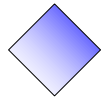


The Voice of Truth



December 15, 2013

The Bible Is Clear By Jimmy Pettigrew

Recently, I have been having a discussion with a man (belonging to a denomination) concerning the church. He called me a brother, and I pointed out to him how he could become my brother in Christ. His reply, he asked this question in a sarcastic way, "Do you think our Creator cares about the particular denomination one belongs to? He goes on and says, "No... our Lord and Savior wants our hearts, that's what's important to Him." Then he says, "The church of Christ as the bible refers to it is talking about all followers of Christ regardless of denomination."

First, I want to say the use of mechanical instruments of music in the worship to God is sinful because it is not authorized (**Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16**). Denominationalism is sinful because it is not authorized by the Bible. Whatever in religion is not authorized by the Bible is sinful. This the Bible plainly teaches. People need to realize that whatever in religion that is not authorized by the Bible is sinful, and will be rooted up (**Matthew 15:13**). The essential head of every denomination is not Christ, but Satan. There would be no denominations if all men followed the Bible.

The Bible is clear that the church is not a part of the whole; the whole being false religion. We are not to go beyond the things written (**1 Corinthians 4:6**) and when we do, we do not have God (**2 John 9-11**). A denomination is a group of people who formulate their own creed not found in the Bible.

God cannot accept denominationalism because He condemns division (**1 Corinthians 1:10-17**). There is no authority in the Bible for the Lutheran "church," Methodist, or Baptist "church," etc. The man does not live who can prove that the Bible authorizes a man to be baptized into, say the Methodist "church." Such authorization is not in the Bible. The church for which Jesus died (**Acts 20:28**) is the one body of people who have been saved by His blood (**Ephesians 1:7; 2:13-17**). The church for which Christ died is neither a denomination nor a part of a

denomination.

Remember Jesus said, "If ye abide in my word, (then) are ye truly my disciples" (**John 8:31**). Then Christ goes on to say, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (**John 8:32**). Truth is from heaven, not from man (**John 1:17; 14:6; 16:13**). It must be known (**John 8:32**), believed (**2 Thessalonians 2:12**), loved (**2 Thessalonians 2:10**), and obeyed (**1 Peter 1:22; Galatians 5:7; Matthew 7:21-23; Hebrews 5:8-9**). It sounds to me that there is more than just the Savior wanting our hearts.

Notice please, that denominationalists claim to be faithful servants of Christ while they (1) reject Christ's one plan of salvation and to accept a plan of salvation which has been invented by mere human beings (for example, salvation by grace or faith only), (2) reject the one church which Jesus died and enter a denomination, which also was invented by mere human beings, (3) to reject the way of worship which has been authorized by the New Testament and to engage in worship which has not been authorized by the New Testament. People, denominationalism is sinful because it is not authorized by the Lord Jesus Christ (**2 John 9-11; Colossians 3:17**).

The Bible teaches that every person who is baptized in the name of Jesus Christ is added by the Lord Himself to the church for which He died (**Acts 2:38, 41, 47; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 12:13**). Those who have done what the Bible authorizes become members of the church of Christ; Christians, and nothing more. They do not become a hyphenated Christian (Lutheran-Christians, Methodist-Christians, and Baptist-Christians); they become just Christians!

Do you see what this person is saying? He is telling me that the body of Christ doesn't matter. The church is not important. If that be the case, then he is telling me the blood of Christ doesn't matter (**Acts 20:28**). How could

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anyone say the church is not important? Who would say that Christ wasted His blood on the cross? You do if you say the church doesn't matter, as long as you give your heart to the Lord. If the church doesn't matter, God's eternal plan doesn't matter (**Ephesians 3:8-11**). His ideas, his attitude is, "I'm okay, and you're okay." His belief is as long as your religious you're alright in the sight of God. Wrong! Tell that to Cain, Nadab and Abihu (**Genesis 4; Leviticus 10**). I want us to notice what this man is saying, notice: The Baptists teach baptism by immersion; the Methodist by sprinkling; Baptists practice a closed communion with the Lord's Supper; The Methodist an open communion; The Baptists teach one can't fall from grace, while the Methodist can fall. According to this man's teaching, he believes both views on these subjects are correct, because it doesn't matter as long as you give your heart to the Lord. He accepts the view that God is the author of both these views on these subjects. Well God is not a God of confusion (**1 Corinthians 14:33**). Our God is ever a God of order. God demands order! He is not the author of confusion. We are to speak the same thing. *"Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and (that) there be no divisions among you; but (that) ye be perfected to-*

gether in the same mind and in the same judgment" (**1 Corinthians 1:10**). Here it is specified the need to speak the same thing, thus making it possible that there be no divisions. The speaking of the same things would be possible when all proposing to serve the Christ confined their speaking to *"the oracles of God"* (**1 Peter 4:11**), recognizing only the Word as authority (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**). This is impossible under this man's doctrine.

We plead with everyone to realize that he can be just a Christian, not some so-called "hyphenated-Christian" – a member of some denomination. There never has been a need for any denomination. There is no present need for anyone to be a member of a denomination. All one needs to do is obey the gospel of Christ, the seed, which is His word (**Luke 8:11; 1 Peter 1:20-25**), as a penitent believer being baptized unto the remission of your sins (**Acts 2:38; 22:16**), and you have the assurance of God, as set out in His word, that you will be a member of the church for which Jesus died (**Acts 20:28**), in which Christ is a Savior of (**Ephesians 5:23**), you will be just a Christian. Obedience to the Bible makes nothing but Christians. And there is no way to become a Christian except by believing and obeying the Bible. ♦

"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**) ♦

“Doing What Is Right”

By Jarrod Jacobs

Doing what is right is becoming an increasingly rare thing. In a world that encourages us to think in terms of “situation ethics”, and “the end justifies the means”, it is difficult to find people who are ready and willing to do the right thing all the time.

