



The Voice of Truth

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The Church Doesn't Matter?

By Jimmy Pettigrew

The prevalent attitude toward the church among religious people for years has been, "Oh, the church is not important. It makes no difference whether one is a member or not. One church is just as good as another. The church is non-essential to man's eternal welfare." If what is meant by these statements concerns man-made churches, then we would agree heartily. Jesus said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up," (**Matt. 15:13**). Every last "church" built, named and governed by man is doomed to destruction. Jesus Christ fervently prayed against them all (**Jn. 17:20-21**). In reality Roman Catholicism and Protestantism have no connection at all with one's salvation. However, if some are saying that the Lord's church does not matter, now we got a problem, because I strongly protest. God's Book never has taught the concept that the church of Jesus Christ is a worthless institution, one void of all value. If the church doesn't matter, you are telling me, then:

That The Body Of Christ Doesn't Matter. Christ is the "saviour of the body," (**Eph. 5:23**). Paul teaches that there is one body (**Eph. 4:4**). How many bodies is He the Saviour of? "But now in deed there are many members, yet one body," (**1 Cor. 12:20**). Paul, as we see, has taught time after time the oneness of the body. What is the body? **THE CHURCH!** (**Eph. 1:22-23**). In this passage Paul tells us that the church is the body. In Colossians 1:18 he teaches that the body is the church. So the church is the body and the body is the church. There is only one body; therefore there is only one church. How perfectly this agrees with the promise: "I will build my church" (**Matt. 16:18**). Salvation is found in this one church. This does not mean the church is the Savior. The church is the saved! If the church does not matter, neither does salvation matter which is graciously conferred within the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. When Paul was persecuting the church (**Acts 9**), he was persecuting Christ (**Acts 9:4**). The church and Christ cannot be separated. The church is important! If the church doesn't matter, then:

You Are Telling Me The Blood Of Christ Doesn't Matter. In his epistle to the Ephesian church Paul said that Jesus "loved the church, and gave himself for it; ..." (**Eph. 5:25**). Christ shed His blood for the church (**Acts 20:28**). How could anyone say the church is not important? The blood of Christ purchased the church. If the church doesn't matter, then the blood of Christ doesn't matter. It is the blood of Christ that made it possible for us to be reconciled back to God (**Rom. 5:10**). We are reconciled unto God in one body (**Eph. 2:16**), which is the church (**Col. 1:18, 24**). Thus, one is saved from his sins, reconciled unto God, when he enters the one body, the church of Christ (**Rom. 16:16**). Who would say that Christ wasted His blood on the cross for a worthless institution? You do if you say the church doesn't matter, that then church is unimportant.

Every Christian, child of God, is a member of the church of Christ. No one can be saved without the blood of Christ (**Heb. 9:22; Eph. 1:7**), and the church of Christ was purchased by the blood of Christ (**Acts 20:28**). Thus, there are no Christians who are not members of the

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church of Christ. If the church doesn't matter, then:

God's Eternal Plan Doesn't Matter. Who would say this? You do when you say the church is unimportant. The church was not an after-thought on God's part (**Eph. 3:8-11**). It existed in purpose before the world was; it existed in prophecy (**Isa. 2:2-4; Dan. 2:44**). God had His plan of redemption before He made man; the church was and is a central part of it. No other foundation is man permitted to lay (**1 Cor. 3:11**). If the church does not matter, then:

The Lord's Supper Does Not Matter. The Lord's Supper is to be observed in His kingdom (**Lk. 22:29-30**). In **1 Corinthians 11:20-34** the sacred penman taught the brethren at Corinth to observe the Lord's Supper in their church assembly. The church at Troas observed the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week (**Acts 20:7**). This sacred feast was and is to be done in the church of the Lord. God never commanded anyone to partake of His Son's Supper save those in the church and only upon the first day of the week, Sunday. If the church doesn't matter, you're telling me the Lord's Supper doesn't matter. Who would do this? You, if you say the church is not important, one church is just as good as another. If the church doesn't matter, then:

