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to a proper understanding of God's word. What is your question? Ask me any Bible-related question, and I will do

my best to answer you from the Bible. For this is our true standard of unity! Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com

"WHICH CHURCH SHOULD I ATTEND?"

One Where His Name Is Glorified

Acts 4:12 - No other name whereby we might be saved.
Acts 11:26 - God gave the name Christian
1 Peter 4:16 - We can glorify God in this name.

One Where His Teachings On Salvation Are Followed

John 14:6 - Only He is the way to heaven.
Hebrews 5:9 - All must obey Him to be saved.
John 8:24 - He said we must believe on Him.
Luke 13:3 - He said we must repent.
Matthew 10:32-33 - He said we must confess Him.
Mark 16:16 - He said we must be baptized to be saved.

One Where His Will Is Followed In Worship

John 4:24 - Worship must be sincere and proper actions.
Acts 20:7 - Lord's Supper on the first day of the week.
Colossians 3:16 - Singing praises to God.
Acts 2:42 - Prayer and teaching.
1 Corinthians 16:1-2 - Giving of our means on the first day of the week.

YOU SHOULD ATTEND THE CHURCH OF CHRIST "The churches of Christ salute you." (Romans 16:16)

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		
Evangelist: Jimmy Pettigrew		
How to Contact Us	Our Address	Schedule of Assembly
Telephone: (920)499-5677 E-mail: hillcrestcofc@live.com  	1621 Hillcrest Drive Green Bay, WI 54313 	Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm* <small>*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month</small>
www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com		



The Voice of Truth



February 19, 2012

THE WORD OF GOD
 By Jimmy Pettigrew

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning" (James 1:17).

Men are surrounded by gifts of God. Jesus Christ is God's unspeakable gift (2 Corinthians 9:15); Eternal life (Romans 6:23); Salvation (Ephesians 2:8); Rain and sunshine (Matthew 5:45); Earth and fruitful seasons (Acts 14:17). Life is a gift from God (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

We want to look at the Bible as God's good gift to man. The Scriptures are inspired of God (God-breathed) (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible is a gift from God to men. The Bible is complete revelation of God's truth to man. Mankind has failed to appreciate and respect the Bible as God's absolute and final will for man. "The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?" (Jeremiah 8:9). Man in Jeremiah's day had failed to appreciate and respect God's Word. We live in that kind of society today! There is no respect for God and His Word. We humans do not generally regard rules and regulations as absolute occurrence. We usually perceive them as offenses upon our freedom; deliberate attempts to restrict our behavior. What about us in the Lord's church? We may have a tendency to display resentment and a rebellious spirit when faced with spiritual standards. We feel that God is prying and merely burdening our lives with offhand, senseless instructions.

God intends mankind to fashion his life, his thinking, his speech, his whole being according to that divine book. Man needs something to direct him in life (Jeremiah 10:23). God's Word is man's lamp and light (Psalm 119:105). God's Word is man's hope against sin (Psalm 119:11). God's Word is the truth whereby man may be freed from sin (1 Timothy 2:4). The truth of God's Word is the means whereby we obtain the purification of the soul (1 Peter 1:22-23). The Word of God gives all we need (2

Timothy 3:16-17). God's Word sanctifies (John 17:17); cleanses (Ephesians 5:26); it gives understanding (Psalm 119:30); it will judge us (John 12:48). God's Word has power to produce a new life (James 1:18). It is quick, living and powerful (Hebrews 4:12; Romans 1:16). It is able to build us up and give us an inheritance (Acts 20:32); set us free (John 8:32). It is able to make us wise unto salvation (2 Timothy 3:15). The Word of God provides us with righteousness (Proverbs 14:34). We become all God wants us to be through faithful obedience to His Word.

Now knowing all this concerning God's Word, His guidelines for humanity, His commands are not burdensome (1 John 5:3) nor too hard (Deuteronomy 30:11). The laws of God, His Word, for humanity are actually very desirable (Psalm 19:10) and tasteful (Psalm 119:103). As the Israelites were engaged in their final encampment on the plains of Moab prior to entrance into the Promise Land, Moses pronounce a most important principle: the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes . . . for good always (Deuteronomy 6:24).

You see, God is not asking us to do anything that will hurt us! God is not hampering us and exercising His authority in our lives in order to make us unhappy! Quite the opposite! Our obedience to His Word will make us happy! "If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17). "But he that looketh into the perfect law, the (law) of liberty, and (so) continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing" (James 1:25). Our faithfulness to His Word will make us righteous. "(My) little children, let no man lead you astray: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous" (1 John 3:7). "Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves (as) servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16). Our obedience will bring us true friendship! "If ye love me, ye will keep my

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commandments" (John 14:15). "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you" (John 15:14). Our obedience will enable us to be saved (Hebrews 5:9). He offers salvation freely to all them that obeys Him. Though He has by the grace of God tasted death for every man and so made an atonement for all, he nevertheless bestows salvation only on those who obey Him. If we will do God's will, we will be wise (Matthew 24:45-46; 7:24). We become all

God wants us to be through faithful obedience to His word.

Friend, do not resist the commandments of God, no matter how difficult they may seem to be to you. "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord" (Lamentations 3:40). Read the Bible in order to be wise. Obey the Bible in order to be holy. Give me the Bible! For after all, it is given for our good! ♦

"Questions Which Demand Answers"

By Jarrod Jacobs

As we talk to people about the church and becoming a Christian, we may become frustrated because we do not know an answer, or because we do not know the answer right away. While we should never be afraid to say, "I don't know, let me study that and I will get back to you," we should also know enough to answer most questions when they are asked of us. Peter said, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (I Pet. 3:15). Let us look at some questions that are asked of us at times and answer them from the Bible.

