

The Correspondent



SUNDAY

Bible Study 9:30 AM
Worship 10:30 AM & 1:30 PM

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study (Adult) 1:30 PM
Bible Study (All Ages) 7:00 PM
www.collinsville-troycoc.org
(618) 667-6708

For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth... in every place. (1 Thessalonians 1:8)

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Speak the Things We Have Seen and Heard

-Renn Ferguson

Thomas Campbell is credited with the saying, “Speak where the Bible speaks, be silent where the Bible is silent.” There is another version of this quote which adds, “call Bible things by Bible names, and do Bible things in Bible ways.” Thomas and Alexander Campbell were preachers in the early 1800’s during the restoration movement of the United States. It is said that Thomas made this statement at the end of one of his lessons. Though Thomas was credited with this saying he was not the first to make a statement with the same point.

In Acts 4, shortly after the establishment of the church, we read of the persecution that Peter and John faced. They were in the temple where Peter healed a crippled man (3:1-10). They had been there teaching people about Christ. Unfortunately, as they were teaching the Sadducees became irritated with their teaching and seized them. The next day they were brought before the council to be questioned. They asked Peter by what power had he healed the crippled man and of course he declared to them that it was by the power of Jesus. Notice what is said in verse 14, “but seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition.” They knew they had no case against Peter and John. So, they had to figure out what to do with them. As verse 18 records, “so they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.” To which Peter replied, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you just judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” Sounds familiar right? Thomas Campbell, in essence said the same thing Peter said. Though we were not there to witness Christ personally we have the testimony of God through the New Testament writers. Therefore, we must not go beyond what we have from Him. Anything more is too much, anything less is not enough.

Peter later wrote, “whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God...” What does that mean? It means to simply speak the truth. In fact, Paul said, “for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.” (Acts 20:27). Paul understood that God is the standard. Just as Jesus stated in John 12:48, we will be judged by His word, not mans. So, shouldn’t we look to Him for guidance? If He is our God and our Judge is it not reasonable to look to His word? Is it not logical to simply do what He says and to not go beyond it?

In relation to Thomas Campbell’s quote I read a statement by a man who said, “This sounds like the motto of the Churches of Christ. It is not a biblical saying, only their opinion on theological interpretation. So in a sense they are already speaking where the Bible does not. Ironic isn’t it?” This man does not know what he is saying. In fact, multiple apostles made the same point on multiple occasions. If we desire to be pleasing to God let us simply “speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent”.