

“What Do I Call You?”

When you are around people as a preacher, you can tell that they really are not sure how to refer to us. In the New Testament, people who proclaim the gospel were known as a “preacher,” “minister” or “evangelist” (Romans 10:14; Ephesians 3:7; 2 Timothy 4:5) Personally, it does not really matter to me which term is used to describe my occupation, as long as it is one that is scriptural. One fact I know for sure, though, is that the use of titles such as “Reverend,” “Father,” “His Eminence” and “Master” are not to be used. They are all foreign to the teaching of Jesus Christ. “Reverend” is used once in the Bible, and it is in reference to the name of God, not man (Psalms 111:9). Every Christian is a priest (1 Peter 2:9), yet there is no Bible authorization for priestly robes, collars or peculiar religious titles to distinguish “clergy” from “laity.” The Catholic Church “beatifies” or “canonizes” great people in the church as “saints,” but the word “saint” is derived from a Greek word meaning “separated.” The term refers to an ordinary member of Christ’s church who has submitted to the conditions of gospel obedience (Philippians 1:1; 4:21; 2 Thessalonians 1:10).

Christ taught His disciples that they were equal with each other (Matthew 20:25-28). Christ further admonished everyone against assuming titles of distinction: *“But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted”* (Matthew 23:8-12). Let the Bible be your guide!

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