The Gospel Doesn't Matter. The gospel of Christ produces the church of Christ; it is the seed (**Lk. 8:11**). If the gospel had never been preached, then the church never could have existed. The church and the gospel are inseparably linked. If the church doesn't matter, neither does the gospel matter. The gospel is composed of facts that must be believed. We must believe Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, that He died, was buried and rose again for our sins according to the Scriptures (**1 Cor. 15:1-4**). The gospel tells us what we must do to be saved. One must hear God's Word (**Rom. 10:17**); believe it (**Mk. 16:16**); repent (**Lk. 13:3, 5**); confessing Christ is the Son of God (**Rom. 10:9-10**); being baptized for the remission of sins (**Acts 2:38**) and live a life of continued faithfulness (**Rev. 2:10**). None of these are important if the church doesn't matter. If the church is of no value, neither is the Bible which produces the church. Who would say this?

Does the church really matter to you?

"Is There A Standard?"

By Jarrod Jacobs

"That's your opinion." "Who are you to tell me what to do?" "Who is to say _____ is right or wrong?" "I see nothing wrong with it." Have we not heard or said such statements as these in the past? I am afraid we all have. The common theme in these statements is selfishness resulting in the abandonment of a standard of rule or authority in our lives.

This attitude is prevalent in our society. This is because many people either deny God's existence (atheism), or they justify what they do by reasoning: "God wants it this way. He wants me to be happy." Either extreme is spiritually fatal, and in either case, we have taken God off His throne and set ourselves up as king of our lives! The effect is the same because if we deny God's existence, we have no objective standard for life. If we justify our actions based upon what we want, God is rendered impotent in our lives. In such a case, while the person may profess faith in God's existence, they allow Him no power, or control, or rule in their lives as He needs to have. This attitude has been with us for many years, and it leads to ruin (**Zeph. 1:12; Lk. 6:46**).

Is there an objective standard for us? The answer is, "Yes." Just as we have a standard in this nation concerning what is legal and illegal, so also we have a standard for our lives that has been given by God. In fact God's standard transcends all others (**Acts 5:29**), for this standard is the one God will use for judging us one day (**Jn. 12:48**).

No man is a law unto himself. He is expected to comply with the revealed word of God. God's word is inspired, with the ability to furnish us "*completely to all good works*" (**II Tim. 3:16-17**). In other words, if a word or deed is not authorized of God, then it is not a good

work! Regardless of how many might say they think it is a good work, it is not considered “good” unless God has authorized it within His word!

Further, this same word is alive and powerful (**Heb. 4:12**). It can “pierce” through hearts and can “discern” even the “*thoughts and intents of the heart.*” No other book has this kind of power! In fact, **Romans 1:16-17** reveals that God’s word has the power to save. This is true power — power to show folks the truth and to lead them to salvation before it is everlastingly too late. Yes, this is the standard, for no other book reveals what is necessary to be saved.

This same word provides wisdom, and is itself wisdom. When we consider what David said about the word of God, we gain a greater appreciation of what it means to possess a book which produces wisdom. He said, “*Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts*” (**Ps. 119:98-100**). Friend, I do not care who you are, how many colleges you have attended, or the degrees you may hold. No one is truly educated if he does not have a knowledge of the Bible! Yes, there is a standard, and this standard is available to the “PhD”, to the “ditch-digger”, to the young, to the old, and everyone in-between. God’s word will make us all better people, a people who are preparing for an eternity in Heaven.

God’s word is also called “seed” (**Lk. 8:11**). This seed, when allowed to germinate in the “*honest and good heart*” (**Lk. 8:15**) will produce good fruit. We can be saved from our sin, and then continue to live faithfully to God (**Rev. 2:10**). Jesus also told His disciples to abide in Him so we can produce much fruit (**Jn. 15:4-5**). In the production of this fruit, we grow spiritually, and strengthen our relationship to God. By bearing spiritual fruit, we can lead others to Christ as well.

