

Keeping the Church Alive #10
“His Word & Man’s word”
By Russell Earl

Since the world began man has been at conflict with the commands of God. The reasons vary as we look back through the years. In the Old Testament we find those who tried to worship false gods because they felt that the commands of God were too difficult or they believed they hadn’t received any blessings from God. Sadly, these same problems and similar ones still exist today.

It is not uncommon anymore to visit a congregation and to realize that they do not preach the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27) or they do not worship according to the pattern found within the New Testament.

If we are to be acceptable in the eyes of God we must first recognize the truth. Peter said “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth...” (1 Peter 1:22a). We are purified by obeying Gods Word. How is that possible? If you obey God’s Word then you repent when you sin, you put God first in everything, you desire to follow His commands as found in the Bible and you live the life that God desires for all believers to live, which is a faithful life of obedience to Him. God’s Word purifies our souls so that we can be acceptable to Him and receive eternal life. The doctrines of the men of this world do the opposite. If we follow man instead of God our souls become corrupt and we are not acceptable to God. Thus we will not receive the reward of eternal life.

We must next decide that we will teach God’s Word, the truth and nothing else. This would also include teaching involved with false doctrines. We must warn people who follow false doctrine that they will pay the price for their error. The Bible tells us to “note and avoid” (Rom 16:17) those who teach false doctrines. We combat these false ideas by teaching truth and exposing the errors of the false teachings.

Next, we must know what our teachers are teaching and practice discipline within the church itself. If we are to guard ourselves from false doctrine and misinterpretations we must know what are teachers are teaching in every class. If we have teachers promoting materials with false doctrine, or teaching misinterpretations we must handle those situations. We need to correct them and if they are unwilling to teach the truth, those teachers should be removed from their teaching positions. If we want our members and visitors to hear the truth then we must have teachers teaching who know the truth and teach it.

Finally, we must not be promoters of the “social gospel”. There are messages that all enjoy hearing. There are also messages that many do not want to hear, perhaps ever! When we give in to the feelings of these types of members or guests we are no longer proclaiming the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). We naturally want everyone to enjoy worshiping and visiting with us at the church of Christ. However, if we stop proclaiming the entire message of the Bible then we are no longer the church that Christ died to establish. If we want to remain pleasing in the eyes of God we must know the truth and preach it. We must also know the errors found in the world that are being taught and openly teach against them.

If we want the Lord’s church to stay strong we must decide whose word we will proclaim the words of man, or the Word of God!