

Occupy Wall Street: Biblical or Unbiblical?

Before I answer the question proposed in the title, let me give you a quick glimpse into the movement called "Occupy Wall Street."

On or around September 17th, 2011, hundreds of protesters gathered on Wall St. in Manhattan to stand against the unfair policies of our government and politicians.

Since then, thousands have rallied and the movement has quickly spread into various cities throughout the United States. With famous politicians, actors, actresses and many of society's finest stepping out into the action to give their two cents, the movement has gotten international attention, and if nothing else, has made their voice heard.

The protesters, camping out for almost a month and refusing to leave until their demands are met, insist that the USA "be put back into the hands of it's individual citizens". According to the organization's website, their cry is that "our nation, our species and our world" is at stake and in crisis due to the corporate greed and corrupt politics going on between Wall St. and Washington.

The core of the movement even has their very own "saying." "We are the 99%" is their catchy demagogic mantra, which, (when translated into common language) means, "We are not getting enough handouts while the remaining 1 percent (the rich) is getting everything."

Although there may be some valid motivations to various aspects of this resistance movement, the central theme of most of the protesters seems to be: "*Give me what I deserve...even if it's unfairly taken from someone else!*" (See <http://wearethe99percent.tumblr.com/>)

The majority of the mainstream press initially portrayed the movement as a bunch of radical, unemployed hippies with a confusing message, gathering simply because they have nothing better to do. Some just felt that protesting was "cool", and most of all, it gives their life meaning. Now, the movement is getting more organized and the message seems to be more coherent, although many have a competing message. Consistency within the movement as a whole is hard to come by.

The movement on the surface, for the majority of its members, has an underlying entitlement driven, socialist agenda that is quite scary (especially when you dig a little deeper and read their 13 Demands, which in actuality, some reflect Karl Marx's 10 Pillars of Communism. <http://occupywallst.org/forum/proposed-list-of-demands-for-occupy-wall-st-moveme/>).

It's quite obvious that some of their demands are unbiblical and unconstitutional. (Guaranteed living wage income, free college, gender equality, etc.)

But what about their method?

Is peaceful protest and publically standing against evil something that could glorify God?

This leads us back to the main question...is this movement biblical or unbiblical?

Short answer: both biblical and unbiblical.

Unbiblical in it's worldview- biblical in it's approach.

Remember the parable about the "children of this world being wiser than the children of light?" I believe that quote by Jesus is a valid expression to describe what we are seeing with the Wall Street movement. However, zeal without "the key of knowledge" is not good.

The "children of the world" seem to have their approach correct-they're not just complaining about the problems of our world, they're doing something about it. Nevertheless, their worldview and demands are not so biblical.

Many Christians who know the mess we're in, although they love the Lord and they follow Him with a true heart, shy away from activism and even traditional evangelism.

There are those that are aware of what's presently happening spiritually, morally, fiscally and physically to our country, but don't see the biblical mandate to take action.

Some, on the other side of the spectrum, actually think everything is happening exactly as it's supposed to. They'll agree, "Yes, of course, sin is getting worse and worse...of course our economy is crumbling...but isn't this what the bible says about the "end times?" (Yes, that's a whole separate topic, but I must interject here and say that I disagree with that view wholeheartedly. I believe that sort of teaching, is in part, responsible for the apathetic approach towards civil government & cultural engagement by the majority of Christians.)

Back to the question at hand: Yes, it is biblical to engage the culture this is what Occupy Wall Street is doing. They're engaging, getting involved, doing something to make change. They have a "no compromise" approach. But, it's unbiblical to engage the culture un-peacefully, but even worse, without God's law and the gospel as the absolute standard of truth and justice-this is what is most unbiblical about Occupy Wall Street.

As I mentioned, there's an underlying communist spirit within most of the movement, which will probably be used to enhance the upcoming elections (2012). Many groups and unions are trying to hijack the movement since, at this time, there's no apparent leadership by any one group.

With that said, let me ask a very simple question: What if Christians were to apply a biblical strategy of no compromise, i.e., the biblical aspect of Occupy Wall Street, to combat the proclamation of evil in our society? Of course, I'm talking about more than just a pietistic non-compromise.

