

# THE BULLETIN

## THIS WEEK:

Sunday:  
Bible Study & Worship  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Fellowship  
Wednesday:  
Bible Study

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

## PRIVILEGED TO SERVE:

### Month of May

Announcements:  
Luther Honey

### Singing:

a.m. – Mark Nortz  
p.m. – John Loanzon  
Wed. –Luther Honey

### Prayer:

Cliff Jones

### Bible Reading:

### Preaching:

Doug Frazier

### Lord's Supper:

Dick Tudor  
Greg Green  
Tim Stanley  
Jon Lydon

### May

### Prepare communion

Angie Stokes

### 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Fellowship:

Beverly Mikell  
Kim Mikell  
Pam Myers

## THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Welcome to a brief introduction to the Church of Christ! If you have any questions or comments don't hesitate to contact us.

### The Origin of the Church From Matthew 16:18 we learn

- The church wasn't established in the Old Testament. Thus the rules governing this relationship will be found in the New Testament.
- The church belongs to Christ, not man.
- The church is a very important relationship.
- The word 'church' is spoken of in the singular, Jesus desires that all believers be united and in one universal body (Eph. 1:20-23; John 17:20-23). Acts 20:28 '..the church of God which He purchased with His own blood'.

#### **This verse reveals:**

- The church came into existence after the death of Christ.
- It is an essential relationship, for it is inherently connected with the blood of Christ.
- The church isn't a building, rather it is people who have been redeemed (1 Peter 1:18-19).
- The church isn't an optional relationship, for one cannot be saved apart from the blood of Christ.
- The church is the same relationship known as the kingdom of God (Compare Acts 20:28 with Revelation 1:5-6). Acts 2:38,41,47 '...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved' (KJV).

#### **From these passages we learn:**

- Hearing the gospel, faith (2:37), repentance and baptism stand between the sinner and salvation.
- Upon being baptized one is added by the Lord to the church. The church that the Lord adds us to belongs to Him.
- Being saved and being a member of the church are the same thing.
- Therefore the church is the body of the saved (Eph. 5:23).
- Thus the church that Jesus Christ established came into existence upon the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2.

### The Undenominational Church

If you have spent much time reading the Bible then you already have realized that there are no denominations mentioned within its passages. Every Christian was simply a member of one united body of believers. Various congregations existed (Corinth, Rome, Ephesus, etc.), but they were all part of the same body. Each congregation practiced and believed the same doctrines or teachings, that is, what was being revealed through the apostles (1 Corinthians 4:17; 14:37). Christians were admonished to remain united, divisions based on following certain leaders within the church, or dividing up the body of Christ into various sects or flavors of Christianity were condemned (1 Cor. 1:10). In fact, even sects based on following elevating one apostle over all others were rebuked (1:12-13).

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### What Christians Believed/Practiced

This isn't meant to be a complete list. But here is just a sample. Someone has noted that if you were trying to find something then you would look for its identifying marks, such as the specific characteristics of a car that had been stolen. In like manner, the church that Jesus established has identifying marks.

- **Worship** - Christians assembled on the first day of every week (Sunday) (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1; Heb. 10:25), and observed the Lord's Supper. Every member partook of both elements (1 Cor. 11:23-26). They sang spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19; Colossians 3:16); gave as they had been prospered (1 Cor. 16:1-2). Collections were not solicited from non-members. They prayed together (Acts 2:42), and listened as the Word of God was taught (Acts 2:42).
- **Organizational Structure** - Jesus was the sole head (Eph. 1:20-23). Each local congregation was shepherded by a plurality of men called elders/pastors/overseers or bishops (Acts 14:23; 20:17,28; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-11). The authority of these men was limited to the congregation of which they were members (1 Peter 5:1-3). Thus each congregation was self-governing. The New Testament provides no earthly organizational structure for the church which is beyond the local congregation. Including state, regional, national or a world headquarters.
- **Basic Teachings** - The church that Jesus established taught and practiced:
  - Water baptism is just as essential to salvation as is hearing the gospel or believing that Jesus is the Son of God (Mark 16:15-16; John 3:16).
  - Man is born pure and innocent (1 Cor. 14:20).
  - No one has been predestined for salvation or damnation (2 Peter 3:9).
  - Heaven and hell are both eternal (Matt. 25:46).
  - The Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit each possess the qualities of Deity (John 1:1; Acts 5:3-5).
  - Jesus is the only way to the Father (John 14:6).
  - All non-Christian religions are powerless to save (Acts 4:12).
  - God's moral standard is not changed by time and culture (Galatians 5:19-21).
  - A Christian can lose their salvation (Heb. 10:26-31).
- **Church History**

