

“22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:22-27).

Loved ones, this morning we want to discuss a topic that does not get discussed nearly enough...

WHAT IS RIGHT WITH THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

INTRODUCTION

We live in a time when people love to criticize the church and unfortunately criticism sometimes comes even from people within the body.

It is the easiest thing in world to criticize the church. But, we must remember that criticism is the poorest substitute in the world for service.

When someone is asked, "What's wrong with the church?" we will get a variety of answers from many people. It is said that the church is outdated, too narrow-minded, or maybe even too judgmental.

We know that at times we are all guilty of neglect — we are not living up to our responsibilities. Therefore, sometimes we try to excuse ourselves by finding fault with the church.

Of course the church is not perfect because it is made up of human beings, but we must admit there is more that is right with the church than what is wrong. We criticize the 2% that is wrong and forget the 98% that is right.

Would an automobile salesman talk down his car to a prospect? Would a realtor criticize the house he is trying to sell? Would an insurance salesman point out the weaknesses of his company? We Christians are salesman, too.

Today, rather than to criticize the church, we want to take a different approach. We will humbly yet confidently say some things that are “right about the church.”

So, instead of running down the church, let us see and teach what is right with the church. These things we will discuss are absolutely right; therefore, we need to stay the course on them.

1. The Church Of Christ Has The Right Origination And Foundation.

What is it? “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11).

We don’t trace our heritage back to any human movement or organization. We trace our origin back to deity; that is, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus never wrote a book, never printed a picture, never wrote a score of music, never founded a university, never erected a skyscraper, but, He did the greatest thing ever done — He built His church.

Jesus promised to build His church. He said to His apostle, “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).

The Psalmist sang of God as his "rock and salvation" (Psalm 62:1-2, 5-6). Paul says "that rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4).

Jesus, the Son of God is the firm rock foundation for His church. No building is stronger than its foundation. No power on earth can defeat a thing that has Christ as its foundation.

The Holy Spirit says, “19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:19-22).

Some claim that the church of Christ was started by a man named Alexander Campbell as a part of the so-called “Restoration Movement.”

Let’s ask a simple question here. Whose church began in Acts chapter two? Well everyone has to agree it was Christ’s church.

The church is not built on Peter, or Paul, Campbell, or any other man (or woman) for that matter. Jesus bought the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28).

When Jesus said “upon this rock I will build my church,” it was built on the truth that Peter confessed, as recorded in Matthew 16:16, that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

That’s why our foundation has a sure anchor (Hebrews 6:19).

It rests not on a fallible man, but only on the infallible deity of God Himself.

The church of Christ is not a man-made denomination. It is simply a continuation of what began in Acts chapter 2 when the Lord first added about 3,000 souls to that church (Acts 2:37-41, 47).

So, if we do what they did in Acts chapter two, we will be members of the same church that they were members of. The origination and foundation is one way the church is right and cannot be wrong.

2. The church of Christ Has The Right Head And Authorization.

Paul wrote, “22 God has put all things under Christ’s feet, and gave Christ to be the head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Ephesians 1:22-23).

“Jesus is the head of the body, the church... (Colossians 1:18).

Everything we do in the church must be done “in the name of or by the authority of Christ” (Colossians 3:17).

3. The Church Of Christ Has The Right Message And Teaching On Salvation.

What is it? The message is all about God calling the lost by the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14).

Paul wrote, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16).

The gospel call is not a social message promoting fun and pleasure. It is not a call to march, demonstrate, riot, legislate to take a person out of the slums, but to take the slums out of the person.

The good news of Jesus is a message of redemption and hope. It is plainly directed to the sinner who is lost in this world and has no hope for the next.

The message is the gospel of salvation that gives the sinner hope by the forgiveness of his sins (Luke 24:46-47).

Jesus had promised that His apostles would have the Holy Spirit to guide them into “all truth” (Matthew 16:19; John 16:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

After hearing the Spirit’s utterance and message from the apostles in Acts chapter two, the people were convicted of their sin and asked, “men and brethren what shall we do” (v. 37).

Peter’s inspired reply was simply: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (v. 38).

