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THE ANCHOR

“so we do not drift away”

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Tolerance. Never before has a word gained popularity so quickly in our culture. Today everyone is expected to be tolerant of each other and their beliefs. According to Wikipedia tolerance is, “a fair, objective, and permissive attitude toward those whose opinions, practices, race, religion, nationality, etc., differ from one's own; freedom from bigotry.” We are told repeatedly that tolerance is the mark of our nation and us as a people. That in a melting pot country like ours where the minorities are quickly becoming the majorities we must promote and embrace this idea of tolerance in order to survive and grow. Indeed it must become our unifying cry as we learn to embrace, accept and become one people even if we believe differently. Truth be told that does not sound like a bad idea. People getting along, refusing to discriminate, learning to accept people for what they are... who would be against that? The problem is we do not live in a nation where tolerance is actually practiced.

If you have watched the news this last week you immediately thought of an event that showed the lack of tolerance in our nation. I am referring to the comments made by Chick-fil-A President and COO Dan Cathy in an interview he made with the Baptist Press. Here is what Cathy said regarding his companies support of traditional families. “We are very much supportive of the family -- the biblical definition of the family unit. We are a family-owned business, a family-led business, and we are married to our first wives. We give God thanks for that. We operate as a family business ... our restaurants are typically led by families; some are single. We want to do anything we possibly can to strengthen families. We are very much committed to that.” It was with these words that the storm of intolerance was unleashed.

According to the media, Cathy was the intolerant one. Chick-fil-A and their COO were described as homophobic, bigoted, hate-mongers, hypocrites and any other assortment of names. The mayors of Boston, Chicago, San Francisco and Washington D.C. all stated that because of Cathy's comments that they would oppose the expansion of any new Chick-fil-A stores in their cities. Bloggers ranted and raved about the hate-filled values that Cathy was throwing out and how backwards and close-minded he was. A traditional biblical marriage was mocked as one in which the woman was not allowed to speak, many wives and concubines were allowed, women who were not virgins were not considered worthy to be brides as Biblical verses were pulled out at random to point out that a biblical marriage is a horrible event to partake in.

Sounds tolerant, does it not? I can definitely detect in the responses of these people, “a fair, objective and permissive attitude towards those opinions... practices... differ from their own.” Tolerance might be more clearly defined in our culture as, “My right to be correct in my thinking, and you having the right to think what I think or be labeled as bigoted and oppressive.” The very attitudes that Cathy is accused of having are on full display in the response of those who do not agree with his thinking. Not to mention the frightening implications of governmental leaders making policy decisions based on religious reasons in spite of the reality of the religion clauses in the first amendment in the constitution. We would do well to remember Thomas Jefferson's letter to the Danbury Baptist Association in 1802, “Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man and his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church and State.” As far as a traditional biblical marriage, it is hard to argue with people who randomly pick and choose verses at random from the Bible completely removing them from context and thus meaning. It is also hard to get someone to understand that the Bible is not a rulebook by which we use draconian measures to live by, but instead is a revelation of a living and loving God who out of that love acted out towards humanity desiring to restore and redeem them into the relationship for which He created them, which will lead to their joy and His glory.

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If there really is any tolerance in our world it is found in God, although I believe most people would argue the exact opposite. The truth is that God is holy and righteous, and thus has standards that are so far removed from what we consider correct or appropriate, that many actually laugh at the notion that God would think or feel that way, and invariably come to the conclusion that they could not and will not believe in a God who, for example, is against homosexual marriage. They would argue that there is no way that a loving God could be against something that is who they are, and that if God cannot love them like they are then they do not want to have anything to do with a God like that. Here's where we see the tolerance.