The unity found in the New Testament wasn't to last. Through the apostles God predicted a coming apostasy which would hit the church (Acts 20:28-30; 1 Tim. 4:1-4; 2 Tim. 4:2-4). Following the death of the apostles changes started to happen. For example, changes were made in the organizational structure of the local congregation. One elder began to be elevated above his fellow elders and assumed the title of bishop as applying exclusively to himself. Such bishops began to oversee more than one congregation, instead they were ruling a geographical region containing many congregations. Eventually, one bishop assumed oversight over all the congregations, thus the organizational structure found in Roman Catholicism came into existence.

During the early centuries many other foreign practices were being introduced (the Bible clearly condemns adding to the Word-Matt. 15:1-9; 2 John 9; Revelation 22:18-19). We find such human religious traditions as infant baptism, prayers for the dead, the fruit of the vine withheld from the members during communion, a clergy-laity system, and so on. Finally people realized that these things weren't right and began to "protest", thus the beginnings of the Protestant religious bodies. While many people had good intentions, and some of the human traditions found in Catholicism were removed, unfortunately the Protestant Reformation only succeeded in establishing even more religious bodies based on human founders, doctrines and practices. Among other things, the Reformation introduced the unscriptural idea of being saved by faith alone, which is a complete reverse of what the Bible says (James 2:24).

### Conclusion

The Church of Christ here at Alachua is striving to be nothing more and nothing less than a congregation that conforms to the Church that Jesus established and purchased with His own blood. We urge all believers to come back to the teachings and practices one can find revealed in the New Testament, to discard all human religious traditions which lack book, chapter and verse and to lovingly and obediently speak and practice what the Bible sanctions (1 Peter 4:11). Let's be content to allow God to tell us how He wants to be worshipped and served.

## **HAVE YOU EVER OBEYED THE GOSPEL?**

By Bob Danklefsen

Today many are searching for God and eternal salvation. They want a better life than they are experiencing at present here on earth and the assurance that they will be with the Lord throughout eternity. Not knowing where to turn, they ask a friend or turn on the radio or TV to find solutions to life's problems and find spiritual direction.

Often the answer they receive from these sources falls short of the Lord's teaching on salvation and eternal life. They almost never ask, "Have you ever obeyed the gospel?" It is clear in the scriptures that the main message declared by those who belonged to Christ was the gospel and it was essential to believe it, 1 Corinthians 15:1. It is also clear that obedience to the gospel was also taught as essential, 1 Peter 4:17.

## **WHY STRESS THE GOSPEL?**

Jesus had stated after His resurrection, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," Mark 16:15. Everyone is to hear the gospel! Yet the vast majority with whom I have studied who claim salvation do not know what the gospel is. God not only expects the lost to hear the gospel, He asks them to obey it, 2 Thessalonians 1:8. Here He says that He will take vengeance on those who know not God and obey not the gospel. It is clear that a person who does not know God will die in his sins, John 8:24; Revelation 21:8. Therefore, the purpose for stressing the gospel to one in sin is so that God will not take vengeance on him for not obeying it.

## **IS THERE MORE THAN ONE GOSPEL?**

Paul states, "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed," Galatians 1:6-8. The Lord says, there is no other gospel than the one taught by inspired men in the Bible.

One might ask, "What is meant by 'other gospel'?" Today, members of various churches go and talk to their friends about religious matters. Some stress prophecy as their main message. Others concentrate on Bible miracles. Still others offer what has come to be known as the social gospel - doing good to others as proof of one's salvation. Others stress a plan of salvation as if this were the gospel. What is the only gospel God recognizes that brings about salvation?

## **ACCORDING TO GOD, WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?**

Remember, Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," Mark 16:15. What did those told to preach tell those lost in sin? Let us look at the book of Acts where conversions are recorded and see what the lost heard. Peter's first sermon after Jesus' resurrection tells that Jesus was killed and raised, Acts 2:22-36. The reader will note that the only message given was the message about Christ. He tells of Jesus' death in 23, 36. He stressed His resurrection in 24, 27, 30-32, 34. His ascension was also emphasized in 30, 33, 34. In chapter 3 the same message is expressed, verse 15. See 4:10, 33; 5:30. Every time the disciples faced those lost in sin, the main message was the same, Jesus Christ and Him crucified, 1 Corinthians 2:2. The letters sent to the churches always reminded them of the Savior's death and resurrection, Romans 1:1-4, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Galatians 1:1. Many more passages could be cited. The death, burial, resurrection was that message of first importance, 1 Corinthians 15:3,4.

