

### **The Wednesday Word, December 16, 2015: Gospel Trouble!**

Someone once said that the Christian life is easy. I disagree! As far as I can see, only the easy parts are easy. The hard parts are hard, very hard.

Along with the joy and peace in believing comes trouble.

Have you ever noticed just how much trouble Jesus caused? Consider Paul. He was doing very well thank you until he was enlisted by the Nazarene. I think I can hear some of his former friends, saying, "That guy Saul really blew it! He was one of the most privileged men in Israel till he went astray following that Jesus fellow. What good did it do him? Kicked out of Synagogues, whipped and beaten, stoned and left for dead! All he got was trouble."

Jesus, Himself, was always surrounded by trouble. Even at His birth, there was trouble. Remember how the Wise Men came looking for the newborn King and all Jerusalem was 'troubled' (Matt 2:3). Now, why in the name of thunder would the birth of a baby trouble an entire city? The new King had arrived but rather than being excited or filled with rejoicing--- the citizens of Jerusalem were troubled. What a strange brew---- an entire city troubled by a baby!

But, why were they troubled? Maybe they were troubled because they knew that Herod wouldn't take this news well ...and 'if the King ain't happy, ain't nobody happy!' On the other hand, maybe they really understood that this baby was their rightful King...a King who demanded allegiance and loyalty. A King who expected all! Maybe they felt they would be better off with Herod and the Romans. Whoever he was, this baby was trouble!

Jesus always causes trouble! He leads us to life by means of death....that's troubling, especially when we are so committed to our own plans, goals and ambitions.

Christ speaks to us in grace, looks at us in grace, thinks of us in grace and promises us gracious rest, but this grace comes wrapped in a cross that brings us to an end of our noble efforts to impress God .....that's troubling.

What a strange Saviour He really is! He comes promising peace but at the same time brings a sword (Matthew 10:34). Swords speak of trouble!

But those ancient Wise Men saw nothing in Him to trouble them. They wanted to worship Him. They were prepared to take Him for who He was...the King and Sovereign of their existence.

We will either be troubled by Him or we will worship Him. But, even when we worship Him, we will not be free from trouble. Yet, somehow, in trouble, we learn that even in the midst of that which seems wrong and not according to the script of a good writer, He who was born in Bethlehem is really in charge. In the darkness of pain, we can come to a place where we can thank God for the grace of trouble! The truth is, our only hope is to be troubled by Jesus. We need Christ to trouble us. We need to be troubled about our self-righteousness self- sufficiency in order that we can trust in Christ's righteousness and sufficiency alone.

And that's the Gospel Truth!