This is not a new phenomenon. Looking back through the years, we see people who did not do the right things. It may be that they were motivated by money, by popularity, by family issues, etc., but the result was that they rejected what was right and did what was wrong. Let us not be like this.

Let us look into the Bible and see some examples of folks who did the right thing even when it was difficult. Then, let us resolve to act like them.

Moses

When Moses stood before Pharaoh, and told him God’s message to “*Let my people go*” (**Ex. 5:1**, etc.). Moses had to do what was right and speak the truth to a world leader who had God’s people enslaved. Moses met Pharaoh several times in **Exodus 5-12** and God’s message never changed.

Pharaoh’s response to God’s word was compromises such as: “*Go sacrifice to your God within the land*” (**Ex. 8:25**), and “*... you must not go very far away*” (**Ex. 8:28**). One of Pharaoh’s compromises was that the men may go and worship, but leave the children (**Ex. 10:8-11**). Later, he said, “*Go, serve the Lord; your little ones also may go with you; only let the flocks and herds remain behind*” (**Ex. 10:25**).

Notice that in every case, Moses stood firm. Moses did not compromise when it came to sacrificing in the land, for he said they had to do, “*as He tells us*” (**Ex. 8:26-27**). Nor did he compromise in leaving the animals. He said, “*Not a hoof shall be left behind*” (**Ex. 10:26**)!

At any time, Moses might have compromised and won Pharaoh’s favor. However, he chose to do what was right! Yes, he upset Pharaoh, but he gained God’s favor (**Heb. 11:25-27**; **Jas. 4:4**; **Deut. 34:10-12**)!! Can we say we are ready and willing to follow what the Lord said without compromise? It must be done! (**Rev. 22:14**)

Balaam

Another example of doing the right thing was a man often called the “mongrel-prophet”, Balaam. While he certainly was not without fault, I appreciate his attitude when he stood before king Balak. In **Numbers 22-24**, we read about Balak’s work to curse God’s people, and his use of Balaam to curse them.

As we read this account, it is clear that Balak wanted to give Balaam “great honor”, money, and many other rewards if he would but curse God’s people. In our terms, Balak was offering bribes to Balaam for this work. I am impressed with Balaam’s answer when he tells Balak on two occasions: “*If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the command of the Lord my God to do less or more*” (**Num. 22:18, 24:13**). It didn’t matter what Balak offered, Balaam was only going to speak what God said to speak. He was going to do what was right. Can we say we are ready and willing to do what is right even when it means we are not going to receive “honor” or get the money others may have? (**I Tim. 6:10; Matt. 16:26**)

Elijah

Elijah is a prophet that has always had a special place in my heart. Elijah was ready to do what is right even when his life was threatened. Beginning in **I Kings 17**, Elijah stood before wicked King Ahab and told him what God had said.

We also see Elijah standing against 450 prophets of Baal (**I Kings 18**). He fought and killed these men by the brook Kishon (**I Kings 18:40**). He did not look at the numbers of people, nor the “sincerity” of their practice and decide to leave them alone. Rather, Elijah stood and showed who the true God is — Jehovah (**I Kings 18:30-39**)!

Sadly, the longer Elijah preached, the more his life was threatened (ex: **I Kings 19:2**). Thankfully, Elijah did not listen to the threats (even in his depression). His strong preaching and determination to do what is right resulted in him finally being taken from this earth and not seeing death (**II Kings 2:11-12**).

As we know, doing what is right will not please the

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people. It will not make everyone happy, and in fact, puts us at odds with people we love at times (**Matt. 10:32-37**). What will we choose? Will we choose to serve the Lord even when people do not like it? Or, will we choose to say and do things which placate the "majority"? Will we choose to act like Elijah (**Rom. 15:4**)? If not, why not?

The Heroes of Hebrews 11

Just as the Hebrew writer, "time would fail me" to speak of all that need to be mentioned in this article. Yet, **Hebrews 11** speaks of many faith heroes "who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated – of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (**Heb. 11:38**).

Friends, let us stop for a moment and consider what these folks did. They did what was right despite of what physical consequences might follow. They did this because they had faith in their Creator, and trusted in His

promises when they never enjoyed the promises while on earth (**Heb. 11:39**).

As we consider our lives, are we living in a manner similar to these great faith heroes? If not, why not? In contrast with those folks, we are allowed to enjoy and experience blessings in Christ (**Eph. 1:3**). These are not promises we are waiting to enjoy. Rather, they are things we can enjoy now.

Doing the right thing can cost us quite a lot in this world. Are we willing and ready to pay the price?

Conclusion

Our study has just named a few of the Old Testament heroes. This is not to diminish the good works and right decisions of folks in the New Testament. The apostle Paul suffered much so as to do the right thing in God's sight (**II Cor. 11:23-28**).

Of course, the greatest example of all is Jesus the Christ! "He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth" (**I Pet. 2:22**). Books deserve to be written about the decisions He made in doing what is right. Let us look to His example and see what is best. Note that in all of the examples above, men were not pleased with the decisions of the faithful. Yet, God was, and He is the One we must please!

What decisions have you made that show you are trying to do what is right? *Credit: The Old Paths – 10/20/13 ♦*

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