What if Christians were to stand up and speak out on particular issue, but instead of socialism and communism as the answer, i.e., more government, what if they "refused to compromise" until God's law and gospel were presented as the foundation for all solutions in society and culture?

I don't think anyone would disagree that "no compromise" and peacefully standing for truth are biblical concepts.

But I'm talking more than just picnicking on Wall Street...what if we began to propagate Christ's death, resurrection and law, publically, in all areas of life?

Here are a few examples of how the people of God could glorify Christ with "no compromise" action steps.

Better, yet, here are some "What if" situations, comparable to the organized efforts of OWS:

*What if...*Christians peacefully went in the public square and protested against the tyrannical and ungodly decisions of government-and refused to leave until they were heard?

*What if...*Christians "demanded" abortion be stopped or else we would occupy every street corner, around every clinic in every city in America-and refuse to leave until they closed?

*What if...*Street preachers, in a God honoring, biblically faithful way, preached against the evils and particular sins of our culture such as tyranny, abortion, homosexuality and all violations of God's word faithfully and consistently in the public square-and refused to be moved by the consequences, results or acceptance by their peers?

Here are a few broader applications:

*What if...*Christians were to stand and preach the gospel in front of City Hall, calling the leaders of society and the civil to repent and submit to God's standards, not human standards created by the sinful passions of man?

*What if...*Christians heard IN CHURCH, from their pastors, all aspects of the law of God and what it says about freedom, liberty and justice in society-and refused to believe the lies of secular humanism?

*What if...*Christians taught their children for more hours than the government and the world does-and refused to leave their children's education in the hands of ungodly teachers?

*What if...*Christians got involved in legislation at the local, state and national level and stood strong for God's Word as the ultimate standard of those laws?

*What if...*Pastors *encouraged* Christians to boldly take God's law and gospel into all sorts of civil issues, education, media, etc, into every sphere of life and to *expect victory*?

Could you imagine if just a few churches began to promote the "what if's" above and encouraged this sort of behavior in a God honoring, biblically faithful manner in the churches throughout our nation?

"What if?" would quickly turn into "Why not!"

Not to mention, God would move powerfully. Souls would be saved, saints would be blessed and Jesus Christ would be glorified. Things would change. Lives would be saved. People would be regenerated. We know this because that's what happens when God's Word is preached publicly and when Christianity is lived out as a whole life system.

Unfortunately, many churches want nothing to do with "activism," political involvement, engaging the culture or transforming society. Why? Well, lots of reasons. Too many to list here. But you've certainly heard the various objections and even the scriptures used as the basis for retreat rather than "engage".

I'd like to digress for a moment to address at least one of them right here, probably the most popular scripture/statement used against cultural engagement:

"Jesus said, my Kingdom is not of this World"...

Of course, it's typically followed with *"...so why are you worried about all this political stuff...Jesus said we're not of this world."*

As if Jesus was advising or teaching Pontius Pilate that He has no intentions for Christian's to get involved in any part of "the world" after His death, they are to only be concerned with spiritual things and heaven.

Most scholars agree, the kingdom is in fact spiritual. I'm not disagreeing with that. However, this tiny little verse (which is usually taken out of context when defending an attitude against getting involved in culture) does not mean that Christians should avoid the things of the world. He is certainly not saying that standing against the evils of society, engaging the culture or reproving ungodly government is not part of Church's responsibility.

Many people read this verse as if Jesus was saying to Pilate, *"This world is not of my kingdom,"* rather than, *"My Kingdom is not of this world."*

"My kingdom is not of this world," means, in context with a suspicious Pilate (who was asking Jesus about His kingship as it pertained to a revolutionary attack against Rome), that the "source of" His Kingdom is not of this world (if it was, His people would fight, etc.).

This means the "origination" of His Kingdom is not of this world, not that His spiritual Kingdom is separated, divorced or disconnected from secular society.

The purpose of Christ is to be the new Adam. Jesus reversed the work of the fall, restored man as a covenant keeper back to God, established the Kingdom of God, and enabled man again to fulfill his calling to dominion over all the earth-in the earth- with the assurance of victory.

The scriptures plainly teach that the dominion of His Kingdom, and his dominion agents (Christians) are in fact to actively rule over all aspects of this world (Genesis 1:26). This is why He commands us to go into all nations and not only "get people saved" to wait for His return, but to disciple, restore and redeem as well.

