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## Viewpoints

*Observing events in our modern world from the viewpoint of our ascended Savior.*

### Double Standard ~ August 23, 2014

*Ferguson reminds us how we labor under the world's double standard.*

[Online Version & Archive](#)

What a shame that some media outlets who broadcasted news of an event failed to report (or update) the event with all the facts. Is this politically manipulated messaging or inadequate reporting?

No doubt you've heard of the officer-involved shooting on August 9<sup>th</sup> outside of St. Louis, in Ferguson, MO. News of the community's reaction has been flooding the media, detailing how demonstrations and protests have turned into rioting, looting and arson.

The event that I'm referring to was reported by CNN this way: "An officer ... pointed a semi-automatic assault rifle at a Ferguson, Missouri, protester and threatened to kill him -- a tense episode caught on video and posted online... A CNN crew also saw the officer point his weapon at those around him as he cursed, shouted and threatened people by saying he'd kill them unless they stayed away. The St. Louis County Police said that one of its sergeants walked over and immediately took action, forcing the officer to lower the weapon and escorting him away from the area."

The officer ended up being suspended for egregiously using garbage language and threatening to kill people. This is unprofessional for peace officers who are trained to maintain their composure under extreme circumstances.

Full disclosure: my oldest son is a state trooper, decorated for his by-the-book response when attacked by gunfire. Through my son's experiences, I know a little about the training and protocols of law enforcement, which is why I went sniffing for more details. Something didn't smell right to me about how CNN was reporting this story.

Local news in St. Louis' (Channel 4) reports these additional details: "St. Ann Police Chief Aaron Jiminez said the officer raised his gun after he saw a weapon in the crowd. After realizing it was only a BB gun, Jiminez said the officer then scanned the crowd with his AR-22 rifle raised, which Jiminez said is a standard procedure. 'It was havoc at that time. He also got urine thrown on him, having to deal with that is obviously disgusting,' Jiminez said. 'However, when he's trying to protect the public and asking people to back up, under no circumstances do I, or our department, condone his language.'" In other words, the officer followed the protocols of his training, except he resorted to using similar dirty and

threatening language that was being thrown at him from the group of demonstrators. Properly, this offending officer was removed from the scene and suspended from duty.

Translation? Because peace officers live by higher standards, they're treated with a double standard when compared to the public. The general counsel for the St. Louis Police Officers Association explains this double standard: "[The officers] have shown 'admirable restraint'... despite being persistently egged on. You're asking them to stand there and stare into the faces of people who are spitting on them, who are yelling at them, who are screaming at them ... who are touching them... You're saying: Just take it."

But it's not just peace officers who labor under a double standard, and pay a steep price if they fail. You and I also labor under a double standard, because we follow Jesus Christ. The Bible explains how the public **"thinks it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of sinful activities, and they heap abuse on you"** (1 Peter 4:4). The agitators against Christ also *spit at us, yell and scream at us, poke their fingers into our chests*, so to speak, in order to egg us into responding in an unchristian manner. And if do—if we use filthy language, or retaliate with threats, or throw our weight around as children of God—then the agitators take our failure as motivation to vilify us as hypocrites. And, we can expect, important facts will be purposely left out of the narrative in order to manipulate maximum destruction of Christianity's reputation.

This double-standard is unfair. But the perfectly innocent Jesus who suffered spit, scorn and crucifixion to pay for our sins also infuses his forgiving power into us, to hold us up under this double standard. He does this so that we can live up to his high standards, as soldiers of the cross. Soldier on in his strength, my fellow peace officers!

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to... live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us... Be sympathetic... be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.... If you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened." Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. (1 Peter 2:1-2 & 4:8-16, selected)

Source Material (Links may become inactive over time.)

[Officer who threatened to kill protester in Ferguson suspended](#) @ kmov.com (Channel 4)

[Officer suspended for pointing semi-automatic rifle at 'peaceful' protester](#) @ CNN.com

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*Blessings to you and your loved ones, Pastor Mike Nitz*

