



The Voice of Truth



July 19, 2009

Authority

By Jimmy Pettigrew

The critical issue in religion today is the question of authority. So, what does authority mean? Authority means the right to command and enforce obedience. Who has all authority in religion today? "And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (**Matthew 28:18**). "All" means what? The Greek meaning of the word "all" is "any, anyone, every, everyone and the whole." The word "authority" refers to power of Him whose will and commands must be submitted to and obeyed. Christ's claim is that of all authority! "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (**1 Peter 3:22**).

Therefore, we may correctly conclude that what men believe and practice today in the name of religion must be authorized by the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul wrote, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (**Colossians 3:17**). Men must respect the authority of Christ and submit to that authority in order to be saved. Now, where is the authority of Christ exercised today? Honest, sincere people today need to appreciate the fact that the authority of Christ is now exercised exclusively through His New Testament. This is a religious problem today; people fail to respect the authority of the New Testament today! Men have appealed to the Old Testament for the authority to practice: polygamy, mechanical instruments of music in worship, keeping the Sabbath, burning incense in worship, and to practice infant baptism. No New Testament writer ever sanctioned them, and no New Testament church ever practiced them; they are thus without the authority of Christ. We are not to go beyond what is written (**1 Corinthians 4:6**). We must not go beyond the doctrine of Christ (**2 John 9-11**). The "doctrine of

Christ" is that body of teaching which came from the Lord. It is that "form of teaching" which delivers from sin (**Romans 6:17**), and in which we will be judged by (**John 12:48**). To teach and practice another gospel is to invoke the wrath of God upon us (**Galatians 1:6-9**). As it is vital to hear the scriptures, so also it is important to respect the silence of the word of God (**Hebrews 1:5; 7:14**).

Let me ask a question: When the apostle Peter on the mount of transfiguration desired to build three tabernacles, one for the lawgiver, Moses, one for the representative of the prophets, Elijah, and one tabernacle for Christ, what did God say? Peter put Jesus on equality with Moses and Elijah, like people do today to authorize their practice of mechanical instruments of music worship, or keeping the Sabbath etc., but God did not. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (**Matthew 17:5**). Thus God determined not three tabernacles, nor three to be honored, but one, the Son. Now, we are to hear Him! Let ask another question, did God pronounce a condemnation upon those who refuse to hear His Son? "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people" (**Acts 3:22-23**).

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ he hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ he hath both the Father and the Son" (**2 John 9**). What does it mean to transgress, and abide not in the doctrine of Christ? It means simply to refuse to be governed by the authority of the New Testament. Well, what about one who refuses to abide in the

doctrine of Christ? He hath not God; that is, he has no claim on God as being his God. What of the one who abides in the doctrine of Christ? He hath both the Father and the Son; that is, he sustains that relationship to the Father and the Son which enables him to claim both of them as his own. It seems it would be impossible for the writer to teach more clearly than he does in this passage that God accepts in religion only that which He authorizes in the New Testament. Therefore, what men practice in religion today must be authorized by God's word and since God speaks to us by His Son (**Hebrew 1:1-2**), the word of Christ is the authority that must be respected now, and this authority is exercised through the New Testament.

Whatever is offered as worship to God, which is not authorized by the New Testament, is not acceptable to Him!

What Example Do You Set in this Local Church?

By Brian A. Yeager

Sometimes people view things subjectively, opposed to objectively. At times it is difficult for us to properly examine ourselves as we ought to (**II Corinthians 13:5**). It even becomes difficult at times to see our close friends and family members with an objective eye. Someone who is an objective person can "express or deal with facts or conditions as perceived without distortion by personal feelings, prejudices, or interpretations" (Webster's New World College Dictionary, 4th Edition). Being subjective is the opposite of being objective.

Everyone in a local church is setting some sort of an example for others to see, and very possibly follow. Everyone from the Sunday morning pew warmer to the enthusiastic Bible Class teacher is setting some sort of example. All that attend from the older Christian, to the young children, who are just learning about the Lord, are witnesses of behaviors that Christians show forth. Faithful Christians need to follow Paul's instructions through his letter to Titus: (**Titus 2:7-8**) "*In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot*

be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." During your reading of this article you need to be objective. You need to see yourself clearly. Then ask yourself the question: what type of example am I to others?

Are You a Positive Example in this Local Church?

We all should be striving to be good examples for our brethren to follow. We should be able to say things like the Apostle Paul said to the church in Corinth: (**I Corinthians 11:3**) "*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*" A positive example to follow is very much needed for all of us. We know that we have many within the pages of God's word, but what we are in the body of Christ is significant in the saving of souls. Christians are lights in the world (**Matthew 5:16** and **Philippians 2:15-16**), but that does not mean we are not lights within the church. For example, when we read the concluding chapter of the book of Romans we read of Phebe. She is an encouragement to brethren then and now, because she was a helper to Christians (**Romans 16:1-2**). Priscilla and Aquila were examples as they would risk their own necks for the sake of brethren (**Romans 16:3-4**). We need brothers and sisters in the body of Christ today like Phebe, Priscilla, and Aquila.

