

The Difference Between churches of Christ

Introduction

James 1:21-27

One might ask “What is the difference between churches of Christ.” or “Why are there differences in churches of Christ?”

- A. This is a very good question and one that deserves an honest, sincere answer.
- 1. There really is only ONE difference between churches of Christ. So the root of the answer is a simple one and that is:
 - A. Some strive diligently to stick to the mission given to the church and the authority of Christ, while others do not.
 - 1) Jesus said:

Matthew 16:18....I will build My church....

- 2) When Jesus told Peter that He was going to build His church He also gave His church a mission.
- 3) What was that mission?

Matthew 18:11 "For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.

1 Timothy 3:15I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is **the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.**

Jesus said:

John 14:6...."I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

3. **But how is the church to accomplish this task of performing its mission to seek and save the lost?**
 - A. **In accordance with how Jesus and the inspired writers told us how to accomplish it. ---- By Christ's authority- not man's.**
 - 1) **The authority of Christ is very important to grasp!**

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you**; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Colossians 3:17 **And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

4. **The mission of the church is spelled out in the Bible. But some confuse the mission of the church with the mission of individuals, often times making them one in the same.**
 - A. **Some will say that God has given man leniency on how to bring souls to Christ. Yet, the Bible is clear on how to bring souls to Christ.**
 - 1) **Beginning with this morning's lesson, I will be preaching 5 other lessons dealing with the issues that have and continue to divide churches of Christ.**
 - **July 1 – Bible Authority**
 - **July 8 – Expediency**
 - **July 15 – Fellowship Halls and Entertainment**
 - **July 22 – Church Benevolence**
 - **July 29 – Church Co-operation**

The Bible Teaches

1. In every Biblical reference in the church's work to help the needy, help was **ONLY** given to the saints.
 - A. The challenge to every individual, to every Christian, is to give just one passage of scripture that shows where the New Testament church gave funds or helped non-saints?
 - 1) Yet today many, many churches of Christ are guilty of going beyond the Bible (Christ's authority), to give out of its treasury to help assist non-saints.
 - B. The world claims it is the church's mission to help everyone.
 - 1) As a result, even churches of Christ are bowing to the pleas of the world --- the very ones who do not read the Bible, do not know God, nor practice godliness!
 - a) Remember, churches are only as strong and right as the individuals who come to it.
 - b) Before being added to the church, most people have the idea that the church's work is to help everyone.
 - 2) **NOTE: Compare the mission of church in relationship to the American Heart Association and a man with an ankle problem.**
 - A. If a person comes needing secular employment, - what can the church do out of its treasury? No more than the American Heart Association can do for ankle problems.

2. Will the church stand before God at the judgment or will each and every individual?

A. The answer is an obvious one - we will stand individually.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that **each one may receive the things done in the body**, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

B. Many churches will help with orphan homes, widows, or homes for unwed mothers (James 1:27), but these are not the only ones who qualify for help. Look what Jesus said: **Matthew 25:31-46**

1) Yet many churches think it is their responsibility to provide for orphans - probably because they lack a guardian or breadwinner.

C. It is the individual that is being talked to in James 1:27. Not a church of people, but rather – you and me personally.

1) A review of James 1 and 2 will show that James is pointing out the difference between real and counterfeit, genuine faith and pretense, the one that hears and does versus the one who hears and does not. (Individual - not church).

3. Galatians 6:10 in context:**Galatians 6:10**

A. Many churches of Christ use this passage of scripture to justify doing “good” to all men (Saints and non-Saints).

1) We know that a good work must be something that has been approved of by God.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that **the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

B. The very context of Galatians 6 is talking to individuals, not the church collectively.

Galatians 6:1-10

Know the Truth, Practice Truth

1. Jesus said:

John 8:32 "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

A. We can only gain freedom in the truth of Jesus's word.

- 1) Therefore, you and I must act according to what Jesus taught to be right, not what man teaches to be acceptable!

2. Solomon wrote:

Proverbs 23:23 Buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom and instruction and understanding.

Conclusion

1. It is my hope that you truly understand that there are differences between churches of Christ.

A. Again, we will discuss this in detail over the next four weeks.

2. It is also my hope that through this understanding that you have the wisdom to know the difference and by knowing, will strive to serve Christ in all purity.

3. Man will always continue to dream up new ways to serve God, more things to do and place it in the category of "it's a good work."

4. God has always and always will determine what a good work is. Listen to God and set your heart on pleasing Him, no matter what the cost.

Matthew 10:34-37

