

Jesus in The News

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At the 9/11 celebration this week in New York City it will be clergy free, meaning no ministers will be allowed to participate.

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg has decided there will be no clergy presence at the upcoming ceremony observing the tenth anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center.

I do not find that so unusual, that's consistency with political correctness.

Most of us remember when Fox News commentator Brit Hume was asked his opinion about golf star Tiger Woods, whose marriage was on the ropes because of multiple reports of adulterous affairs. So when Brit was asked about it on the *Fox News Sunday* show, he said that he thought Tiger could save his golfing career but salvaging his personal life was another matter. Then his comments went in an unexpected direction:

The Tiger Woods that emerges once the news value dies out of this scandal – the extent to which he can recover – seems to me to depend on his faith. He's said to be a Buddhist; I don't think that faith offers the kind of forgiveness and redemption that is offered by the Christian faith. So my message to Tiger would be, "Tiger, turn to the Christian faith and you can make a total recovery and be a great example to the world."

Not surprisingly, his comments resulted in a tidal wave of criticism. He has been called a "bigot" and "narrow-minded." One writer called his statement

“creepy” and “a stupid way to think.” Even to some Christians, it seems faintly embarrassing to see a public figure be so bold.

But Brit Hume wasn't finished yet. The next day he went on *The O'Reilly Factor* and repeated what he said on that Sunday, **laying down some seriously good theology in the process**. And then he went even further during a radio interview, explaining his remarks this way:

Christianity is uniquely and especially about redemption and forgiveness. That is what the cornerstone of what the faith is about. Now other faiths aren't hostile to the idea, but think of what the message of Christ and Christianity is. It is that the God of the universe sent His only begotten Son, who died a hideous death on the cross, to atone for all of our sins.

He is saying nothing new here at all. But in calling for Tiger Woods to convert to Christianity, he violated the taboo that says either say nothing publicly about religion or praise all religions as basically good. But it is all to his credit that Brit Hume has refused to back down.

Near the end of his interview with Bill O'Reilly he said that the name of Jesus has always been explosive. Nice word. It reminds me of **Romans 1:16** and Paul's comment that the gospel is the “**power**” of God providing salvation for anyone who believes. An old gospel song says

Verse 1:

Tis' so sweet to trust in Jesus,
just to take Him at His word.
Just to rest upon His promise,
and just to know that is was said by God.

Chorus:

Jesus, Jesus, how I trust You,

how I prove You more and more.
Jesus, Jesus, my precious Jesus,
I thank You for grace to trust You more.

How true this song is, but the name of Jesus is also explosive.

Not everyone loves the name of Jesus.
Many people prefer never to hear his name mentioned in public.

If you don't want an explosion, keep quiet about Jesus.

Brit Hume dared to open his mouth and calmly say what Christians have always believed—that there is forgiveness and redemption through Jesus Christ.

I hope Tiger Woods will take it to heart someday.
And I hope more Christians will take courage to be as bold as Brit Hume.

One other thing he said stood out to me. When Bill O'Reilly asked him why there were so many negative comments about Christianity, Brit Hume replied this way:

“You speak the name of Jesus Christ . . . and all hell breaks loose.”

It's always been that way. Jesus himself reminded us that “I did not come to bring peace, but a sword” ([Matthew 10:34](#)). Remember that a sword cuts both ways. *When we preach the Good News of Jesus, not everyone will be happy with us.* Some will sneer, others will ignore us, and some will believe our message. And we never know in advance what reaction we're going to get. You can't look at an audience and say, “That man will believe but his buddy next to him won't.” It doesn't work that way.

What happened to Brit Hume happens to anyone who speaks up for Jesus.

Some will like it.

Some won't like it.

Some won't care either way.

How do we stay encouraged when we know that some people will not only reject our message but us as well? How do we stay focused on our task instead of worrying about what others may think about us?

2 Corinthians 2:12-17 NIV

¹² Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me,

¹³ I still had no peace of mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said good-bye to them and went on to Macedonia.

¹⁴ But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him.

¹⁵ For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.

¹⁶ To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task?

¹⁷ Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God.

These verses offer us a clear answer to discouragement by reminding us that when we are joined with Jesus Christ, we are on the winning side.

We may lose a few battles, but the victory belongs to the Lord.

If we are on his side, doing his work, we cannot lose.