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WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL WHAT WE SAY!

While passing through Lumberton a few months back I noticed a sign in front of a Baptist church that said, "Let's lift up Jesus." This terminology of Jesus being "lifted up" is found in the scriptures. Unfortunately it does not mean what people use it to mean today. When people speak of "lifting up Jesus" today, they are talking about praising Him and giving Him glory. There of course is nothing wrong with this idea of giving glory to Jesus; He deserves all of the glory that we can possibly give to Him. (Matthew 21:1-9) However this is not what "lifting up Jesus" is talking about in the Bible. John 12:31-33 explains what this was talking about; Jesus said "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This He said signifying what death He should die." Similar statements are also found in John 3:14 and John 8:28 and it is talking about the same thing in those places as well. So as far as I am concerned, I do not wish to "lift up Jesus" today; He was "lifted up" once before on Calvary's cross for the sins of the world. He suffered for my sins and for your sins nearly 2000 years ago. And for that great sacrifice I will always praise Him and do my best to give Him glory all of the days of my life. (Matthew 5:16/1st Cor. 10:31) Therefore, let us be careful how we speak as Christians. We may be guilty of saying something that we do not intend to say.

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S BIBLE QUESTIONS:

Zechariah 11:12-13 is the Old Testament scripture that speaks of the betrayal price of Jesus. Both Matthew 26:14-16 and Matthew 27:3-5 speak of the 30 pieces of silver that Judas was paid for leading the soldiers to Jesus. This amount is equal to about \$15-20.00 today.

QUESTIONS FOR THIS MONTH:

What man in the Old Testament had a son who was very strong and what was his son's name? (What was the secret of his strength and who deceived him into telling this secret?)

What chapter in the New Testament speaks of the right of the civil government to carry out the death penalty? (Find the statement made by Jesus where He recognized this authority as well.)

"LET NO MAN DESPISE THY YOUTH..."

In 1st Timothy 4:12 Paul makes the following statement to a young Christian named Timothy: ***"Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe."*** (NASV) It is obvious from Paul's statement to Timothy that he had confidence in him and his character; that he could be a good example of what a young Christian should be. We give these same encouraging words to our young people today: Be a good example to your classmates, to your peers, to your brothers and sisters, and to other young Christians. Let your speech, your behavior, your faith, your love and your purity be an encouragement to others to follow. We have confidence in you that you can live a righteous life and in so doing lead others to Christ through your godly example!

"LORD, GIVE US THE BOLDNESS TO SPEAK!"

In Acts 4, we read about the early challenges and difficulties that the Apostles faced as they labored to preach the gospel in Jerusalem. They had been put in prison by their enemies, threatened about preaching the gospel of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ in Jerusalem, and then set free. They prayed to God for boldness to continue to preach about Jesus, and that boldness came. Many souls were saved because of the courage and boldness demonstrated by the Apostles in preaching the gospel. (Acts 4:4/5:14/6:7)

Today we as Christians need to have this same kind of boldness as well. Too often times we are almost apologetic for the fact that we believe that there is **"only one true church"** (Matthew 16:18/Acts 2:47/Ephesians 1:19-22/Ephesians 4:4); and that **"baptism is necessary for salvation"** (Mark 16:16/Acts 22:16/1st Peter 3:21/Romans 6:3-4). Sometimes we are shy about saying that the Bible teaches that there is **"only one acceptable reason for divorce with the right of remarriage and that is fornication, which is sexual infidelity."** (Matthew 19:9) We need greater conviction and boldness to proclaim God's truth today as the Apostles did back in the first century. Let us as Christians pray to our heavenly Father that He will grant us the boldness that we need to continue this great work of teaching the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ to people today! It may be that this is what is really lacking among God's people, at least to some degree. Maybe with greater boldness and courage to speak as we ought, that more and more souls will be won for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! (Colossians 4:3-4) **If it happened in the first century, why can it not happen again today?**