

*From Where I Sit . . .*

## **"In Search For The True Church"**

There are many trademarks one can read about in the Bible that would help us to know whether or not we have found a church that is true to Jesus and His Word, and thus a "true church." Certainly we have an obligation to study the Bible and see how the Lord identifies that institution for which He gave His life's blood. In Acts 20:28, the Apostle Paul tells us that the elders are to *"feed the church of God which he purchased with his own blood."*

In searching for the church as it is defined in the Bible we look at matters of respect for the authority of Jesus. He declared that he had all authority and commanded the apostles to go preaching the message and teaching the people to *"observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you"* (Matthew 28:20). That's why it matters whether or not we worship after the New Testament fashion, and whether we preach and practice a "thus saith the Lord." Religious differences make no difference whatsoever IF they make no difference to Christ. On the other hand, if the differences make a difference to Him then we must look for what He has authorized. Passages come to my mind that indicate there was a distinctive message that the First Century church was not to deviate from.

Paul wrote in Galatians 1:6-9, *"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."*

John contends that it does make a difference what we preach and teach. 2 John Verse 9, *"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."*

I learned of a man who visited a certain congregation and was thrilled with the scriptural emphasis on everything they did. As he left the building he was heard to say, "I have been looking for the "true church" for a long time. I hope that this will be that church. I'll be back for the services again this evening."

Just as the stranger had promised, he was present at the evening services. After the service he visited with the minister and indicated that he truly believed he had found a church that was true to the Bible and was thus the "true church," but now he would have to continue his search elsewhere. Naturally, the preacher wanted to know why the man now thought this was not the "true church." Was it a matter of doctrine or of spirituality? The reply that the stranger gave should cause each of us to evaluate ourselves. He answered, "If this had been the true church,' all those who were here this morning would have been here tonight." Now we might differ with the gentleman's criteria for what makes a "true church," but we surely can learn from this episode that others see in our lives as well as in our doctrine whether we are of God. Each of us has a responsibility to represent the cause of Christ through our faithfulness. This church is only as true to Christ as we each make it. See you in services this evening.

..... Terry Broome

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