



"The world is a dangerous place to live; not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it."

—Albert Einstein

13-Oct-23

Inured, Calloused, Apathetic

I have always liked words, though they are nothing in themselves but symbols of meanings. For instance, the spoken word "cat" is merely a collection of sounds we make with our lungs, throats, tongues, palates, teeth, and lips. Our brains, however, understand these sounds as a carnivorous mammal with certain characteristics that mark it as part of the Felidae family. The written letters *c-a-t* tell us the same thing visually.

Words also have histories, and this may be why I enjoy them so much. Words and their meanings mutate over time, sometimes strangely, sometimes predictably, sometimes strikingly. For instance, we use buckles almost daily on belts, shoes, cars, and various other places. However, the original Latin word, *buccula*, means "little cheek"; the Romans used this word to describe the cheek-piece of a soldier's helmet. The French borrowed it as *boucle*, applying it, however, to the boss of a shield (a "cheek-like" protuberance on a shield's face). Later, the English—perhaps because of the necessity to tighten and bind the leather straps used in holding the shield—gave it its modern meaning as a fastener, primarily for belts.

These days, in an increasingly secular and downright immoral world, the three words in this essay's title possess a great deal of meaning to Christians. This adjectival trio describes steps in the process of hardheartedness that so damages character.

Inured comes to us from French and Latin. The French phrase *en ure* means "in operation" or "in employment" (we can see *ure* in such words as "manure" and "maneuver," both of which originally meant "to work with the hand," thus "to till or cultivate"). Ultimately, *inured* derives from the Latin word *opera* (as in "operate"), which means "to work." However, because of the habitual and sometimes despised nature of work, *inured* has come to mean "accustomed to accepting something undesirable." For example, Christians have become inured to television's anti-Christian bias.

Calloused also descends from Latin (*callus*) through French (*calleux*), but its meaning has remained consistent. It means "hard-skinned." A person develops calluses on his palms when he works them vigorously. When I was little, the skin on my Uncle Bob's hands always impressed me. He was a bricklayer, and after handling thousands—maybe millions—of bricks throughout his career, his palms and fingers were rough, thick, and hard. A human heart can develop similar calluses. A calloused person, however, is a step beyond an inured one. He has become so used to the degradations and abominations around him that his heart has formed a shell to keep them at bay.

Unlike the other two words, *apathetic* derives directly from Greek with little or no change. It is formed by *a-* ("not") and *pathos* ("feeling" or "suffering") and simply means "unfeeling" or "without feeling." An apathetic person is indifferent and unconcerned. Once a Christian reaches the point of apathy about the sins of his society, he is precariously close to losing his salvation. He no longer cares how terribly far morals and standards have slid. He has become so accustomed to the gutter that he no longer cares that he lives there.

Ezekiel 9 records the prophet's vision of the marking of those "who [sigh and cry](#) over all the abominations that are done" ([Ezekiel 9:4](#)) and the slaying of all those who do not ([Ezekiel 9:5-7](#)). [God](#) explains to Ezekiel, "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great, and the land is full of bloodshed, and the city full of perversity; for they say, 'The LORD has forsaken

the land, and the LORD does not see!" ([Ezekiel 9:9](#)). What does it mean to "sigh and cry"?

The Hebrew word for "sigh" is *'ânah*, which means "to sigh, groan, or gasp." The *Theological Wordbook of the [Old Testament](#)* comments, "Ezekiel's references point to exercise of heart on the part of those who sighed over Israel's desperate spiritual condition." "Cry" is translated from *'ânaq*, which literally means "to shriek" but is used for crying, groaning, or lamenting. These nearly identical-sounding words mean much the same thing. The difference is that sighing is inward while crying is an outward expression of our inner grief.

Are we saddened to see what has become of our country and its people? Do we "cry out" against the ravages of [sin](#) among our family and friends? Or, sadly, have we become inured to it, calloused by constant contact with it, or even apathetic about it? If Ezekiel 9 is any indication, it is time to let God know where we stand.

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Don't Be Indifferent](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh (1932-2023)

God's Word contains more about the Feast of Trumpets than all the other Holy Days combined. Functioning both as a memorial of some historical occurrence as well as a prophecy of a future event, the Feast of Trumpets describes an axial period, a pivot point in history, as was the fall of Babylon, which ushered in a rapid succession of world empires changing the political and cultural configuration of the world. Now, we are approaching another pivot point, the collapse of modern Israel, described by the major and minor prophets, and the coming of the Day of the Lord, a time God cautions us not to desire. The frightful Trumpet Plagues are coming on the world because of the breaking of covenants on the part of people who should have known better. When Amos warned covenant-breaking Israel to repent of their vile

sins, they threw him out. There is no such thing as blanket salvation; membership in the CGG or any other organization does not provide a ticket to a place of safety. God owes no one anything except a death sentence for unrepented sins. The letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3 indicate that the Church at the end time is not in as good a condition as we might hope. All ten virgins fell asleep. We in God's Church are still not as awake as we should be. The oil the ten virgins had in their lamps is not transferrable; we must secure our own oil. We dare not be caught off guard, falling asleep at the switch like our Israelite forbears.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[The Torment of the Godly \(Part Two\)](#)

by Charles Whitaker

To be a prophet of God is no easy task, and it is one that tends to be mentally and emotionally burdensome to the prophet. As Charles Whitaker explains, God desires His people to have an emotional yet entirely rational response—to sigh and cry—to the lawlessness and idolatry increasing around them in the world.

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