



# The Voice of Truth



February 21, 2010

## "Charges to Christians"

By Jimmy Pettigrew

One of the real problems of Christianity is a lack of dedicated service to Christ. You must serve Christ zealously and faithfully. Living the Christian life is pictured in the New Testament as: warfare (**Eph. 6:10-18**), an athletic event (**1 Cor. 9:24-26; Gal. 5:7**). A good start, so important in a race, does not insure a successful finish. Christians need to remember these charges for running the Christian race.

(1) "...stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (**1 Cor. 16:13**). Paul exhorts the Corinthians to stand fast. Meaning, stand fast in the truth (**Jno. 17:17**), God's word (**Psa. 119:9**), the New Testament (**2 Cor. 3:6**), the gospel of Christ (**Rom. 1:16**), the doctrine or teaching of Christ (**2 Jno. 9**). This is the urgency needed by all saints! We must prove our worth as a soldier of Christ and fight the spiritual warfare that Christians must wage! Stand fast in the faith, always be eager to defend (**1 Pet. 3:15**) and contend (**Jude 3**). Stand for things which Christ stood for, stand for the things which Christ died for, stand and ask for the old paths (**Jer. 6:16**).

(2) "Abstain from every form of evil" (**1 Thess. 5:22**). When one has learned what is good or true, and what is evil and false, he should hold fast the true and abstain from the evil. In **1 Timothy 6:11-12**, follow a discourse on a number of evils and the disastrous results that come upon those that follow such things. Paul addresses Timothy as a "man of God", indicating that he is one who is committed to God in this life. In view of the evils just mentioned (**1 Timothy 6**), Paul urges Timothy to "flee these things" (**vs. 11**). There are times when running is not cowardly, but wise. It is absurdity, foolishness and madness to remain in the presence of temptation needlessly. It is not wisdom to

*deliberately place one's soul in jeopardy. When Joseph was approached by the wife of Potiphar for the purpose of fornication, Joseph fled the scene completely. We cannot always avoid temptations, but we do not have to remain in their presence. "Do not enter the path of the wicked, And do not walk in the way of evil. Avoid it, do not travel on it; Turn away from it and pass on" (Prov. 4:14-15).*

(3) "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (**Jno. 14:15**). This says in effect, that love for the Lord is evidenced in keeping His commandments. If you'll keep on loving Me, you'll keep my commandments. "And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keep-eth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" (**1 Jno. 2:3-5**). "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (**Jno. 15:9-10**). This love for God is not simply an emotion. It is a disposition that seeks the glory of God. It is an attitude of submission to His will. It is the desire to do His bidding! Love is not only obeying commands; it is having them! "He who has my commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to Him" (**Jno. 14:21**). Love **MUST** be expressed in obedience! Such glorifies the Son and thus, glorifies the Father. Do you love the Father? Do your actions show that you do?

(4) "...Be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living" (**1 Pet. 1:15**). We are en-

*couraged to live lives of complete dedication to God. As the song we sing, we need to:*

*Take time to be Holy,  
speak oft with thy Lord;  
Abide in Him always,  
And feed on His word.*

Are we taking time to be holy when we want worship services shortened? Or, when we want the sermon not to be over twenty minutes? We want the prayers short, the songs few. What's the big hurry? Are we in a hurry to visit the sick and erring after services? No, we want to go to a restaurant and eat a delicious meal, watch TV or whatever we desire. If the Lord's Supper is served first, some brethren will partake of it and leave on a trip the minute after they partake! Is this taking time to be holy, or is this taking time for our own desires? We need to forget the cares of the world and take time to be holy! We should study God's word and pray every day.

The truth of God has been placed in the care of those who love the Lord. It is an awesome responsibility, so let us handle it aright, love it, obey it, live it and stand fast for it! •

### **"Christ's Shocking Doctrine"** By Jarrod Jacobs

Can you imagine something being told to you that was so shocking that you could not believe your ears? Can you imagine something so shocking being told to you that you became enraged, or that you shook all over? Can you imagine something so shocking being said to you that it made you weep? Would it be difficult to fathom something being told to you that was so wonderful that it brought you great joy?

What could do these things? What kind of information could elicit such responses as we have mentioned above? It is the doctrine of Christ! Yes, the doctrine of our Lord is so shocking to some that even our "knowledgeable" and "enlightened" society today has a hard time coming to terms with

what Christ taught.

In our Lord's day, people were "astonished at his doctrine" (**Matt. 7:28**). Why? Among other reasons, our Lord was speaking things to these people that they had not heard before. It was unfamiliar to them. In truth, such a statement as **Matthew 7:28** ought to shock US! Why? Because, Christ was teaching these people things they should have known already, since they were children of God!

What are some things our society finds shocking about the doctrine of Christ? Please consider some of the shocking statements below that Christ taught, and see if these are things which shock us.

#### **"He That Believeth And Is Baptized Shall Be Saved" (Mk. 16:16).**

This is a shocking doctrine to most of the denominational world today. In fact, many claiming to be Christians and brethren in Christ are not so sure about the verse, anymore! The reason this is so shocking to people is because they have been taught that men are saved at the point of faith alone. Nothing could be further from the truth. As one reads the New Testament, he will learn that NOTHING alone will save you. Yet, so many are shocked to consider the fact that Christ demanded men be baptized in order to be saved! Peter said, "*the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us ...*" (**I Pet. 3:21**). Could anything be clearer than this?

