

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Judging the One Who Judges

By Greg Gwin

A not so imaginary conversation might go something like this:

Tom: “I’ve studied the doctrines taught by your denomination, and I find that they contradict the Bible.”

Dick: “What do you mean?”

Tom: “Well, take for instance baptism. Passages like Acts 2:38 command it, and your denomination says it’s not necessary. I think you are wrong in this matter.”

Dick: “But . . .

Tom: “And you teach the doctrines of inherited sin, predestination, and premillennialism; and you have instrumental music in worship, and church sponsored recreational activities for the members.”

Dick: “But . . .

Tom: “Actually, it would be pretty easy to come up with an even longer list of things that you believe and practice that are contrary to the Scriptures.”

Dick: “Okay, now, wait just a minute! What right do you have to judge me anyway? The Bible says, *‘judge not that ye be not judged.’* You shouldn’t be judging me!”

Tom: “You’ve just quoted Matthew 7:1, where Jesus was condemning the hypocritical judgment of the Pharisees who wanted to correct the faults of others without correcting their own lives.”

Dick: “Yeah, but . . .

Tom: “You should also know that Jesus instructed us to *‘judge righteous judgment’* in John 7:24. You see, we’re actually commanded to judge others.”

Dick: “Well, I still don’t think you should judge others.”

Tom: “Really? Did you stop to realize that you’ve been judging me in the matter of judging? Is that consistent?”

The Mission of the Church

By Richie Thetford

Do you know what the mission of the church is today? Some may be confused as to what the mission of the church really is in a society that places emphasis on the physical needs of people. I want to discuss exactly what the mission of the church is so that we can gain a better understanding of what the church is really supposed to do.

A Spiritual Mission

Jesus said: ***“I came to seek and save the lost”*** (Luke 19:10). Christ had a mission and that was to save man from the awfulness of sin! When the apostles went out preaching under the commission, what did they preach? Their preaching centered on the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, for He had come to save man from sin. What is it that your preacher preaches about each week where you attend? Is the emphasis placed on the same things that the apostles placed the emphasis on in the first century? I encourage everyone to sit down and read the book of Acts. Notice the sermons that were delivered by Peter and Paul. Everyone was centered on Jesus Christ. They did not preach on politics, economics, psychology, or social issues. They preached a crucified and risen savior of the world, our redeemer. These apostles were inspired by the Holy Spirit, but we today have their inspired Word, the spirit revealed in the Bible, so why would our preaching be any different? What they preached, they recorded for us in the Bible. So as Jesus sent His apostles out to preach salvation through Him, we too must preach that same message today, the message of salvation. Therefore, our mission, which is the church’s mission, is in effect the mission of Christ, which is a “spiritual mission.” Please think about this because why would we want to preach or teach things that were not taught back in the first century concerning spiritual matters?

Christians Are Interested in All Phases of Life

The church of our Lord is made up of individuals that have been washed clean by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus, through baptism (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; and Gal. 3:27). Once this happens, then one can wear the name Christian, and a Christian must be a Christian twenty-four hours per day. A genuine Christian, and there are many pretenders who are not genuine, is interested in economics, political affairs (usually), the social things of life and of course their relationship to God or religion. But the genuine Christian is primarily interested in that relationship with God. A devout servant of the Lord understands that each day they ***“seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”*** (Matt. 6:33).

The spiritually minded, genuine Christian is interested in the salvation of his soul and the souls of others. It is the soul that never dies, and this is clearly understood. However, many modern churches of today have the concept that it is not good enough that we simply make more Christians so that the community will be better, but rather that the church must get caught up in, and engaged in politics, economics, and philosophy. I would like to remind us of this very important fact: The church in the first century DID NOT engage itself in the political, economic, and philosophical interests of life. The early church preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to save men’s souls. That is exactly what we should be doing today. Because of that, I encourage all of us to take a good hard look at what we might be doing in the name of religion. Are we truly practicing only those things which are approved of in the New Testament of our Lord? If not, why not? Jesus said: ***“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven”*** (Matt. 7:21).

The Emphasis of the Early Church

Everyone should consider and think about the type of preaching that the apostles did in the first century, the only kind of preaching that we can read about in the pages of our New Testament. In Acts, chapter 2, Peter’s message was the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. In Acts, chapter 3, it was the same. In Acts, chapter 9, Saul of Tarsus was converted and was told to be baptized to wash away his sins. He told of his conversion in Acts, chapter 22 and what Ananias told him what he needed to do to be saved. Paul was told to: ***“Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord”*** (Acts 22:16).

Philip preached in Samaria, and it was said that he ***“preached Christ unto them.”*** He did not preach the philosophy of men. Paul later condemned that idea in 1 Corinthians, chapter 1. The emphasis of Peter, Paul, and Philip’s preaching, along with the rest of the apostles was on Christ. The mission of the church today is the very same. It is a “spiritual mission,” a mission in which we must preach Jesus Christ for the salvation of souls. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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