



“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**

## **It Wasn't the Same**

Terry L. Mabrey

A family had some friends over for lunch. It was a simple lunch of soup and chili. One of the visitors liked the chili so well that she wanted the recipe. Later, she told her friend that her chili did not turn out the same. It just didn't taste the same. As she explained how she made the chili, she mentioned several substitutions had been made because she didn't have the original ingredients on hand. She did not have the chili mix that had been used, so she substituted chili powder. Instead of the seasoned chili beans, she had red beans in the pantry. She always used ground turkey, so she substituted that for the lean ground beef. Then, she added a few seasonings of her own.

You might wonder why she even requested the recipe. It is strange how people think substitutions can be made and still have the original. You cannot make substitutions if you want the original.

So it is with the church. Denominationalism has brought about many substitutions and changes. Why is it that people think they have the church Jesus built when so many substitutions have been made?

Christ is the only head of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18). There is no authority in the New Testament for a church clergy and hierarchy. Every member of the

Lord's church is a priest (1 Peter 2:9). The church is overseen by elders and served by deacons (Philippians 1:1).

Yet, there are many differences in denominations. In most denominations there is a clergy system with priests, pastors, and/or “Reverends.” Often there is a national, and sometimes an international, governing body. Some denominations have deacons, but a “Pastor” rather than elders. Others have elders that are not married (1 Timothy 3:2), or women serving as elders (1 Timothy 2:12).

A person enters the church through baptism (1 Corinthians 12:13). When a person who has believed in Christ as the Son of God and has repented of sins is baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38), God adds him to the church (Acts 2:41,47). It is not a matter of “joining” the church or a denomination. It is, also, at that point that he becomes a child of God (Galatians 3:26-27) and has his sins washed away (Acts 22:16).

Denominationalism is different. How different depends upon which denomination it is. Many denominations teach that a person becomes a Christian, a child of God, merely by “asking Jesus to come into his heart.” He is then accepted into the denomination based upon a testimony of conversion. Sometimes he is “voted” into the denomination. In other cases, he is sprinkled (not baptized) as an infant who has no capability of belief. Years later, after taking instruction, he is “confirmed.” He then is a member of the denomination. Other denominations have even different requirements.

The Bible sets out God's authorized manner of worship. The early church met upon every first day of the week to eat the Lord's Supper, or for communion (Acts 20:6-7; 1 Corinthians 11:20ff & 1 Corinthians 16:1-2). Prayers were offered up in worship (Acts 2:42 & 1 Corinthians 14:15) as well as songs of praise (1 Corinthians 14:15 & Ephesians 5:19). There was edification (Acts 2:42 & Acts 20:7), and giving as one is prospered (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

Substitutions and changes have been made in denominations. Many denominational worship services center around entertainment – with bands, concerts, skits, drama presentations, and even acrobatic acts. Musical instruments have been added, and the Lord's Supper has been taken away, being served only at certain times. In other denominations, burning of incense and the counting of beads has been added, along with statue worship. Saturday worship has replaced or been added to the first day of the week.

One should realize that the same principle applies here as with the chili. If you want the original, there can be no substitutions and/or changes (Deuteronomy 4:2). If you want the church of the Bible, the church of God's choice, it must be according to His instructions.

# An Example of True Loyalty

Jesse Dickison

David’s son and heir Absalom tried to overthrow his father’s throne and banish him from the kingdom. We can read about it in 2 Samuel chapters 15-18. Absalom was joined in this rebellion by Ahithophel, who was David’s trusted counselor, and by most of the people of Israel. David had faithfully served as king for over thirty years when this all took place.

In this sorry story of betrayal, there was one man who loyally stood with David. He was Ittai the Gittite. Though few know him, he deserves recognition for his loyalty to King David. In some ways, Ittai’s story is surprising because he was a foreigner. The term Gittite refers to a native of Gath, one of the main cities of the Philistines, the archenemies of Israel. Gath was even the hometown of Goliath. Apparently Ittai the Gittite was a soldier of fortune whose occupation was to sell his sword to the highest bidder.

But he was a man whose loyalty was not for sale: “And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be” (2 Samuel 15:21). He was determined to serve the king no matter what. His example says something worth saying about loyalty.

## True Loyalty Does Not...

1) **Consider Convenience.** It was not a good time for Ittai and his men. They were newly arrived in Jerusalem. They had their wives and children in the column that fled Jerusalem and Absalom, but he had made a commitment and he honored that commitment even when it was inconvenient.

2) **Contemplate Circumstances.** David did not look like a winner at this time. It appeared Absalom was going to be king, but Ittai made a commitment for better or worse.

3) **Consult the Crowd.** Ittai did not choose sides based on what everyone else was doing. The majority followed Absalom. Ittai took his stand beside David.

Ittai was loyal to an earthly king. Are we loyal to the Heavenly King?

**Influence:** “Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God” (3 John 11).  
**Is your influence for good or evil?**

# Observations and Concerns

November 29, 2023

**Welcome Visitors!** We are grateful you have decided to visit us today.

**Praise in Psalm:** “Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, *unto thee* do we give thanks: for *that* thy name is near thy wondrous works declare” (Psalm 75:1).

**Declaration of Appreciation:** Please remember this week in your prayers of thanksgiving those who lead singing on a regular basis. We appreciate our song leaders.

Remember this evening is the fifth Wednesday **Singing Night**.

Our **monthly youth devo** is scheduled for Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 PM at the church building. The menu will be chili dogs. The chili, hotdogs, and buns will be provided. Please bring sides and desserts.

The **Men’s Business Meeting** is Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> after the evening service.

## Remember in Prayer:

- ▶ **Darla Smith** has some upcoming appointments to determine how to move forward after a mass she had biopsied was malignant.
- ▶ **Walter Jackson** fell recently and has been in the hospital with dehydration and bruises.
- ▶ **Sammy Gray** will be having medical tests in the upcoming weeks.
- ▶ **Gene Bishop**, friend of Doyle and Dicie, fell and had staples put in his head.
- ▶ **Ed Dindy**, father of Tia Swearingen, is scheduled to begin treatments for cancer next week.
- ▶ **Kaylee Northrop**, granddaughter of Chuck and Jody, had surgery in her foot last week. She is recovering at home.
- ▶ **Shawna Northrop**, daughter-in-law of Chuck and Jody, had knee surgery today.

Extended Prayer List: **Joyce Cash** – health difficulties; **Dan & Marcella Dennis** – health issues; **Bill Dilks** – cancer; **Sammy Gray** – health concerns; **Nelda Hudson** – heart struggles; **Chuck Northrop** – blood disorder; **Darla Smith** – declining health; **Pat Taylor** – health issues; **Ed & Sherry Carmona** – health issues; **Ed Dindy** – cancer; **Betty Jackson** – health issues; **Sam Orr** – health concerns; **Sandra Rowell** – lymphoma; **LeAnna Shafer** – cancer.

Schedule of Services	Assignments			
		Wednesday, Nov. 29	Sunday, Dec. 3 AM	Sunday, Dec. 3 PM
	Announcements	Chuck Northrop	Doyle Jackson	Chris Nelson
	Prayer	Chuck Northrop	Doyle Jackson	Chris Nelson
	Song Leader	Doyle Jackson	Bill Dilks	Doyle Jackson
	Lord's Supper (speaker)		Ross Swearingen	Ross Swearingen
	Lord's Supper		Chuck Northrop	
	Lesson	Chris Nelson	Chuck Northrop	Chuck Northrop
	Prayer	Ross Swearingen	Chris Nelson	Bill Dilks
	Door Attendant	Ross Swearingen	Chris Nelson	Ross Swearingen
Sundays				
Bible Classes. . . . .	9:30 AM			
Worship . . . . .	10:30 AM			
Worship . . . . .	5:00 PM			
Wednesdays				
Bible Classes. . . . .	7:00 PM			
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