That answer came straight from heaven. It was not a man-made idea.

In Mark 16:16 Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved....”

Notice the order: they Believed, they were Baptized, then they are Saved (B B S vs B S B).

The religious world often tries to rearrange that message to say: believe, saved, and baptized. But that is not what the Lord said.

Does the order actually matter? Of course it does. Salvation/eternal life is found only in obeying the Lord’s word in exactly the way He gave it (Hebrews 5:9).

So why would any preacher today give a different answer to the question? Unfortunately, many do. They say things like “just believe,” or say a prayer and invite Jesus into your heart.

That's not what the apostles preached. That's not what the Spirit said. If someone today asked what must I do to be saved shouldn't we give the same exact answer the apostles gave in Acts chapter two?

If we claim to follow Christ then we must teach what is authorized by Him, not what's popular, or not uninspired man's part of tradition.

If we want to speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent, we must confine our message to what the Spirit has revealed. The message and teaching of Christ is still a right thing about the church that cannot be wrong.

4. The Church Of Christ Has The Right Membership.

The Lord's church is more than an institution, an organization, or a building — it is the saved who have been added to it by the Lord (Acts 2:47; Colossians 1:13).

No obedient soul is excluded. The church is made up of all colors, cultures, men, women, and young people, who in humble submission to Lord's will repented of their sins and were baptized for salvation in Christ.

There is no absolute perfection in any of us, but are sins continue to be washed away by the blood of Jesus as we walk in the light (1 John 1:7).

Too often the church is judged by its sorriest members. The world never looks at the finest Christians in church and says, "What a wonderful person! The Christian faith must be a fine thing."

No, they look at some weak sinful member and say, "See! There is a product of the Christian faith. Nothing to it."

This truth places great responsibility upon us, doesn't it? We must live each day so that when the world looks at us, it will be forced to say, "The Christian faith has done something for him."

Proposition: Let the Christian choose 20 members on any church roll and then choose 20 people you meet outside church. When everything is added up, it will be plain that the church members far outweigh outsiders in good living and good works.

Yes, the Lord's church – the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27) – is the grandest in all the world. You and I are fortunate to have the highest privilege of being members of it.

Now, shall we just let it go at that? Shall we drink in all the blessings of God like a sponge and do nothing about it? God forbid! With every privilege there goes an obligation.

What Is Our Obligation To The Church?

First thing is to "Line up with it."

If you are a Christian, then of course you are in the church. Even so, some members think lightly of the church by saying, "It doesn't matter about being a member of the local church. I'm me and I'm going to do whatever I want to do. If they see me in worship on Sunday or do not see me, it does not matter. They are not my family. They are just Sunday morning associates."

QUESTION: Did Christ make a mistake when He founded the local church and gave us as an anchor and as an opportunity for service and fellowship?

Second, we must pray for the church.

We can criticize it and tear it down or can pray for it and boost it up. What do you think God wants you to do?

Third, we should be faithful to all of its services.

Our physical body needs food, drink, and sleep. Flowers in the field need sunshine and rain. And our soul needs instruction, exhortation, and encouragement which is furnished by the church and its ministry. I am a poorer man when I neglect its services.

Fourth, we are to support its work.

It is a worldwide work. It begins where we live and extends to the ends of the earth.

**Who is the wise and happy man when the year ends?
He is the one who has had a part in God's great
redemptive program for the whole world. The wise man
wins souls (Proverbs 11:30).**

**Fifth, we are obligated by love to invite others to share
our blessings in the church.**

Be evangelistic. Invite others, hand out cards and tracts,
make calls, encourage, etc.

**Do you have hope in Christ? Then don't be selfish, give
hope to someone else. Have you found the way to
heaven? Then point out the way to someone else.**

Conclusion

Are you still outside of Christ?

Illustration: A little boy had to go to the well for water in darkness of night. He asked his father to go with him. Why do you want me to go with you, his dad asked? The smart son said, "It is too dark to be out without a father"

So, friends, the future and even the present is too dark for you to try to live it without a Father.

H, B, R, C, B