

NARROW-MINDED

Often, faithful Christians are accused of being “narrow-minded.” It is a heinous attack that is, most times, untrue. Still, however, the claim is made and promulgated as fact to all who will listen. How many times has Satan successfully damaged (in the eyes of the world) the reputation of a faithful servant of Christ with a simple claim based on little or nothing at all? In our brotherhood today, elderships are “marking” and “withdrawing fellowship” from men based only on claims, rather than evidence. Whether the claim is true or not, those who have been “marked” have had their character tarnished in the eyes of individuals who do not know them. So it is with the claim, “narrow-minded.” It is a pejorative. It is a belittling label that no one desires to own. It is an assertion that usually places the accused on the defensive and “back on their heels.” Perhaps, that is the primary purpose of the term – to avoid answering Scriptural questions, the onus is transferred from the one being questioned to the questioner. Sadly, many in error have been able to “slide under the radar” by hurling a “You are narrow-minded,” or “You are a ‘legalist’.” I was once accused of being a “legalist.” I told my accuser to name what I had done that was legalistic, and I would confess my sin and repent publicly on Sunday morning. The man’s reply – silence. It was just a claim.

As Christians, we must be “Christ-minded” (Phi. 2:5). Jesus and His Word must be our standard for how narrow or broad-minded we are. Whatsoever has been bound and loosed by God in Heaven is what we should teach and practice as being bound or loosed here on Earth (Mat. 16:19). God’s Word, and all that is to be bound or loosed, is and has always been “settled in Heaven” (Psa. 119:89). One who narrows or broadens God’s boundaries sins and must repent. We must not be narrow-minded nor broad-minded and the only judge is God’s Word (John 12:48). Those who are truly “narrow-minded” or “broad-minded” according to the standard of God’s Word may be shocked. Those who make such allegations may be met with a “Thou art the man” (2 Sam. 12:7), after a sincere and honest examination of the Truth (John 17:17).

Consider:

- * One who teaches that man is saved by faith (or grace) only, eliminates God’s requirements of repentance (Luke 13:3), confession (Acts 8:36), baptism (Acts 2:38), and faithful living (Rev. 2:10). Those who teach such are “narrow-minded” because they have narrowed God’s laws where God did not.
- * One who teaches that Jesus only shed His blood for those He predetermined to be saved (Limited Atonement), limits the power of God’s love, grace, and mercy. Jesus said He died for the sins of the whole world (John 3:16-17; 1 John 2:1-2). Therefore, teaching Limited Atonement is Scripturally “narrow-minded.”
- * One who teaches that an act of the Holy Spirit, separate and apart from the Word of God, is needed for one to be saved, limits the power of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16-7) and is therefore “narrow-minded.”
- * One who teaches that there are many faiths and not just one (Eph. 4:5), there are many churches, not just one (Eph. 4:5; 1:22-23), and that fellowship can be shared with anyone

who is “religious” (cf. 2 John 9-11), broadens God’s boundaries and are therefore loosening where God did not.

No one wants to be called an ugly or unflattering name. Sadly, Jesus warns that His faithful servants will receive the hatred of the world (Mat. 10:22). It must be our contention, however, to not be swayed by mere claims and pejoratives. We must be true to the Heavenly standard of God’s Word. We must not be narrow-minded (i.e., bind where God did not) and we must not be “broad-minded” (i.e., loose where God did not). We must have the mind of Christ (Phi. 2:5).

- *Brad Green*