#### **"I Will Build My Church" (Matt. 16:18).**

The singular nature of the Lord's church shocks many. Unfortunately, men in our society have the idea that one can simply choose the church of their choice; and that so long as the name of God is invoked at one point or another, God is pleased. Nothing could be further from the truth! Just because men choose to be associated with a particular group, does not mean God chose that group! Just because a particular group pleases its neighbors and the community by the good

works they perform does not mean God is pleased. Please read **Matthew 7:21-23**, and notice that though those standing before Christ claimed to do "*many wonderful works*," Christ told them, "*I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity!*"

It is our responsibility to be associated with the church of God's choosing, and not our own. Which church is the church of God's choice? It is the church built upon the foundation of His son (**I Cor. 3:11**); purchased with His blood (**Acts 20:28**); and the one which worships Him in spirit and in truth (**Jn. 4:24**). Paul called it the church of God, or the church of Christ (**Acts 20:28; Rom. 16:16**)! This true doctrine is shocking, to some, but we must respect it and obey His precepts!

**"Be Thou Faithful Unto Death ..." (Rev. 2:10).**

Another shocking aspect of Christ's doctrine is the fact that being a Christian is a life-long commitment. Being a Christian is not something that we can simply do, or not do, as the mood strikes us! Yet, many today consider those of us who are Christians as "religious fanatics" because we wish to live for Christ every minute of our lives. This is shocking to many because they want a religion of convenience, one where they are served; not one where they must serve!

Paul wrote, "*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*" (**Rom. 12:1-2**). Being a Christian means we "*present*" our bodies as "living sacrifices" to God. We belong to Him, and live to do His will in all things. Though some do not care, those who are Christians realize that all of our lives must be given in service to Him. He died for us, therefore, we need to live faithfully for the Lord (**II Cor. 5:14-15**).

**"Adorn Themselves In Modest Apparel" (I Tim. 2:9).**

It is expected of Christians that we dress in a modest way. In our current age, we find that many who claim to be Christians are not interested in dressing modestly, but in dressing like the world! Many men and women have long since become comfortable appearing in public in various states of undress. Both Paul and Peter tell us something quite different than we are hearing among those in the world!

Paul said: "*In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works*" (**I Tim. 2:9-10**). Peter said: "*Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; ... Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price*" (**I Pet. 3:1-4**).

The way in which a Christian should dress is one of "*shamefacedness*," "*sobriety*," ("soundness of mind, self-control," **Strong's**) a profession of godliness, and "*the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit*." Based upon these characteristics, how could one professing godliness wear what most of the world wears today? How could Christians justify wearing the shorts, bikinis, and other outfits that are being worn by both men and women in our society today? If you will read carefully, even in the beginning, God "*clothed*" the man and woman (**Gen. 3:21**). In so doing, he gave them "*coats of skins*" or "*tunics*" as some versions say. Before this time, the man and woman were naked (**Gen. 2:25**). When they sinned, they attempted to cover up themselves, but failed. Adam even admitted he had hidden from God because he was "*naked*," though at this time wearing the equivalent of modern-day "biker's shorts" (**Gen. 3:8, 10**). BOTH were topless,

and God covered them both with these "coats" or "tunics." There is no double-standard in God's eyes for men and women!

Yes, such talk about modesty and our clothing is shocking to the worldly. But, if we are going to be what Christ wants us to be, we will dress in the appropriate manner -- at all times!

***"Whatsoever Ye Do In Word Or Deed, Do All In The Name Of The Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17).***

Perhaps one of the most shocking things people learn about the doctrine of Christ is that for all we do or say, we must have authority from Christ! There is nothing that falls outside this realm. Sometimes, you'll hear people say, "There are lots of things we do today without authority from God." Friend, if you do "lots of things" without authority from Christ, you need to repent! The things we do without authority from Christ are sin! **Colossians 3:17** declares plainly that whatever we say, and whatever we do must have sanction from Heaven! If we do not have it, then we are asking for problems. We will answer to God for words said and actions done that were without authority from Christ. Christ's response will be *"depart from me"* (**Matt. 7:21-23**)! The Scriptures have been given to man that they might thoroughly furnish us unto all good works (**II Tim. 3:16-17**). Therefore, if something is not authorized of God, it

is NOT a good work! Shocking? Yes, to some! But, sometimes we need a good shock in order to get us back on the *"strait and narrow"* way that leads to life (**Matt. 7:13-14**)!

### Conclusion

Let us always appreciate and follow the doctrine of Christ. Yes, it is shocking to those who are not familiar with it, but it is comforting and of great value to those who are (**I Cor. 1:18**)! Our greatest delight ought to be in the will of God (**Ps. 1:1-2**). Let us study it, live it, and teach it to others while there is still hope. God forbid that we ever get so settled and acclimated to this world that His doctrine shocks us!

Credit: [www.southside-churchofchrist.com](http://www.southside-churchofchrist.com) ♦

### 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

### Do You Just Belong?

Are you an active member? The kind that would be missed?

Or are you just contented that your name is on the list?

Do you attend the meetings and mingle with the flock?

Or do you stay away to criticize and knock?

Do you take an active part to help the work along?

Or are you satisfied to only just belong?

Think this over, my dear friends: I know you won't go wrong.

Are you an active member, or do you just belong? ♦

### About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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#### Our Address

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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

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