

In today's social media, we have become accustomed to a term called "canceling." It is a way of expressing disapproval of something or someone in a public forum. People cancel others when they want to stop the spread of objectionable ideas, but those who have been canceled see it as their right to free speech being suppressed.

We can appoint ourselves arbiters of right and wrong and judge and jury. And now, thanks to social media, we get to dole out punishment.

Aunt Jemima was canceled. They had to rethink how they promoted their product to an increasingly enlightened and more modern audience. Dr. Seuss had to pull six books because of racist and insensitive imagery. Colin Kaepernick's kneeling during the National Anthem was seen as disrespecting the American flag and the military. Canceling is a practice of groups on both sides of the political spectrum who want to promote their own ideology and silence their opponents.

Followers of Christ have always faced pressure from those who disapprove of certain aspects of the gospel message. People tried "canceling" them – from the biblical stoning of Stephen to present day massacres in African villages.

The Apostle Paul tried combating the cancel culture at the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians Chapter 15) by starting with their belief that there is no bodily resurrection and then explained what it would mean if that was actually true. He used "if. . . then" statements to show that "if" the bodily resurrection of Jesus is canceled, "then" our hope of the gospel is gone and useless and we are "still in our sins."

Paul's reasoning may be a good pattern for us to follow when challenged by differing views or opinions. There may be unpopular aspects of the gospel message that we may feel pressured to suppress, but does that removal distort the message? And to what gain?

During our upcoming Convention in June, we will be discussing changes and/or additions to our Department Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules. I am asking everyone to be in prayer for these meetings. Rather than choosing sides and trying to cancel each other, let us objectively look at the proposals being presented. Let us see how we can try to clarify these documents to make our organization the best it can be and one in which everyone is proud to belong.

Prayer – "Heavenly Father, we ask You to be with us and guide us in our convention giving us wisdom and understanding. Help us to follow Paul's example. "For "if" the dead are not raised, "then" Christ has not been raised either." 1 Cor. 15:16

Rose Laning