

Preaching Christ Without His Church?

Some mistakenly believe that Christ can be preached without preaching about His church. The problem lies in the fact that many believe that the church has become too offensive. Therefore, the idea is to preach Christ and not offend others with teaching about the one, true church. However, if one preaches Christ, one must ignore many items which we will now consider.

Fulfilled Prophecies

One must ignore fulfilled prophecies because the Lord's church is spoken of many times in the Old Testament. Two of the most prominent passages are Isaiah 2:2-3 and Daniel 2:44. The pillar and support of the truth is the church (1 Timothy 3:15). How can one speak of Christ and the truth without the church? Hebrews 12:28 says, *"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."* If we are going to serve God, it will take more than a knowledge and love of Jesus. We serve God within His kingdom!

Christ's Purpose

In Luke 19:10, Jesus said He came to *"seek and save the lost."* Part of that mission involved establishing His church (Matthew 16:13-19). Acts 2:47 says, *"Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."* If preaching Christ without His church is all-important, then why are people who are saved added to the church? Does this not show that preaching about Christ and salvation necessarily involves preaching about His church?

Teaching In Parables

In Matthew 13, several parables are spoken by the Lord which instruct as to the nature of Christ's kingdom (vss. 44, 45-46, 47-50). All these parables demonstrate that the church or kingdom is something to be greatly desired. If Christ is our preeminent concern, then why would the Lord place so much emphasis on the kingdom?

The New Birth

In 1 Corinthians 4:15, Paul said that *"in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."* In John 3:3, 5, being *"born again"* means that one can *"see"* or *"enter"* the *"kingdom of God."* This inexorably ties together the preaching of Christ and the preaching of His church!

True Greatness

In Matthew 18:1-4, Jesus said that one must be “converted” in order to “enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 20:26-28 adds, “*But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*” Jesus is given as an example for us being servants of one another. According to Matthew 18:1-4, when one humbles themselves, they become great in the kingdom. So the sacrifice of Christ is linked to the kingdom of heaven between these two passages. We cannot separate them without doing violence to the scriptures.

The Blood Of Christ

Acts 20:28 says, “*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*” This verse, combined with Ephesians 5:25 (“*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it*”), presents a problem for those who want to preach “Christ only.” If Christ shed His blood for His church, that is a pretty good indication that the church must be preached right along with Christ!

Apostolic Preaching

Apostolic preaching provides the final line of evidence for the vital connection between preaching Christ and His church. In Acts 8:12 Philip was “*preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ ...*” When Paul was in Rome, he was “*Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ*” (Acts 28:21). Apparently, the apostles thought Christ and the church belonged together.

We must reject the appeal of the these “Christ only” brethren much like we must reject the appeal of “faith only” in the religious world. If people are “turned off” by hearing about the true nature of Christ’s church, it is to their eternal shame. Preaching Christ must include instruction about His church!

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