

Today's Sermons

Morning: What To Do When...

Evening: Song Service

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FOR THE RECORD

Sunday Bible Study	34
Sunday AM Worship	45
Sunday PM Worship	30
Wed. Bible Study	25
Offering	\$1619



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Times of Services:

Sunday

Bible Study:... 10:00am

AM Worship:...11:00am

PM Worship:...6:00pm

2nd Sunday:.....1:30pm

Wednesday

Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program

Sunday:.....7:30am

"Back to the Bible"

AM 580 WSKS

93.5 FM

**We Extend A
 Warm & Cordial
 Welcome
 To All Our
 Visitors!**

Ashamed of the Church of Christ

Steve Higginbotham

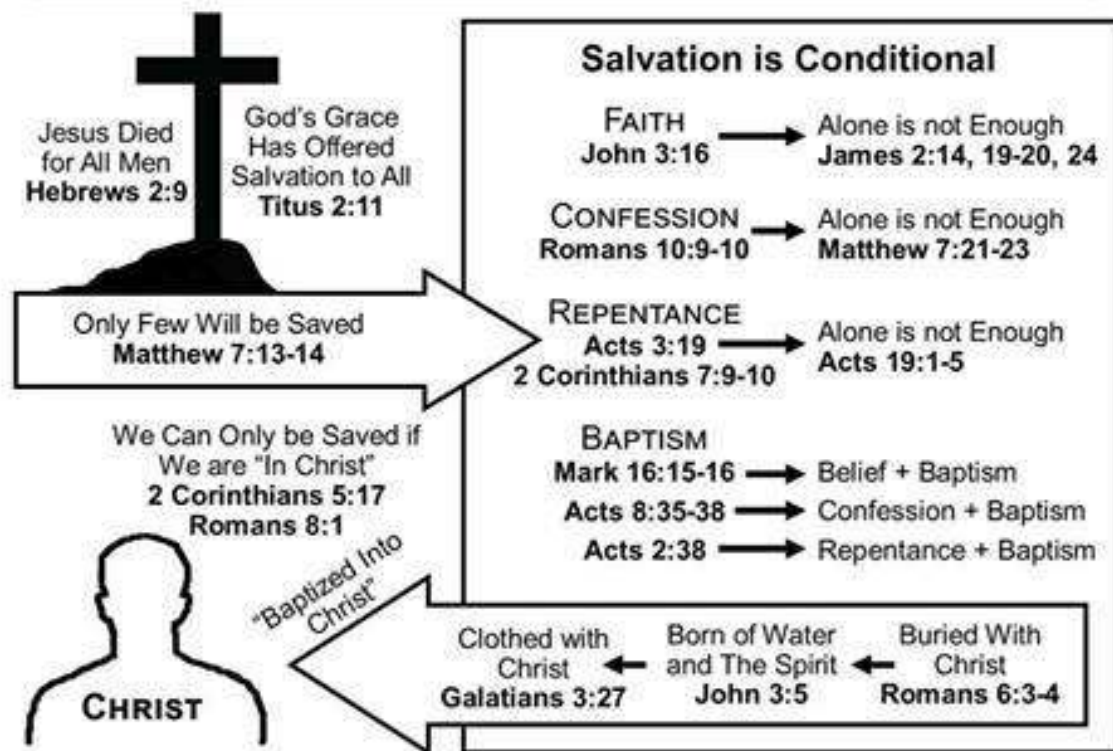
Statistics tell us that during the 1940's and 1950's, the Lord's church experienced tremendous growth in the United States. In fact, some tell us that the Lord's church was, during that period of time, the fastest growing religious body in America. However, that is no longer true. We are not growing nearly as fast as we were 30 and 40 years ago. And because of this, we have faced a barrage of criticism.

For some time now, brethren have preached sermons, written articles, and published books criticizing every aspect of the church. Such criticisms have been destructive and harmful. While sin and error cannot be allowed to go unchallenged (Jude 3), these criticisms need to be tempered with praise. While I can find some imperfections in the people who make up the church. I can also find many good things. Instead of dwelling on "what's wrong with the church," should we not balance that with "what's right with the church?"

