

Joshua 24:14-16

14) Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. 15) And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. 16) And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods.

Yesterday (April 21) was the anniversary of the most historic day of many in the history of the great state of Texas, the date of the fall of the Alamo. While March 2, Texas Independence Day, is when Texas declared its independence from Mexico and April 21, San Jacinto Day, is when Texas won its independence from Mexico, probably both have more long-lasting significance. If it is one word that Texas is known for around the world, it is the Alamo. The Alamo was a crumbling Catholic mission in San Antonio where 189 men held out for 13 days from the Mexican Army of General Santa Anna, numbered approximately 5,000. But on this date in 1836, Santa Anna unleashed his forces, which over-ran the mission and brutally slaughtered all the fighting men. Those who did not die in the attack were executed, and all the deceased bodies were unceremoniously burned. Proving, however, that he was not without chivalry, Santa Anna spared the lives of the Alamo's women, children, and their slaves. But for Texans across the globe, this is our day.

While Thermopylae will always go down as the greatest 'Last Stand' battle in history, the Alamo is right up there in contention for Number 2. Like all such battles, sometimes the myth becomes the legend, and the legend becomes the reality. In Thermopylae, the myth is that 300 Spartans stood against the entire 10,000-man Persian Army. However, there was also a force of 700 Thespians (not actors, but citizens from the City-State of Thespi) and a contingent of 400 Thebans fighting alongside the 300 Spartans. Somehow, tragically, their sacrifices have been lost to history.

Likewise, the legend that lifts the battle of the Alamo to the land of myth is the line in the sand. The story goes that William Barrett Travis, on March 5, the day before the final attack, when it was increasingly clear that no reinforcements would arrive in time and everyone who stayed would perish, called all his men into the plaza of the compound. He then pulled out his saber and drew a line on the ground. He said that they were surrounded and would all emphatically die if they stayed. Any man who wanted to stay and die for the freedom of Texas should cross the line and stand with him. Only one man, Moses Rose, declined to cross the line. Those who crossed the line would seal their fate in blood.

If survivor's accounts can be fully trusted, James Bowie, lying on his sick bed and unable to walk, commanded his men to carry his bed across what then represented the line of death, knowing full well that the Alamo would very soon become the tomb of these Texas heroes.

Unfortunately, the thing about 'last stand' battles is they generally turn out badly for the losers— very badly. Much like the technological issues of yesteryear, the battle over Facebook and social media platforms has become this generation's hill to die on. Today, one must determine two things: is Facebook a cause worth fighting over, and more importantly, is it worth dying over? We, like our fathers before us, are surrounded, if not overwhelmed, by an invention that is not only here to stay but perhaps only in its infancy.

Transcending the invention itself, and more concerning to holiness-minded men today, is the direction this invention will most likely lead men. We have sufficient evidence before us now that should be concerning to all spiritual leadership moving forward. Only in a religious world, and more pointedly, a Pentecostal world, would Facebook enjoy the privilege of wearing a suit and tie. The secular world, with its trending filth and debauchery, which comprises the overwhelming majority of subscribers to Facebook, and the targeted group Facebook has built its massive wealth from, view it as a "hook-up" site.

Contrasting the historical message of the church to separate or disconnect from the mindset of the world is the message Facebook preaches - “get connected.”

As with other hard-fought historic battles regarding sanctification issues we have waged throughout the church’s history, holiness men today are faced with (in many cases) a life-changing decision. Do I cut and run with the majority to the refuge of social safety and acceptance, or do I stay and fight for our long-held principles of sanctification, knowing the odds of social acceptance and survival are perhaps non-existent? If we only fight the battles wherein victory is a foregone conclusion, then be sure moving forward, we have few battles in the field of technology that will ever be waged.

While silence is in vogue in many pulpits today, some have courageously crossed the line. The “villains” of today represent a thorn in the side of the liberal-minded, worldly Pentecostals along with progressive conservatives. These rebel-rousing revolutionaries, with their passionate opposition to Facebook, will, without argument, become the heroes of the holiness faith tomorrow. What seemingly appears as an effort of futile resistance from what some would regard as the “ignorant and unlearned” of today will most likely become the next class of inductees into faith’s illustrious hall of fame— from villains to victors. Today, the opposers of Facebook appear as social outcasts and losers, but I submit the real losers will ultimately be the offspring of those whose fathers embraced the beast of venues like Facebook.

There is a line being drawn in the sand of our Apostolic heritage regarding social media platforms. You can escape by fleeing with the crowd, or you may cross the line of death for a cause much bigger than any man. The cherished principles of sanctification and separation should make this choice a no-brainer. With eternity in view, I will humbly but gladly cross the line.

But as for me and my house...

Bill Pitman 4/22/24