



“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

If Not Me, Who?

Charles Coats

We often recognize there are things that need to be done. We may discuss it, analyze it, or even investigate it. But, in many cases, it never gets done. Part of the reason for this is we are waiting for someone to do it.

Even when we know we all have a responsibility in a matter we still tend to expect someone else to do what needs to be done. For some reason, we are able to convince ourselves it is not “my responsibility.” Sadly, this same attitude has found its way into the work of the church. We “hire” preachers so they can do our work for us. Or, we “have” elders, and they have the responsibility to do the work. And, of course, what about “those” deacons? Isn’t their job to do this work?

While it is true that preachers have a work to do, and it is true that elders and deacons have roles to fulfill, it is not true that all the work of the church falls on the shoulders of these men! The Bible clearly teaches the work of the church is **every** Christian’s responsibility!!!

Those who became Christians in Acts 2 are those who “continued steadfastly” (verse 42); “were together” (verse 44); and, were “continuing daily with one accord” (verse 46). As a result, saved souls were added daily (verse 47). The church in Corinth was commanded to be unmovable in the work of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58), and the Galatians were asked who had hindered them from obeying the truth (Galatians 5:7). In Acts 2 and Acts 4, we find the church was involved in helping one another. All things were common. No one counted the things they owned as their own. They provided for everyone as they had need. Every member was involved in this. In Acts 4:29, the church prayed for more boldness that they

might preach the word. When the church was scattered abroad in Acts 8, those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. Note the Bible teaches all of them went forth doing this. We do not find faithful Christians waiting on someone else to do the work. They understood they by the grace of God were made to serve (1 Corinthians 15:10).

While we leave the work in the hands of the few, the Devil has many legions of people willing to work for him. We decry the condition of the world, yet do nothing to help it because, after all, that is someone else’s responsibility. We have trouble getting out of **our** cozy house and giving up **our** time to do the work of God. We are too tired; it is too late; it is the wrong time; we are so busy; and on and on we go with our excuses — tools of the Devil to keep us from doing the work God desires.

If we do not do the work of God, then who will? ***We must not let the Devil win!***

True Branches of Christ

Marvin L. Weir

The fifteenth chapter of John portrays Christ as the true vine and individual Christians as the branches. One who obeys the Gospel is a branch in Christ. Man-made denominations are not the branches spoken of by John as is made clear in verse five. The disciples who are followers of Christ are the branches under discussion. Each child of God has the responsibility to produce fruit as a branch in the kingdom.

Denominations teach that these “branches” are different “churches” in a futile attempt to justify denominationalism. The context, however, will not allow such an erroneous interpretation. It is individual people under consideration and not different religious groups. Man-made religious bodies are desperate to find New Testament Scripture to back up their existence but they will search in vain. There is only “one body” (Ephesians 4:4), and one does not mean many!

Only those who obey the Gospel (Romans 1:16) are branches “in Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:17). One puts on Christ in the act of baptism (Galatians 3:27). A penitent believer who obeys the Gospel plan of salvation is “baptized into Christ” (Romans 6:3) and “raised” to walk “in newness of life” (Romans 6:4).

One who does not bear fruit is not maturing in Christ. The apostle Paul identifies the fruit that every child of God is to produce as being “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self control” (Galatians 5:22-23). The Christian who is bearing fruit for the Master will continue to mature as Peter demonstrates in saying, “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity” (2 Peter 1:5-7). A Christian

will also strive to teach others the Gospel in planting and watering as the opportunity arises (1 Corinthians 3:6).

When the Word of God is proclaimed, the seed of the kingdom is sown (Luke 8:11). The Gospel is still to this very day God’s power to save souls from sin (Romans 1:16). No one has ever been saved by the wisdom of man (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:20-25), and this truth strikes a deathblow to all the gimmicks that are employed today by religious shysters to draw a crowd. A true follower of Christ who is bearing fruit for the Lord will preach the Word and be content to let God give the increase.

The Word of God has the ability to clean and make pure. The apostle Peter says to brethren, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Peter 1:22-23).

It has already been noted that a person puts on Christ at the point of immersion into Christ (Galatians 3:27). One who is in Christ must choose to continue to abide in Christ (John 15:4). If one fails to “walk in the light as he is in the light” (1 John 1:7) or “goeth onward and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ” (2 John 9), he does not “abide in the vine” (John 15:4) and cannot bear fruit. Many today pretend to be “branches” while refusing to do the Lord’s will. Jesus notes this truth in saying, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:21-23).

May we submit to the Master’s commands so that we will not hear Him say at the judgment, “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say” (Luke 6:46)? John 15:6 says, “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.” This makes it clear that Jesus is speaking of individuals and not “churches.” One is obligated to remain in the vine. Whatever is required to do he must do or be purged from the vine. This shows that man can apostatize and lose his soul.

Different fruit does not come from the same vine. Religious division is contrary to Jesus’ prayer (John 17:20-21). All “branches” in Christ are to produce the same fruit. In other words, each Christian is to “speak the same thing...that there be no divisions...be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Corinthians 1:10).

One cannot claim to follow Christ while refusing to obey His commands. A true branch of Christ abides in His Word and enjoys fellowship with the Father and the Son and all others who are content to abide in the teaching of Christ. May we strive to be true branches of Christ!

Observations and Concerns

June 14, 2023

Welcome Visitors! Thank you for coming our way!

“Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength” (Psalm 96:7).

Expression of Gratitude: We are grateful for all who attended and participated in our VBS. The Wednesday Evening Summer Series will resume next Wednesday.

Remember in Prayer:

- Sherry Carmona is scheduled to have knee surgery on June 15th.
- Shawn Smith, son of Vance and Darla Smith, suffered a heart attack and is recovering at home.
- Gary and Margie McNatt, friends of the Carmonas, are having a difficult time.
- Alexis, daughter of Stephanie Huckleby, is going through hardships. See Stephanie for more details.
- Pat Taylor has been in the hospital concerning diabetes.

Extended Prayer List: Jim Allison – continual health concerns; Joyce Cash – ongoing health difficulties; Dan & Marcella Dennis – ongoing health issues; Bill Dilks – cancer concerns; Sammy Gray – continual health concerns; Nelda Hudson struggling with heart problems; Chuck Northrop – blood disorder; Vance & Darla Smith – extended health problems; Sam Orr – extended health concerns LeAnna Shafer – undergoing chemotherapy treatments; Betty Jackson – prolonged health issues; Amanda Georgakus – struggling with cancer; Bobbye Mooney – declining health due to cancer; Jacob Webster – recovering from dog attack.

Schedule of Services	Assignments			
		Wednesday, June 14	Sunday, June 18 AM	Sunday, June 18 PM
	Announcements	VBS	Russ Earl	Ross Swearingen
	Song Leader	VBS	Doyle Jackson	Bill Dilks
	Prayer	VBS	Chuck Northrop	Paul Praschnik
	Lord's Supper (speaker)		Ross Swearingen	Doyle Jackson
	Lord's Supper		Chris Nelson	
	Lesson	VBS	Russ Earl	Chuck Northrop
	Prayer / Door Attendant	VBS	Paul Praschnik	Russ Earl
Sundays				
Bible Classes. . . 9:30 AM				
Worship 10:30 AM				
Worship 5:00 PM				
Wednesdays				
Bible Classes. . . 7:00 PM				
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