As I see it, the criticism over the years has taken its toll. Imagine what would happen if a person, who for 30 years, constantly filled his mind with negative thoughts regarding himself. This is the situation that exists with some of God's people. They have beaten themselves (or allowed others to beat them) down. As a result I believe we are seeing a generation of Christians who are ashamed of their heritage, the church which Jesus built.

Continued Inside

Know What You Need To Do



Christ and the Church

by: David A. Sargent

More than a few Christians today are ashamed of the Lord's church. They are ashamed of the truth of God's word. They are ashamed of God's scheme of redemption. And they are ashamed of the simplicity which characterizes the organization, work, and worship of the church in recent times, we have heard brethren apologizing for our stand against the innovation of mechanical instruments in worship, calling it a "century old mistake." Just a few years ago, one Christian lady stated that she was embarrassed to be a member of the church of Christ after a congregation received some negative publicity after practicing church discipline as the Bible demands.

In yet another case, a Christian brother apologized for the church's "dogmatic" stand regarding the issue of divorce and remarriage. On and on we could go illustrating the fact that some Christians are ashamed of Christ and His church. Note however, how this attitude contrasts with the apostle Paul's attitude (Rom. 1:16; Phil. 1:20).

The faithful child of God is not ashamed of the Lord's church. He is not ashamed of the commands. Christ has left His church to believe, obey, and practice. And he is not made to be ashamed or apologetic when the illuminating light of God's word exposes error and sin in a person's life.

While I would be one of the first to admit that the people who comprise the church of Christ have some problems and have room to mature and be more like Christ, I will also be one of the first to bring to our remembrance the fact that those people who comprise the church have access to the cleansing blood of Christ (1 John 1:7).

Mark 8:38, "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory-of His Father with the holy angels."

We can lie by silence. When a man is falsely accused in my presence, I am obligated to defend. Otherwise, I am a party to the lie. A man can lie by keeping his mouth shut. One man said the world will not be lost by evil deeds but by good men who did nothing.

It is not uncommon today to hear people devalue the church. Some say in effect, "Christ, yes; the church, no." While some profess they love Jesus, desiring even to follow Him, they have little use for "the church." The Scriptures, however, are clear: One cannot have the church without Christ, and one cannot have Christ without the church.

The church was God's idea. God's plan. It is not man-made. In fact, observe the close relationship between Christ and the church. Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 5:22-23a); He is the complete voice of authority. Christ is the Founder of the church. Christ said to Peter, "On this rock [the confession that Jesus Christ is the Son of God], I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Mat. 16:18). Christ is the foundation of the church. No building or institution can be stronger than the foundation on which it rests. And for the church, "no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). Christ is the Savior of the body, which is the church: "For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body" (Eph. 5:23).

Indeed, as has often been noted by some in an attempt to minimize the church; "the church doesn't save anyone." However, Christ saves the church! In fact the church is composed of the saved (Acts 2:47). Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it (Eph. 5:25). We usually judge the value of something by the price we pay for it. For what price was the church purchased? Christ purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). One cannot separate Christ from His church.

A low estimation of the church may be due to a lack of understanding of what the church truly is, as taught in the Bible. There is also a misconception of what the church is all about. One of the most simplistic, yet one of the most beautiful images of the church in Scripture is that of the family of God. As such, the church is designed to be a place of loving encouragement (1 Thes. 5:11; Heb. 3:213) to those who are seeking to follow Christ. Also, it is God's desire for His family, the church, to grow and grow. God wants His family to share the good news about Jesus Christ, as Jesus instructed His disciples: "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" (Mat. 28:19-20).

How does one become a member of God's family, the church? To those who were convicted of their sin and believed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, Peter said, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them" (Acts 2:41). "And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). Only the Lord can add one to His church when one obeys the Gospel as Peter and the apostles presented it. Has the Lord added you to His church?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Mar 26 – Song Service
- Apr 2 – Men's Meeting & Ladies' Class
- Apr 9 – Preach-N-Eat & 1:30 Worship
- May 21-25 – Our Gospel Meeting with John Daniels
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell