



"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..." Matthew 28:20

Church of Christ • 13800 S. 4080 Road • P.O. Box 527 • Oologah, Oklahoma 74053

## A Church With No Problems

Darwin Hunter

Wouldn't it be great to have a church with no problems? I have heard people express that sentiment, and we probably have all at least thought it if not said it. But is it a realistic desire? Can we expect the church never to have difficulties or be faced with knotty problems?

The Christian is not promised, nor should he expect, a life not bothered by troublesome trials. Not even our Lord, the Son of God, could enjoy a trouble-free existence. No sooner had He come up from the Jordan River (where His public ministry was inaugurated by immersion) than the devil began to hound Him through repeated temptations (Matthew 3:13-4:11). Jesus informed His disciples that "in the world ye shall have tribulations" (John 16:33). Christ further informed them that they should expect martyrdom (John 16:1-3)!

The early church did not enjoy a trouble-free existence. It began gloriously with 3,000 converts added to the church (Acts 2:38-47). However, problems soon erupted bringing challenges and tears. Great poverty among some of the brethren caused great need (Acts 4:32-37). Satan tempted two members (Ananias and Sapphira) to lie and deceive, and God imposed the death penalty upon them (Acts 5). Some in the church had suffered the deaths of their husbands and were in need of benevolence, and a dispute arose among the brethren about this matter (some were murmuring, Acts 6:1-7). Then came the persecution. At first, it was just against the apostles (Acts 4,5). Later, it became widespread after the murder of Stephen, and brethren began to flee from Jerusalem for safety (Acts 8:1-4). What problems

they endured! However, rather than whine and resign, they decided to shine! They "*went everywhere preaching the word.*"

No, we should not expect a carefree church. It will have challenges, problems, discouragements, and even sin that must be rooted out (1 Corinthians 5). But we, like the church of the Lord in first century Jerusalem, must decide not to cave in to them, but to overcome them in a scriptural manner with the Lord's help.

**The only way one can have a trouble-free church is to:**

**1. Preach nothing.** The apostles and other members of Christ's body in those early days preached the WORD. They knew that doing so would upset the Jews, the Romans, and the pagan world in which they lived. The apostles preached a distinctive gospel, one Savior, one church, one way. Of course, if you don't preach these salient points of the gospel, you can avoid a lot of trouble with the opponents of truth. However, eternal trouble will be facing you at the judgment (Galatians 1:6-9; Ephesians 4:3-6).

**2. Stand for nothing.** The early church opposed "evil works" practiced in their society (Ephesians 5:11) and in their preaching "meddled" in such areas as sexual sin, drunkenness, lasciviousness, unlawful divorce and remarriage, and covetousness (Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Romans 7:1-4). Of course, avoiding making judgments in these areas will reduce conflict with our wayward world, but again it will bring us greater eternal woes.

**3. Do nothing.** The surest way to avoid criticism is to avoid doing anything. Many modern believers seem to have perfected this life-style. When the church is active, is converting others, and develops a high profile for righteousness in its community, it is bound to make waves (Acts 19:20-41). So to avoid problems, just be the little church down on the corner that no one knows anything about, or ever hears from.

**4. Reach no one.** Problems are usually caused by people because people have problems. Therefore, an unpeopled church is a trouble-free church (of course, it also resembles a cemetery, and thwarts the purpose for the existence of the church, Mark 16:15-16; Ephesians 5:23).

**5. Challenge no one.** Elders and preachers have found that less problems arise when they do not challenge the membership to deny themselves, give up worldly practices, contribute generously, and work fervently. So, some cowardly follow this ungodly course to avoid friction.

Yes, all these things will guarantee an untroubled existence for the present. However, since all these suggestions are not in accordance with Christ's plan for His church, they will also guarantee an eternally troubled future! While trials and problems necessarily attend a faithful life in the Lord and in His body (the church), nevertheless we must faithfully endure so that heaven will be ours (Matthew 10:22). We dare not cowardly adopt the way of ease (Amos 6:1ff; Revelation 3:14ff).

# CONFUSING MESSAGES

Lee Moses

There are a number of confusing messages being widely propagated through the world today. Many of these are promoted by very well-meaning people who apparently have not considered the logical consequences of their messages. Let the reader consider some of these messages.