It is encouraging to come to services and find that everyone is there all of the time. We assemble together in part to edify each other (**Hebrews 10:24-25**). It is an encouragement to be able to say that brother and / or sister _____ will be at services today, because they are always there. Thus, those who attend faithfully are good examples for all to follow. It is encouraging to brethren to see growth in the lives of their brothers and sisters in Christ. As Christians we are to grow spiritually (**II Peter 1:5-10** and **II Peter 3:18**). Christians who are growing through studies in the word of God (**John 5:39**) are being good examples for their brethren to follow.

It is encouraging to notice your brethren worshipping correctly. We see good examples in how brethren worship. To hear the voices of brethren raised together in song

(**Ephesians 5:19**), to note brethren remembering the Lord's death through partaking of the "Lord's Supper" (**Acts 20:7** and **I Corinthians 11:23-26**), to know that brethren are giving as they ought to (**I Corinthians 16:1-2**), praying with you (**Acts 12:2**), and partaking in the preaching of the Gospel (**Acts 20:7ff.**), is edifying. It is encouraging for brethren to spend time with one another outside of the assembling times of the local church (**Acts 2:46**). Brethren who lead through good examples are brethren who will show interest in others. They will want to be together so that each Christian can support each other. When going through life in the world it is needful to have one another to lean upon. Do you do these types of things and by so doing; do you show a good example to your brethren? If not, are your actions best described by saying you are a negative example to your brethren?

Are You a Negative Example in this Local Church?

Along with good examples of faithful brethren in the New Testament there are negative examples as well. Demas forsook Paul and served as a bad example of a Christian then and today (**II Timothy 4:10**). Alexander the coppersmith did much evil to Paul, and was someone to be concerned about for the effect he may have on others (**II Timothy 4:14-15**). Diotrephes wanted the preeminence among brethren and needed to be confronted (**III John 9-11**). The church does not need examples like Demas, Alexander the coppersmith, and Diotrephes today.

When Sunday morning or Wednesday evening comes, those who serve as bad examples in a local congregation may not at services be found. They have chosen not to attend with the saints. They are saying through their actions that the kingdom of God comes second to them and by doing so, they portray an example not befitting a Christian (**Matthew 6:33**, **Colossians 3:1-3**, and **Hebrews 10:25**). Sometimes the bad examples attend every service, but they are there discouraging those trying to serve the Lord. When Bible questions need answered and older brothers and sisters of the faith (those

who have been Christians longer than others) cannot answer, they are bad examples of growth. When Christians have questions about how to handle a matter in their lives spiritually they should be able to depend upon those who are Christians of age. When they cannot, a bad example is set forth. When those "younger in the faith" are the leaders in a local church; that does not serve as a compliment to those of supposed maturity (**Titus 2:2-6**).

When brethren assemble for worship and they find some who are not singing with the rest of the saints - a bad example is being set (**Colossians 3:16**). When a brother or sister observes the "passover" when the collection is taken - a bad example is being set (**II Corinthians 9:7**). When a brother or sister in Christ abuses the Lord's Supper in any way - a bad example is being set (**I Corinthians 11:29**). When a brother or sister in Christ decides to talk during, ignore, sleep through, or other types of defiant behaviors during the preaching of God's word - a bad example is being set (**Acts 17:10-11**). When a brother or sister in Christ finds prayer to be of no importance - a bad example is being set (**I Thessalonians 5:17**). When brethren decide not to spend time with their fellow saints they are not being an encourager, but a discourager. (Who in this world could possibly serve as better people to have as friends, than those of like precious faith?) When a Christian fails to be a good example, it is because they themselves are not spiritually right in the sight of God and they have nothing to set forth that is good for others to follow.

Conclusion

The church of Christ is led by the Scriptures, but brethren need to resemble what is recorded in the word of God to teach by example. When Christians are setting examples that discourage brethren and possibly even lead others astray, the church of our Lord is not being strengthened. If you are failing in being a good example to your brethren it is time to change before it is too late (**Luke 13:3; 5**). If you are a good example continue to be such and grow daily that to-

morrow you may be a better example to your brethren than you are today. The body of Christ is to be edified through each Christian (**Ephesians 4:16**), let us strive to get to that point. *Credit: <http://www.wordsoftruth.net>*

"What God Says vs. What Man Says "

By Bill Crews

Man says: "The important thing is whether or not one loves God, not the keeping of commandments."

God says: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (**I Jn. 5:3**).

Man says: "Thank God for the many churches so that man may find the one that is best suited for Him."

God says: "There is one body" (**Eph. 4:4**). "He is the head of the body, the church" (**Col. 1:18**).

Man says: "Join the church of your choice, but join a church."

God says: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (**Acts 2:47**). "Every plant, (religious) which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (**Matt. 15:13**). "...and that there be no divisions among you" (**I Cor. 1:10**).

Man says: "Each person should follow the way that seems right to them and that honesty and conscience direct."

God says: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (**Prov. 14:12**). "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (**Jer. 10:23**).

Man says: "Faith only is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort." "Ye see that by faith only a man is justified."

God says: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (**Jas.**

2:24). "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (**Gal. 5:6**).

Man says: "Baptism is not necessary to one's salvation."

God says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (**Mk. 16:16**). "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (**Acts 2:38**).

Man says: "Baptism is an ordinance that can be administered by sprinkling or pouring on of water as well as by immersion in water."

God says: "We are buried with him by baptism into death" (**Rom. 6:4**). "They came unto a certain water: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip" (**Acts 8:36-39**).

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**

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com