

Matthew 12:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

Analysis

'He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.' Quoting Isaiah 42:2, Matthew describes Messiah's character: not contentious ('strive'—ἐρίσει/erisei), not loud ('cry'—κραυγάσει/kraugasei), not self-promoting (voice not heard in streets). This contrasts sharply with expectations of political messiah arriving with military force and public spectacle. Jesus's ministry exemplified this: He withdrew from confrontation when wise (v.15), commanded silence about miracles (v.16), and avoided self-promotion. His power operated through humility, not coercion. Reformed theology values this: Christian influence comes through faithful witness and servant ministry, not through force, manipulation, or self-aggrandizement. The verse describes Jesus's first coming—gentle Savior. His second coming will be different (Revelation 19:11-16). But current gospel age features humble proclamation, persuasive truth, and gentle invitation, not forceful conquest. This challenges triumphalism and Christendom models of coerced faith.

Historical Context

First-century Jewish messianic expectation centered on violent revolutionary overthrowing Rome and establishing political kingdom. Zealots advocated armed rebellion. Even disciples expected earthly kingdom (Acts 1:6). Isaiah 42's description of gentle Servant contradicted these hopes. Jesus deliberately fulfilled this prophecy: He avoided political confrontation, refused crowd attempts to make Him king (John 6:15), and rejected Satan's offer of earthly kingdoms (Matthew

4:8-10). His 'triumphal entry' rode donkey not warhorse (Matthew 21:5), fulfilling Zechariah 9:9's prophecy of humble king. Early church continued this pattern: persuasion not coercion, martyrdom not military conquest, gospel proclamation not political revolution. Church history's darkest chapters involved abandoning this model: Christendom used force to establish and maintain faith, crusades employed violence for religious ends, Inquisition coerced conformity. Reformation partially recovered emphasis on gospel persuasion versus coercion. Modern church must remember: Christ's kingdom advances through proclamation and servanthood, not power and force.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's humble, non-contentious ministry challenge contemporary desires for Christian political power and cultural dominance?
2. What's the difference between faithful gospel witness and coercive attempts to Christianize society through force or manipulation?
3. How do you balance boldly proclaiming truth with Jesus's gentle, non-contentious approach?

Interlinear Text

οὐκ	ἐρίσει	οὐδὲ	κραυγάσει	οὐδὲ	ἀκούσει	τις	ἐν
not	He shall	neither	cry	neither	hear	shall any man	in
G3756	G2051	G3761	G2905	G3761	G191	G5100	G1722
ταῖς	πλατείαις	τὴν	φωνὴν	αὐτοῦ			
G3588	the streets	G3588	voice	his			
	G4113		G5456	G846			

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 11:29 (Parallel theme): Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.