**DRINK RESPONSIBLY.** Is this possible? One loses his sense of responsibility when he drinks. Yet this is the message given in advertisements regularly seen on television. Recommending that one drink moderately, or responsibly, is still a recommendation for him to drink. A far wiser counsel is found in the book of Proverbs: *“Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright”* (Proverbs 28:31). One should make every effort to avoid alcoholic beverages in any amount. Although many people may begin an evening with the full intention of “drinking responsibly,” they often realize the next day that it is impossible — they were far from successful in their endeavor. How can one be demonstrating responsibility when he is purposely consuming a beverage specifically designed to rob him of his good sense?

**DON’T DRINK AND DRIVE.** This is a slogan widely heard during times of pervasive imbibing, such as the holiday season and the high school prom season. However, is it acceptable for one to drink as long as he does not take the wheel of an automobile? By this slogan the idea is given that as long as someone has a “designated driver,” he then has license to designatedly drink himself into oblivion. However, drinking without driving can be just as injurious to one’s health, not to mention one’s spiritual well being. First Corinthians 6:9-10 still teaches that drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

**DON’T DRINK OR SMOKE IF YOU ARE UNDER AGE.** There are activities in which adults may acceptably take part, but yet are unacceptable for children; such as driving an automobile. There are activities which are particularly unsafe for children, but drinking and smoking are neither safe for children nor adults. What kind of message is an adult sending to a child when the adult who drinks or smokes tries to correct the child engaging in these same harmful activities? *“Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye”* (Matthew 7:5).

**PRACTICE SAFE SEX.** This slogan truly came into its own when AIDS first became a widespread problem in the 1980’s. Parents and schools alike are teaching children to practice “safe sex.” However, if one is to practice “safe sex,” he must practice sex. The only true way to remain safe from sexually-transmitted diseases is to abstain from sexual immorality. This is exactly what God teaches mankind to do: *“FLEE FORNICATION. Every sin that man doeth is without the body, but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body”* (1 Corinthians 6:18). Is it not possible that God knew exactly what He was doing when He ordained that marriage was to be between one man and one woman for life (Genesis 2:18-25)?

Those who promulgate these four messages likely have spiritual concerns far from their minds. However, they are not even thinking logically about bodily concerns. They simply promote an option which is not quite as bad as other options. Instead of dancing in the gray area of every issue, Christians, *“by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil”* (Hebrews 5:14). One does not have to accept confusing messages as truth. If one does become distracted by these messages, he can turn to God’s message of absolute truth, *“for God is not the author of confusion”* (1 Corinthians 14:33).

# Observations and Concerns

February 8, 2023

**Welcome Visitors!** Your Presence is our Pleasure.

“Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for *thou* only *art* holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest” (Revelation 15:4).

**Expression of Gratitude:** Remember in your prayers of thanks the men who lead us in worship and make decisions to keep us on the straight and narrow way.

Our sympathy is extended to the family of **Dale Jackson** upon his passing last week. “A Celebration of Life” memorial service is scheduled for Saturday, February 11 at 1 o’clock PM at the building of the Collinsville Church of Christ.

There is one **Bible cover** in the foyer for anyone who wants it.

**Remember in Prayer:**

- ▶ **Pat Taylor** has blockage in her right and left carotid artery. She is also scheduled to see a new neurologist soon.
- ▶ **Joyce Cash** is working with doctors to resolve issues with her heart.
- ▶ **Nelda Hudson** is still seeking a diagnosis for her health concerns.
- ▶ **Ed Dindy**, father of Tia Swearingen, has cancer. He had surgery yesterday to prepare him to begin radiation treatments soon.
- ▶ **Debbie Earl**, mother of Russ Earl, had surgery on her foot and will be in a boot for about three months.

Schedule of Services	Assignments			
		Wednesday, Feb. 8	Sunday, Feb. 12 AM	Sunday, Feb. 12 PM
	Announcements	Russ Earl	Paul Praschnik	Ross Swearingen
	Song Leader	Doyle Jackson	Ross Swearingen	Doyle Jackson
	Prayer	Chuck Northrop	Chuck Northrop	Chris Nelson
	Lord's Supper (speaker)		Chris Nelson	Paul Praschnik
	Lord's Supper		Doyle Jackson	
	Lesson	Doyle Jackson	Paul Praschnik	Chuck Northrop
	Prayer / Door Attendant	Chris Nelson	Chris Nelson	Ross Swearingen
Sundays				
Bible Classes. . . 9:30 AM				
Worship . . . . . 10:30 AM				
Worship . . . . . 5:00 PM				
Wednesdays				
Bible Classes. . . 7:00 PM				
Website: oologahcofc.org				