The Golden Rule

Yesterday (Saturday), as Sandy and I arrived at the Tractor Supply store, we saw a number of rain covers over the tables of sellers, much like a flea market. Hot dogs, homemade breads, earrings, handmade bread knives, jams and jellies, salsas, textile goods, a Boy Scout fund raising booth, and several other things.

As we got to one booth, a stout, barrel-chested "man's man" stranger looked at us and rather gently said, "God bless Charlie Kirk." I immediately choked up and teared up… so did Sandy. Seconds later we were in a three-way hug on the asphalt between farm implements and utility trailers, with tears all around. We, as a nation, are hurting.

But regardless of personal pain or political ideology, social status, education or income, we must, as Americans and as children of God, follow our Savior's words in Matthew 7:12, "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

We are living in a *new normal,* where political violence as well as daily violence in our cities has become so common it usually does not make front page news. Whether we consider the murder of a national figure like Charlie Kirk or the murder of a virtually unknown young lady from Ukraine, almost flippant violence soaks our souls in sorrow.

What shall we do? As those who are called to walk by His word (John 12:48), what shall we do? Shall we fight back with makeshift clubs and molotov cocktails? Can we riot, loot and shoot our way into a better word? (Some Americans apparently think so, but not God's people.)

Consider this carefully: God has not left us physically defenseless against the violent wolves of our streets. He called for the 12 to sell clothing if necessary to buy swords for personal protection, (Luke 22:35-38). Yes, God has authorized His children to protect themselves, their families and one another. And He has authorized governments to prosecute evil, and those governments should take that responsibility very seriously.

But we must never allow our culture or our anger (not even righteous indignation) to convince us that we can use violence to further personal revenge, nor any objective, political or spiritual. Yes, please use whatever means necessary to *stop* violence. But we must never consider violence as a means to effect political or spiritual outcomes. Again, we may use any means, including armed response to protect our worship and our families.

That said, it might be a good idea to print out Matthew 7:12 (and Romans 12:17-21) and post it on our refrigerators, over our breakfast tables, at our places of business, on our business cards, and on all the walls of our hearts and minds. The world must see us in action *for the Master, not for politics or revenge.*

"Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them."

Ray Wallace