In God's eyes when He looks at humanity He does not see homosexuals and straight people, He simply sees one kind of people, sinners. From Adam and Eve until now we have all made choices and actions that have valued and treasured other things as more important than God, and as a result of that have fractured our very nature and our relationship with God. Indeed we have been convicted by our choices and actions and have been sentenced with separation from God ending in our death. As time went on, we began to accept this broken status as normal, and began to value ourselves and creation more than God. God's response to this was to allow us to go on with what we wanted, even though it led us away from Him and what we were created for. To see this in context, read Romans 1:18-32. The end result is that all of us were separated from God, homosexual and straight, Democrat and Republican, liberal and conservative. In that moment, when we were all far from God and worshipping ourselves instead of Him, God loved us and acted to offer us the chance to be forgiven and restored to relationship with Him. So He sent Jesus His son to come and live the life we couldn't live, and die the death that we were supposed to die, that we might be remade from sinners into God's children. This happens not by our merit or actions, but by the grace of God alone. This is tolerance, that we were separated by God because of our sin, and God provided a way for us to be remade and restored to relationship with Him.

So what does this mean for us today? That we align ourselves with God's standards and holiness, even though we ourselves are not perfect. That we agree with God on what He says about things like marriage, while at the same time loving everyone the way God does. A true follower of Christ knows, loves and has relationships with all kinds of people especially those of different faiths, races, and sexual orientation while at the same time holding firm to the biblical standards God has laid out. We should be able to do this well because we are just like those people for we too are sinners, and we want for those people the grace and mercy that God so lavishly poured out on us. For us this is tolerance, that all have sinned, and all can be forgiven. Let us go and live this tolerance to all we encounter. *Karin*



**South Africa
Mission Trip
July 20-28, 2013**

If you would like to go on the Mission Trip to Bela Bela, South Africa please sign up in the church office with a \$100 deposit or simply put your deposit in the offering plate labeled with your name and "Mission Trip Deposit". **The last day to sign up is August 26th.** Also the first mandatory meeting for those that sign up is on September 2nd immediately after the Worship Service.

Have any ideas on how our church can better minister to the oil field workers? We will be having a meeting after the Worship Service on August 12th to share and discuss ideas on how to better serve these men and women.

*Celebrating
Baptism*

Sadie Tristan
Victoria Kotzur
Amber Morales
Joi Morales
Chance Addington
Alexis Reyes

Stewardship

	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Received</u>
Month:	14,982.17	27,372.06
Year:	104,875.19	180,781.22

Sound Bytes

There is no greater way to love than to give your life for your friends. -John 15:13 (The Voice)

One of the selling points of becoming a teacher when you're trying to decide what you want to do when you grow up is getting the entire summer off with no responsibilities. As soon as you begin your teaching career, you learn what most people learn when they begin their careers: you've been lied to. From conferences and conventions, to planning for the following school year, from becoming the caretaker of your children, to family visits, there is very little time left for just lying around and relaxing as you envisioned it when you began this journey.

This summer, Kayla, Brenna, and I took on a new adventure we felt God had called us to: foster parenting. To say that this was the most difficult and intense month of my life would be a drastic understatement. To put it another way, I have a newfound appreciation for Romans 8:26 which speaks to the Holy Spirit articulating prayers that our hearts cannot put into words, as well as 1 Thessalonians 5:17 that reminds us to pray without ceasing.

The foster kids that God chose to put into our lives made us cling to the power that we gain in Christ as well as continually cry out to Him with continual needs. Looking back on it now, there are a few things we know that got us through. The chief of these factors was the friendship of our church family.

There are not enough words of thanks for those of you who gave of your time as well as those who continually put our situation before the Father's throne in prayer. At those moments when we were sure we could not continue, we felt your prayers. At those times when we knew we wouldn't survive without a break, you came through for us. How *blessed* we are to have a family right here in KC when our physical family is so far from us. You brought the verse that begins this article to life for our family, and we can never repay you for it.

Sometimes, we forget how important our church family should be to us. We lose sight of how much people care about us and we try to hide our trials, pains, and shortcomings. I thank God for reminding me that you are the people we get to share eternity with, and I can't wait. Thank you so much for caring for us and please continue to pray as we seek out God in our next adventure!
~Nathan Jones

Youth Camp

