love the glory that comes from man more than the glory that is of God (John 12:43).

Rather than sympathize with evil peoples “good intentions”, we are to simply recognize their folly for what it is. Surely you are familiar with an old proverb …”the road to hell is paved with Good intentions.” Many people will offend God while doing things with good intentions in His name. And they are no better off than the devil who intends evil.

Jesus’ words are a warning to his disciples, and they serve as a warning to us. The disciples would have to suffer and die at the hands of those who *really* thought they were in the right; *really* thought they were serving God, *really* thought they were punishing evil in His name. That’s a hard cross to bear. Jesus prepares his disciples for such a cross; by telling them about it; and by suffering the same thing himself before them. The Jews who killed Jesus thought they were serving God. Those who would later kill the apostles thought they were doing good. And those who persecute and kill Christians for serving Christ, from the beginning of his church until now, think they have God on their side.

But let this be a reminder to ourselves… There is more to salvation than good intentions. Nobody was ever saved by their good intentions. Nobody’s sins were forgiven because they thought they were in the right at the time. Each and every one of you will have to give an account to God for your deeds…be sure you *can* give an account for your deeds.

You are not animals who sniff and snarl your way through the world. You have been given a heart, and a mind, and through faith in Christ, you have been given a Spirit from God…and you have his Word. Certainly there are some hard decisions you have to make in your life, and you might get them wrong, and will need to repent. But there are mortal sins that drive out the Holy Spirit, that are caused by willful ignorance and blindness. The come from a hardened heart and a spirit of rebellion, and you need to be on guard against them. The spirit of this world has an intoxicating hold upon the minds of shallow men, who are better at flattering their friends than following the Lord.

This is especially important today, when the distinction between right and wrong is not celebrated, but blurred. Don’t drink the kool aid. Remember, right and wrong are distinguished by their Author, who has written his Scriptures for our learning and edification. Those who refuse to hear the word have *chosen* to be blind, in order to trick their own conscience into complicity with evil.

But you have sworn off the old self, sworn off this world and sworn off its prince. If you are truly Christ’s…don’t plead moral ignorance with a defense of “good intentions”. Don’t keep your head in the sand, but in God’s Word which will equip you for every Good work. Jesus has ascended to the Father; He is taken from our sight; but He has left us his Holy Spirit. And His Spirit dwells in, with, and under the Scriptures which are the Word of God.

The holy apostles died at the hands of good intentioned men. But left their witness of all that Christ taught them on the pages and in the preaching of the New Testament. If a seed falls to the ground and dies it bears much fruit; the apostles died and bore the Bible you have today, the Word through which Christ sends his spirit. Truly, the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.

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The road to hell is paved with good intentions; the road to heaven is paved with the forgiveness found in the blood of Jesus Christ. He died so that we might live in him and with him. It is not enough that you know his name and have good intentions. There are many who do abominable things while bearing his name, because they know neither the scriptures nor the power contained therein. The Scriptures are the the Holy Spirit for you; do not quench Him, do not grieve him…open the Scriptures, Go to Church, read and hear the Word of the Lord, and you won’t need to rely on Good intentions. For Jesus Christ will give you a good Spirit, through which you can know that, abiding in His Word, you are offering service to God in Spirit and Truth.