"Aren't You The Ones That Don't Believe In Music?"

When someone asks this question, do we know how to answer? One who asks this question needs to be shown that while we do believe in "music," we do not have instrumental accompaniment in our singing. This person needs to be shown passages like Ephesians 5:19: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Another passage to study is Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Yes, we believe in music, but according to the Bible, it is a sin to add the mechanical instrument to the worship. Other helpful passages include: Romans 15:9; I Corinthians 14:15; Hebrews 2:12, 13:15; and James 5:13.

"Do You Think That You Are The Only Ones Going To Heaven?"

Generally, this question is the result of hearing us teach that there is only one church that the Lord established (Eph. 4:5; Matt. 16:18). It came into being on the day of Pentecost with about 3000 souls being added that day (Acts 2:41). God has continued to add the saved to

the church since that day (Acts 2:47). Seeing that this is true, does it not make sense that if I wish to go to Heaven I need to be a member of the church the Lord started?

It is not a matter of whether or not I think "we are the only ones going to Heaven." What I teach must focus on "what saith the Scripture?" (Rom. 4:3). The truth is that God has left us no other choice! We will do it His way, or suffer the second death in a Devil's Hell!

"Do We Not Have Choices In The Religion We Want?"

Many try to accommodate people by allowing them choices that God never offered! We need to learn that there is only ONE way to Heaven, and it is through Christ (Jn. 10:9, 14:6). The way that seems right to men leads to death (Prov. 14:12).

Jesus was crucified to purchase His church and no one else's (Acts 20:28). His church wears His name and no one else's (Rom. 16:16). We enter into that church under His conditions and no one else's (Acts 2:38). There is only one true choice! It is not "my" church, not "my" feelings that determine what I teach and preach. The determining factor is what Jesus has said in the Bible.

"You Do Not Believe In The Old Testament ."

Since we say that we are living under the New Testament today (Col. 2:14), some take this to mean we do not believe in the Old Testament. Not true! The truth is that we believe in the Old Testament and believe its words when it prophesies of its completion.

God promised a new covenant in Jeremiah's day. He said, "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I

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made with their fathers . I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. ... (Jer. 31:31-34)." This promise is repeated in the New Testament and the Hebrew writer says that God has given us a better covenant under which to live, the New Testament (Heb. 8:6-13).

Yes, we believe in the Old Testament (Rom. 15:4). However, it is not binding on us as law (Col. 2:12-14).

"You Do Not Believe That The Blood Of Christ Saves ."

This claim is made because we teach passages like Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38 which declare that one must be baptized in order to be saved. A mistake is made because these people then assume that this means we do not believe the blood of Christ saves us.

Certainly, Christ's blood saves us! We could not have redemption without Christ's blood (Eph. 1:7). However, is it the blood alone that saves us? Certainly not! If the blood alone saves us then what of the love of God (Jn. 3:16)? What of the grace of God (Eph. 2:5)? The Bible says these things save us as well!

A distinction must be made between what God has done to give us salvation, and what man must do in order to receive salvation. On God's side, He has saved us by His grace, love, and Christ's blood. We in turn, must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, repent of our sins, confess Christ and be baptized in order to receive the remission of sins (Jn. 8:24; Lk. 13:3; Matt. 10:32; Mk. 16:16). Christ's blood saves us when we are baptized (Jn. 19:32-37; Rom. 6:3-6).

"Why Do You Make The Distinction Between The Universal And Local Church?"

We make a distinction between the universal and local church because the Bible makes that distinction! The universal church is made up of all Christians, living and dead. It has no earthly organization at all. We see a reference made to the universal church when we read Peter's command to, "love the brotherhood" (I Pet. 2:17). In Christ's promise to establish His church, He referred to the church in the universal sense (Matt. 16:18). When God adds people to the church, He adds them to the church (universal), not to a local church (Acts 2:47). One can be in the universal church without being a member of a local church. However, if one never becomes a member of a local congregation, he has not fully obeyed God based on apostolic

example.

A local church is simply a group of Christians meeting together in a certain locality. When we read of the church at Ephesus, Colosse, or Corinth, we are reading about local churches. They are organized with elders, deacons, and saints (Phil. 1:1). For people to be added to a local congregation, they must be a Christian. They must then make their desire known, and that local church must respond to the request (Acts 9:26-28). The local church has a responsibility to withdraw from those members who walk disorderly (II Thess. 3:6, 14-15; I Cor. 5). Of course, one cannot be a member of a local church without being a member of the universal church.

Hopefully, these distinctions will help us as we discuss the subject of the universal and local church. Many have blurred the lines between the two. When this happens, denominationalism is not far off!

"Why Do You Make The Distinction Between The Church And The Individual?"

We do so because the Scripture makes this distinction. For example, Christ said, "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church..." (Matt. 18:15-17). Notice the distinction that is made between an individual and the church. Yes, there is a difference.

Paul talked about this distinction as well. He said, "If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed" (I Tim. 5:16). If there is no difference between the church and the individual, then when the individual was charged, so was the church! It did not matter that Paul said, "let not the church be charged" for it was charged when the individuals were! See how silly this gets? There is a distinction made between the church and the individual, and it is our responsibility to respect that distinction! Beware of those who say that there is no difference between the church and the individual.

Conclusion

When we decide to follow what the Bible says in all things, the answers to these and other questions are not difficult to find. Let us study our Bibles together and come

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