

Is One Church As Good As Another?

Introduction

Ephesians 1:22-23 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

1 Timothy 3:15 but if I am delayed, I 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.

1. Many people today are very cynical about the numerous so called **"Christian denominations"** today — the notion that one church is as good as another has given way to the contemptuous view that churches as a whole are unnecessary.
2. In the various churches, the *"ecumenical"* movement is popular — denominational mergers are often in the news.
 - A. *"Unity in diversity"* is the basic principle of ecumenism.
 - B. According to this view, the various groups which profess Christianity are more alike than they are different, and since they have so much in common they can have *"unity"* despite their disagreements.
3. Many have long believed it does not matter which church one belongs to, as long as one is sincere.
 - A. Popular evangelists advise people to *"join the church of your choice."*
 - B. The common view is: *If one needs a church, any church will do. One is pretty much as good as another. Churches are like vitamin tablets in a bottle — it matters that you take one, but it does not matter which one. When it comes to churches, they are interchangeable for all practical purposes.*

4. **One fellow compared churches to motor oil: “There are many different brands with slight differences, but any one of the major brands will get the basic job done.”**

Using Common Sense

1. **Indifference is usually the forerunner of cynicism — when one (in the name of open-mindedness) gets too lazy to make up his mind which side he is on, the next thing is to flatter himself that he is above the fray altogether.**
 - A. **Mark it down, the fellow who says any church will do is likely to be a fellow who, deep down, thinks all churches are pretty much irrelevant to real life.**
 - B. **If it does not matter what one believes, can it matter whether one believes at all?**
2. **Can we not see that this issue is too important and urgent to be cynical about?**
3. **Do we believe truth can contradict itself — or be whatever we want it to be?**
4. **Surely our disposition ought to be like that of the Bereans.**
Acts 17:11

Revelation 2:2 "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;

Scriptural Considerations

1. A person today looking for the Lord's church is in much the same position as a first-century person looking for the Messiah Himself!

A. The question *"Could this be the Christ?"* was a question one could not afford to be wrong about.

John 4:29; 7:25-31

2. But there were many who claimed to be the Christ.

Acts 5:36-37 For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed.

Matthew 24:5 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

Matthew 24:24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

A. Were any of the many "Messiahs" who appeared then as good as any of the others?

B. What was the likelihood that one of these, out of all the others, was the "one true Messiah"?

3. Today, if we have correctly identified the Messiah, would we want to connect ourselves to any church that this Messiah did not acknowledge as belonging to Him?

4. The truth is, Christ does not acknowledge just any church that professes Him.

5. Apostasy was predicted early on.

1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

A. Some congregations soon disregarded Christ's authority such that He was about to disavow them.

Revelation 2:5; 3:16

6. Then and now, faith and practice matter the most.

Matthew 7:21

7. As with individuals, churches that go beyond the "doctrine of Christ" forfeit the right to wear His name.

2 John 9-11 Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

Overlooking A Basic Point

1. If we ask whether one “has to be a member of the Church of Christ to be saved,” we are probably missing a crucial point.
2. The Lord’s church is not the one “correct” **denomination** that one must find to be saved.
3. The church of the Lord consists simply of Christians, those who have been **“added to the Lord.”**

Barnabas:

Acts 11:24 For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.

Acts 2:47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

- A. The Lord’s **“disciples”** are not members of any denomination.
- B. They cease to be the Lord’s disciples if they attach themselves to any congregation or organization operating outside the boundaries of Christ’s authority.

Luke 6:46 "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"

4. It needs to be recognized that if one is in any denomination at all, he is in something that came along many years after the Lord’s church began.

View chart of various denominations

Conclusion

1. **In the New Testament, the question of which church to be a part of is the question of which congregation to associate with — not which denomination to join.**
2. **The person who has genuinely obeyed the gospel of Christ will want to submit to the Lord's will concerning which congregation of the Lord's church to join themselves to.**

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.

- A. **We must seek His will about all such vital questions.**
- B. **That can only be discerned by a prayerful, honest investigation of the Scriptures.**
2 Timothy 3:16-17

2 Peter 1:3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,

3. **Thus the more basic question is whether one has actually obeyed the gospel.**
 - A. **The question of whether one is actually a Christian — and in fellowship with Christ — is a most important question.**
 - B. **If a group of churches do not teach the truth about this, they can hardly belong to the Lord.**
4. **Fellowship with other Christians grows out of fellowship with Christ.**

1 John 1:3-4 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

5. **Are you in fellowship with Christ?**

Invitation

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Richard Thetford, November, 2007 (Based on a sermon by Gary Henry)

What Is The Church?

(Matt 16:18)

Gary White

Christ said, *"Upon this rock I will build my church."* However, what is His church? This important question presents serious problems to men who think on this subject. Does the true church exist today? How may one find it? Is one as good as another? Are there not legions of good people in all of them? How can an honest man know which church he would join? In fact, why should he join one? The average human becomes lost in a maze of confusion and decides that no church is as good as any. That is the question ... One church or no church?

It is an accepted fact that Christ founded His church. It is also a fact that in the world today exists many human institutions which are called churches, founded by men, existing by no higher authority than the word of men, governed by no higher authority than the creeds of men.

Who will say that these institutions are as good as the church Jesus Christ built, and of which one Christ is the head? If good people in all the churches make one church as good as another, then good people out of all the churches make no church as good as any. Such reasoning by men is shallow. In the light of the New Testament, it is the church or no church! What church should a person join? If, as claimed, there is good in all, why not join all of them?