



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

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To Keep the Church Pure

Chuck Northrop

Much of the New Testament was written with the intent to keep the church of our Lord doctrinally and morally pure. With the exception of the book of Philemon, every book in the New Testament contains warnings against apostasy or drifting away from the purity of the gospel. Since God is the author of the Bible, these warnings demonstrate God is concerned for the purity of the church. Just as an earthly father is concerned for the welfare of his children, the heavenly Father is concerned for His children’s welfare. The concern of a good father goes beyond the physical welfare of his children. His concern extends to their mental and spiritual welfare. So, it is with the heavenly Father. He is concerned His children remain doctrinally and morally pure.

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

To illustrate the relationship between Christ and His church, God chose the closest human relationships — a husband and a wife. In Ephesians 5:25-27 Paul wrote,

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

When the church is without “spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,” it is a “glorious church.” However, when the church allows the influences of the world to enter into it, it becomes defiled and polluted (Revelation 3:1-6).

There were many in the church at Corinth who were drifting away, and for this reason Paul wrote to deal with these various problems. One such problem was the church was putting up with false teachers who “preacheth another Jesus” and “another gospel” (2 Corinthians 11:4). Because of this problem, Paul wrote,

“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:2-3).

By inspiration of the Spirit James wrote, “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4). James was not speaking of physical adulterers and adulteresses (those who would defile themselves by engaging in sexual misconduct). He was speaking of those who were espoused to the Lord but had defiled themselves by being a friend of the world.

THE TEMPLE OF GOD

In 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, Paul pictured the church as the temple of God. He wrote, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” Notice in this picture, the apostle warned about defiling the “temple of God.” The church must not be corrupted by “the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:7-9), by “another gospel” (Galatians 1:6-9), or by being “conformed to this world” (Romans 12:2). Notice Paul’s exhortation in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18:

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

The reason the church is to be holy or set apart (separated) from the world is explained in 1 John 2:15 where the apostle John wrote, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

PRESERVING PURITY

The first step to preserving the purity of the church is by a steadfast adherence to the apostles’ doctrine. Acts 2:42 says, “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Also remember the exhortation of 2 John 9 which says, “Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son” (ASV).

The second step to preserving the purity of the church is to be as the Bereans who “were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). We must test each teacher and preacher to see if their teaching is in accordance with the word of God.

The third step to preserving the purity of the church is by rejecting false teachers and not tolerating their evil. In Revelation 2:2, John quoted Jesus saying to the church in Ephesus, “I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.”

If we will take these steps to preserve the purity of the church, we will be found faithful in the sight of God and will be blessed for our labors in the Lord. However, if we do not take these steps, we will be guilty of allowing false teaching and immorality to creep into the church, and God will bring just punishment. Therefore, let us maintain purity in doctrine, purity in worship, and purity in service. ❀

Think About Heaven and Hell

Do you believe in the hereafter? Heaven? Eternal life? It might surprise you to know how many people do not! You can see it in their life, their countenance, their attitude. With the clock of time always ticking ever closer to the end of their earthly sojourn — and in their minds the end of their existence — life is becoming darker and the end of life ever blacker.

Blaine Pascal was quizzed about his belief in eternal life. He responded, “Let’s assume that I am wrong and there is no life hereafter — then I have lost nothing. On the other hand, let’s assume that I am right and there is life hereafter, then I have gained everything.”

In case you don’t recognize his name, Pascal was the sixteenth century calculus master. He knew how to put two and two together! Can you? Heaven and hell are real! The good Master taught that the wicked “will go away into everlasting punishment” and that the righteous will go “into eternal life.” You can count on it!

— Dwight Fuqua

Observations and Concerns

March 1, 2023

Welcome Visitors! Thank you for coming our way!

“O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker” (Psalm 95:6).

Expression of Gratitude: Be sure to offer up prayers of thanksgiving each day for God’s provisions, health, and safety.

The annual Oologah lectureship this year is March 24-26 on the theme of “Hold Fast...” Flyers are available in the foyer.

The Monthly Men’s Business Meeting is Sunday evening, March 5, after services.

Remember in Prayer:

- ▶ Dicie Jackson has a spot on her Thymus gland. She will need to have a biopsy soon.
- ▶ Dan Dennis is scheduled to have a CT scan to check on the spot on his lung. He has also been dealing with shingles.
- ▶ Nelda Hudson learned her heart is not pumping properly causing episodes of defibrillation.
- ▶ Ed Dindy, father of Tia Swearingen, is waiting to begin radiation treatments for his cancer.
- ▶ Debbie Earl, mother of Russ Earl, had foot surgery and will be in a boot for several months.

March Anniversaries: Andy & Nelda Hudson - 26; March Birthdays: Bill Dilks - 10; Denise Hall - 15; Vance Smith - 22; Dan Dennis - 31.

Schedule of Services	Assignments			
		Wednesday, Mar. 01	Sunday, Mar. 05 AM	Sunday, Mar. 05 PM
	Announcements	Chris Nelson	Chris Nelson	Paul Praschnik
	Song Leader	Doyle Jackson	Ross Swearingen	Doyle Jackson
	Prayer	Paul Praschnik	Doyle Jackson	Chris Nelson
	Lord's Supper (speaker)		Chris Nelson	Ross Swearingen
	Lord's Supper		Paul Praschnik	
	Lesson	Russ Earl	Paul Praschnik	Chuck Northrop
	Prayer / Door Attendant	Ross Swearingen	Chuck Northrop	Chris Nelson
Sundays				
Bible Classes. . . 9:30 AM				
Worship 10:30 AM				
Worship 5:00 PM				
Wednesdays				
Bible Classes. . . 7:00 PM				
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