

Dear Friends

The Bible should come with a label that says "Caution: Open With Care".

This would be fair warning for anyone who thinks that they can hold a Bible, or pose with a Bible, or presume what the Bible says without actually reading it. Because there are things in there that should cause such people to tremble, tremble, tremble.

For instance, the Bible says (*Exodus 3*) that enslaved people have a right to long for liberation ("let my people go") and that God takes the side of the peaceful children of Israel (*Exodus 14*) against the armies of a hard-hearted Pharaoh.

The Bible says (*Exodus 20*) that God alone is God and that we are not to worship anything else including flags or dollars or even the Bible itself. It's called idolatry and it's pretty serious. The Bible says (*Deuteronomy 5*) that bearing false witness is just as bad as killing and stealing. It says it, right there in black and white.

Not only does the Bible say that forgiving someone who has offended you is important (*Mark 2*), it says you that should be prepared to do so 70 x 7 times (*Matthew 18*). Not only does the Bible say that loving your neighbour is a good thing (*Luke 10*), it says that loving your enemy is an even more important thing (*Matthew 5*).

The Bible says (*Luke 4*) that there is a reason for being in the world and it looks like announcing good news to the poor, release for the prisoners, recovery of sight to the blind, to set broken victims free. The Bible says (*Matthew 25*) that when we feed the hungry, or give drink to the thirsty, or welcome the stranger, or clothe the naked, or care for the sick, or visit the imprisoned we are meeting the Holy One in our midst.

Yes, I would be very careful when using the Bible as a prop. What's inside could seep out and that would change everything!

Grace and peace,

Michael