By stressing Jesus as the one to turn to and serve for life, then when one really makes Him Lord, that person will remain faithful to the One who died for his sins and was raised for his justification, Romans 4:25. Seeing Jesus' faithfulness, even in adversity, helps a Christian to react the same when problems arise, Hebrews 5:7-9, 1 Peter 2:21-25.

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**Meeting Times:**  
**Sunday Morning**  
Bible Study: 9:30  
Worship: 10:30

**Sunday Evening**  
Worship: 5:30

**Mid-Week Bible Study**  
Wednesday 6:30

## HOW DOES ONE ACCEPT CHRIST AS HIS PERSONAL SAVIOR?

On radio and TV and from pulpits we often hear the plea to accept Jesus as one's personal Savior. This is a valid call. The Bible does make it clear that a person must accept Christ, Colossians 2:6. It also states that Jesus must accept those that come to Him, Romans 15:7. Like a marriage, both parties must accept each other. In this case, Jesus makes the final decision as to how one is to respond to His call. Even He has made it clear that this will not take place without obedience, Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:21-23. After enduring the torment He had to go through on the cross, He does have the right to tell us how to accept Him.

It begins with faith, Hebrews 11:6. Jesus performed miracles to confirm that what He said and later, would be written, really did come from God, Hebrews 2:3-4. There were, however, people who believed yet did not have faith. "Nevertheless, even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God," John 12:42-43. The inspired writer said that they believed, but did they really have faith? They could not deny the miracles, but they would not give allegiance to Him.

On the other hand, when told to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household," the jailer's whole family responded, Acts 16:31-34. What made the difference in this response? It is obvious that the faith of him and his family led them to obey the gospel. If they had not, God promised in His word to take vengeance on anyone who had not obeyed it, 2 Thessalonians 1:8.

## IS OBEYING THE GOSPEL A PART OF THE RESPONSE FOR SALVATION?

Many have understood "obeying the gospel" to mean living the Christian life. Paul states, "But they have not all obeyed the gospel . . ." as he quotes Isaiah's experience with people who did not believe then, as many do not today. Peter says, "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?" 1 Peter 4:17. Here Peter contrasts those who belong to God with those who have not yet become Christians. It is clear here that obedience to the gospel is included in the plan of salvation. Paul states that Jesus will return, ". . . in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Thessalonians 1:8. If one dies believing in Jesus but has never obeyed the gospel, the One who said He cannot lie, Titus 1:2, said He will take vengeance on that person!

## HOW DOES ONE OBEY THE GOSPEL?

It is clear from the scriptures that the gospel is the message of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. It is also clear in these verses that it is essential to believe the gospel. Paul said it is possible to believe in vain, verse 2. Faith obviously leads one to repent, (turn from sin) as Jesus clearly portrayed in His story about Nineveh, Matthew 12:41; Jonah 3:10. True repentance would include one's response to render obedience to the gospel since it is a part of the plan of salvation. How can one obey Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection?

God says that one obeys a form of the gospel, Romans 6:17-18. A form is used when pouring a concrete walkway. The form is not the walk itself, but shapes the design for the final sidewalk. Likewise, to literally obey the gospel, one would have to be nailed to a cross, buried, and then to come out of the tomb. God has never asked us to be literally nailed to the cross. What He has asked us to do is to demonstrate our faith in the gospel by reenacting that event as expressed in Romans 6:3-4. Paul writes, "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His DEATH? Therefore, we were BURIED with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life." Here we learn how one obeys the gospel - Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. See also Colossians 2:12-13. When one obeys the gospel, God forgives their sins. If one does not, He takes vengeance on them, 2 Thessalonians 1:8. By stating that He will take vengeance, the Lord has made this response essential for salvation, Mark 16:15-16.

After hearing the gospel, those converted were immediately obedient, Acts 8:38-39; 16:33. Peter's first gospel message resulted in 3,000 obeying the gospel, Acts 2:41. Peter had said, "Repent and let everyone 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," verse 38. Once again, forgiveness of sins will not take place until one obeys the gospel. Have YOU?

**We're on the Web!**

[alachuachurchofchrist.org](http://alachuachurchofchrist.org)