

As we noted a number of weeks ago in a previous Whitestone episode, there's a saying that's been bandied about for a couple centuries or so that seems so savvy and so true and so insightful that it often leaves people nodding in agreement. Here's that saying: "history is written by the victors." Let's recap the discussion around that saying for a bit, then address another idea that's a close companion to that one.

So, here's the premise of the saying that *history is written by the victors*: Yeah...get the idea? At least in battles between nations, the winners get to tell the story because they are in charge after all the battles are won—ostentatiously in charge of the citizens and the overarching communications and the public narrative. And that often seems to be true in lesser organizations, too.

But here's the thing. History and its veracity and reliability for us is not what many think it is. The jumbled-together cacophony of voices competes for supremacy of just *what the history really is* that's being created this very day...and oftentimes their relaying of information is strained beyond belief. Hey, a viewer commonly sees and hears people and their actions on TV or streaming video, then a commentator follows up by saying something that sends this not-so-subtle message: *don't believe what your eyes just saw and your ears just heard—what I'm telling you now is what really happened!*

This "filtering out" and "adding to" in the current era is stunningly pervasive. People receiving this daily "news" have often just given up—there's now little expectation of true reporting, so folks often just simply tune in to the sources where they like the biases. You know, like liberals do! And like conservatives do!

Now that dizzying dailyness of highly-questionable personal remembrances and biased interpretations of history? That stuff gets crowded into aggressive worldviews, ideologies as to how and why things happened in such-and-such time and place. That feeds the current culture wars.

But, by faith, we know there will be a real reckoning and real accountability for individuals and nations as to what the real and true history is for each and every person...and each and every nation! Here's a quick summary: for believers and unbelievers alike, the Son of God will exercise judgment that is righteous and true as to each and every person (Revelation 19:2, Psalm 19:9). Yes, as to every detail of every human life. For believers, that includes both the burning up of unfruitful actions and the rewards for building on the foundation of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:9-16). All of that is Christ's revealing of the right interpretations of every action taken, the true history of every person. Of course, there will be no self-styled conservatives or self-styled liberals proclaiming ideological victories—all pretenses burned up.

Yes, when it comes to history, the total and full Truth with a capital "T" only fully and accurately comes out with Christ as the Judge. And because of His victory at the Cross—in this sense, and this being in the most important sense—history is indeed written by the True Victor, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Now, let's turn to another saying that has emerged in recent years, often when it comes to political and cultural battles. Here's the catchphrase: hey, our opponents are "on the wrong side of history." The intended implications of this phrase are there's a "right" or correct side of history that's inevitable—and "our" opponents are not headed in the right direction at all. And of course, "our" side is!

A version of this verbiage was used by President Barack Obama, and it seemed to strike a cord with many people—at least people who agreed with his politics. It largely means there are current wrongs to be righted and events in history will always work for those to be corrected, presumably through the leadership and power of leaders like President Obama and those who would agree with him. Now, it's pretty clear why that proposition got some traction with folks who want to make social change through the power of centralized government, whether that's a king or representatives of citizens in a democracy.

In fact, that's perhaps the biggest fallacy of that saying: it presumes people should desire a sort of "progress" that upends previous history, whether that's through a king who's essentially an immoral tyrant or if it's through the masses following a popularly elected leader who, together, are carried away with a lust for power. In fact, that's why many who want radical change the past several decades in a place

like America call themselves “progressive:” *progress* is taking power and installing their particular beliefs. And pretty soon, last year’s label of *liberal* is not sufficient, it must yield to this year’s *progressive*! And just wait, this year’s *progressive* must yield to next year’s *communist*. In this way, seekers in this model tend to adopt a supposedly-desirable “woker than thou” model, where the message is essentially this: “what you and others believe and deploy today isn’t woke enough...and with my ideas and leadership, we will go further and deeper to be on the right side of history.” Yes, whatever’s ahead *must* be better...yeah, a better history is always being made, always being forged by us.

Near the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some influential Christians focusing on Caesar far more than Christ started to think that. Yeah, the idea was that man had progressed into being a much better species, at least in some of their enlightened salons in Europe and America. Unfortunately, Europeans themselves unleashed world wars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that were more brutal than ever before! Sadly, the supposedly desirable “right side of history” often simply means to force countless others to conform to one group’s wildest social and cultural desires.

So, here’s the first main point here: upcoming history is not at all assuredly going to be better than the past, the supposed wrong side of history. And now here’s the second point. For quite some time, advocates for the “right” side of history inevitably coming in the future expect constructs like science or technology or research to bring forth or validate their definition of the right side of history. And that’s true in a limited sort of way: discoveries in science and technology have often bettered the lives of many people around the world, with medical discoveries and useful inventions and much more.

But science and technology are in and of themselves agnostic as to how they are being used! For example, the same foundations that allowed a powerful movie like *Casablanca* to be made and enjoyed are fundamentally in the same family of technological progress that is now being used by a massive pornography-video industry that even penetrates harshly to the most vulnerable children. So, are science discoveries and inventions always driving to the right side of history? Of course not.

And now we’ve come full circle to our initial quote about history, and that quote is that “history is written by the victors.” And we can agree again that the only true victor is Jesus Christ...and He is the overriding essence of history—from the making of it as Creator and the Redeemer of it at the Cross and the Judge of it all in the end. That’s the sweeping, comprehensive story of history in the Bible—yes, it’s history as defined by “His Story,” the story of Christ, as the enduring teaching goes.

And because the template for the story of Christ has been revealed for all to see, we can rightly see what the right side of history from God’s perspective actually is! Not only that, we’ve been invited by God to partake in each of our roles in that history with—listen—yeah, with the full assurance that what we are doing is indeed the true and good and right side of history! And believers embrace it because it’s the only narrative that truly makes sense of a world beset by sin and the ultra-elegant response to it—Jesus Christ! Then, we ourselves can help make history by going and proclaiming the Gospel. That makes disciples who themselves can live out their roles in the truly right side of history. Here’s the foundational point: God has shown humanity all this through the prophets of old and the revelation of Christ to the whole world.

So, there we have it. The two adages floating around are these: *history is written by the victors* and work to be *on the right side of history*. But most folks most often use these phrases to mean all-too-human victors in commonplace wars between kings and nations whose work is but vapor and also to mean all-too-human cultural and social warriors striving for power over the virtues of others.

Ah, but the intentional, Spirit-led reader of the Bible has been given knowledge by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26) to essentially say this: both adages are quite true, *but only through the only mediator between humanity and God* (1 Timothy 2), and *that mediator is Christ and Him crucified*. So, we can go forth with confidence each day in our appointed realms that, with God’s help, we can be on the right side of history by aligning with the only Victor that matters in the ecosystem of eternity. *Now that’s absolutely stunning!*

## *A&A: Application & Action*

1. Many people put great hope in politics in order for history to unfold in the best possible way—but others think that the capability of politics for true flourishing is limited. Discuss.
2. Do you believe that “the right side of history” is comprehensively addressed by a person’s alignment with Christ and Him crucified, the framework of the Kingdom of God documented in the Bible? Why or why not?
3. Is your path fully aligned to the right side of history that the Bible reveals to only be through Christ and Him crucified? Discuss.