The extent of Christ's Kingdom over all culture and society can be seen throughout the scriptures. A few well known verses are here:

Dan 2:44: And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, [but] it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Dan 7:13-14 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, [one] like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion [is] an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom [that] which shall not be destroyed.

And of course:

Mat 6:10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as [it is] in heaven. (not "in heaven" as it is "in heaven", but "on earth". :-)

Mat 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, [even] unto the end of the world. Amen.

(I recommend you read Dr. Ken Gentry's "The Greatness of the Great Commission" at our website www.gostandspeak.com for a full exegesis on Matthew 28:18-19 and it's relevance to the full extent of evangelism over all of culture and society.)

The Great Commission extends much further than "spiritual witness"-it's a cultural witness as well. We are commanded to be salt and light, a lamp on hill, to expose the deeds of darkness and to reprove them. We also have the extensive all-inclusive jurisdiction of "any place, any thing and anytime" by Jesus Christ Himself.

We are to disciple all nations and teach them "all things" which he commanded. This means all of scripture, everywhere in the world and every sphere of culture and society. As I mentioned, it doesn't mean just to "get people saved" everywhere, in all places. It certainly entails that, but extends much further.

But instead of doing this, it seems as a whole, we've focused just on the spiritual or sacred rather than including the society and culture. We've limited the extent and power of the Kingdom of God to just the Church and it's salvific calling. We have hyper spiritual evangelism rather than hyper-extending evangelism (bending over backwards to reach every sphere of the world!)

Our evangelism must extend to the very outer limits of where sin contaminates and corrupts, saving the whole man!

(So now, relating back to Occupy Wall Street...)

Until we take action on the fact that the Great Commission extends further than just dying and having a better afterlife, we will continue to be disobedient to Christ, see our nation drift further away from Him, and go deeper into the judgment of God.

And instead of having 10,000 plus Christians standing, preaching and confronting the lawlessness of abortion, tyranny, the socialistic and communistic anti-biblical policies of our government -instead of having churches demanding that our leaders submit to God's law in the areas of economics, civil rule, life and liberty-instead of having Christian lawmakers, businessmen and educators be the norm- we'll continue to have situations such as OWS. Which, for the most part, is nothing more than a humanistic protest (with a barely coherent, illogical message.) And for the most part, one that promotes a lawless, self-motivated purpose.

Don't get me wrong, as I stated earlier, there are some OWS folks who have valid concerns. But for most of the OWS protesters, they are simply demanding that the State start acting like the gods they claim to be- *or else!* (-and the gods they promised us they would be, especially for those of us who went through government sanctioned schools.)

All in all, peacefully standing up and speaking up is a biblical concept. However, biblical concepts don't make sense without being undergirded with biblical law and truth. When the world stands up for themselves and speaks up for their personal passions and desires (entitlements, hand-outs, etc.)...its a biblical concept but with wrong motives. This makes it incorrect in God's sight.

How much more could we glorify God if we stood up and spoke up for His righteousness standards in the public square, proclaiming God's Word in the power of the Holy Spirit? Now you have biblical concept undergirded with God's law and gospel, which is certainly correct in God's sight.

I have to hand it to the OWS folks...they will have no regrets. When all is said and done, they can at least say "we tried". The question is, if abortion, government theft, tyranny, homosexual marriage, Islam, humanism, communism and the cults continue to grow in acceptance at their current rate of speed, will the Church be able to say the same? Unfortunately, I don't think so. Unless, we stop "falling down before the wicked" we'll continue to be as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring" (Pro 25:26)

It's time we've done something. Operation Freedom is not quite as organized as Occupy Wall Street (tongue in cheek of course), but it is a start. Here at gostandspeak.com we're looking to recruit those who would like to take God's law and gospel, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to the exact place the battle is raging the most...the public square. Our ministry will be visiting some of the Occupy Wall Street protests in the upcoming weeks to preach the gospel in the open air and to confront some of the issues with God's standards and solutions. Why don't you join us? For more information, go to our website or email us at gostandspeak@gmail.com

Written by Pat Necerato, www.gostandspeak.com