Yes, we have an objective standard in life, and we need to respect it and obey it. The standard is not our thoughts, or experiences; it is the revealed word of God! Yes, the will of the God of Heaven who loves us, who redeemed us, and who wants us to be in Heaven one day with Him for eternity. The question is will we accept that standard? Will we follow the standard and submit to it? Too many people are rejecting this standard for selfish interests. We will answer for that if we do not repent. Therefore, let us make sure that we simply do what the Lord says (**Rev. 22:14**). Follow the revealed word of God so that we may see Heaven one day. *Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com*

Why Does God Allow Suffering?

By Jimmy Thomas

God is great; God is good; God is love (**Psa. 48:1; 100:5; 1 Jn. 4:8**). Still, suffering is rampant in the world. Because of this many come to doubt God’s power, goodness and love.

We must recognize that God created an orderly universe (**Gen. 1:2; Isa. 45:18**). When one violates His natural laws, willfully or ignorantly, he must pay the penalty. If a man jumps from a high building, falls into deep water, or is trapped in a flaming house, God does not suspend His laws of nature to protect that person. If one’s body is injured or diseased, it will naturally suffer. Children of God are not sheltered from suffering sickness and disease. Such is the common lot of mankind (**Rom. 8:22; Job 14:1**).

Many suffer because of their own sins (**Psa. 38:3-8**). They reap what they sow (**Gal. 6:7-8; Prov. 2:21-22**). Multitudes are afflicted with cancer, heart trouble, ulcers, emphysema, loss of limb, blindness, and mental disorders due to continued abuse of their bodies with alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, fornication, and other vices. Some are behind bars for their crimes (**1 Pet. 4:15**). God should not be blamed for this suffering.

Innocent people may suffer because of the wrongs of others (2 Sam. 12:13ff). A drunken driver kills an entire family, a little child is battered by a cruel father, and helpless parents grieve over a wayward son. Even the Lord Jesus Christ suffered (1 Pet. 4:1; 2:21). God did not spare His sinless Son, neither will we escape (Heb. 5:8; 2:9, 18).

Many suffer because they are righteous (2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Thess. 3:3). Those who do evil often hate those who do good (Jn. 15:18-20). Disciples of Christ are called to daily cross bearing (Lk. 9:23). Yet they are to rejoice and be happy in such afflictions (1 Pet. 4:12-16; Mt. 5:10-12).

Suffering can work for good if it is used properly (2 Cor. 4:17-18; cf. Ps. 119:71; Job 23:10; Rom. 8:17; Jas. 1:2). Remember, Christ loves His elect and will comfort and give them strength to bear their load (Rom. 8:31-39; 2 Cor. 12:7-10; 13:3-4; 1 Pet. 5:17).

Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com

Are You Heaven Bound?

By David J. Riggs

It matters not what else you do in life, if you miss heaven you have been a complete failure. You might gather about you great riches and fame and leave thousands of friends to mourn your departing, but if you are not ready for heaven you have been a miserable failure. On the other hand, you may die in a charity home for the poor and be buried in a potter's field without a single friend to mourn, but if you receive heaven, your life has been a marvelous success.

You can't afford to miss heaven for if you miss it, you miss all. It is the place of eternal rest (Heb. 4:9-11) where pain, sickness, and death will not be known (Rev. 21:4). It is an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that does not fade away (1 Pet. 1:4). It is that city built by the living God (Heb. 11:10).

You don't have to miss heaven. Humbly submit yourself to the will of God (Matt. 7:21). Let His Word guide you (2 Tim. 3:15) and let no one beguile you or your reward (Col. 2:18). Overcome temptations (James 1:12) and suffer for His cause with rejoicing (Matt. 5:11-12). If you do these things, heaven will be yours someday for the God of heaven who cannot lie has promised it.

I quote a few words from some of our songs: "I am going to a city where the streets with gold are laid, where the tree of life is blooming, and the roses never fade. Here they bloom but for a season, soon their beauty is decayed; I am going to a city where the roses never fade." "I am bound for the promised land, promised land, I am bound for the promised land; O who will come and go with me? I am bound for the promised land." "When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun; we've now less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun."

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17