

Is One Church As Good As Another?

INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration "Two Churches Under One Roof," Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations, #1314.
 - 1. We are being told that churches just need to get together and forget their differences.
 - 2. We are told churches need to do this, because "One church is as good as another."
- B. But, is one church as good as another? If one church is as good as another,

DIVISION IS ACCEPTABLE

- A. The religious world in this nation is deeply divided.
 - 1. Just in this small community, about seven different groups participate in the nursing home singing.
 - 2. Those who say that churches are all the same, tell us that this is wonderful for this gives people a choice.
- B. The New Testament teaches that religious division is not acceptable.
 - 1. The night before he died, Jesus prayed that his disciples might all be one (Jn. 17:20-21).
 - 2. Paul pleaded with the Corinthians that there be no divisions among them (1 Cor. 1:10).
 - a. The Corinthian church was deeply divided, and Paul pleaded with them to get rid of such divisions.
 - b. "Be perfectly joined together" refers to a surgeon's mending broken bones.
 - c. Christians cannot be divided; one church is not as good as another.

DOCTRINE IS NEVER FALSE

- A. One can find a church that teaches anything he wants to hear.
 - 1. One church says Jesus is divine; another says he isn't.
 - 2. One church says baptism is essential; another says it isn't.
- B. If one church is as good as another, these views are equally valid.
 - 1. You would be free to believe what you want, and I would be free to believe what I want.
 - 2. Whatever anybody teaches is right.
- C. Yet, the New Testament teaches that false doctrine is real.
 - 1. Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to charge people not to teach false doctrine (1 Tim. 1:3-4).
 - a. False doctrine ran rampant in Ephesus.
 - 1) Many had turned "aside to idle talk" (1 Tim. 1:6).
 - 2) Timothy was to reject "profane and old wives' tales" (1 Tim. 4:7).
 - b. Timothy's purpose for being in Ephesus was to defend what was true.
 - 2. The Colossians could be cheated through false doctrine (Col. 2:8).
- D. False doctrine causes one to be condemned.
 - 1. The one who does not abide in Jesus' teachings does not have God (2 Jn. 9).
 - a. The one who teaches false doctrine does not have a relationship with God
 - b. Those who do not have God have no hope (Eph. 2:12).
 - 2. The one who preaches anything other than what the apostles taught shall be accursed (Gal. 1:8).
 - a. "Accursed" refers to one who is doomed to destruction.
 - b. Those who teach what is false will be lost.
 - 3. Illustration about fire ants, s.v. "Doctrine, False," Illustrations for Biblical Preaching, pp. 112-13.
 - 4. False doctrine is real; one church is not as good as another.

DISAGREEMENTS NEED NOT WORRY US

- A. If one church is as good as another, we don't need to come to a consensus in what we believe.
 - 1. We can all believe different things, and that is perfectly acceptable.
 - 2. We can, according to this view, agree to disagree.
- B. Yet, the Bible exhorts us to be of one mind.
 - 1. Paul told the Corinthians to all speak the same thing (1 Cor. 1:10).
 - 2. Peter told the Christians to whom he wrote to be of the same mind (1 Pet. 3:8).
- C. Christians must agree.
 - 1. We need to say what God has said (1 Pet. 4:11).
 - 2. As we say what God has said, we will agree.
- D. Disagreement isn't acceptable; one church isn't as good as another.

DEVOTION CAN BE MAN'S WAY

- A. If one church is as good as another, it doesn't matter how we worship.
 - 1. We can use the instrument or not use it.
 - 2. We can take the Lord's Supper weekly or not at all.
 - 3. We can allow either men or women to preach.
- B. If one church is as good as another, we would have the right to determine how we worship.
- C. The Scriptures teach that God does care how we worship.
 - 1. Nadab and Abihu learned this lesson (Lev. 10:1-2).
 - a. They offered fire before God which he had not commanded them.
 - 1) They thought it didn't matter how they worshipped.
 - 2) They worshipped the way they wanted to worship.
 - b. Fire went out from before the LORD and they died.
 - 2. Jesus said that people worshipped him in vain (Mt. 15:9).
 - 3. The multiple ways to worship aren't acceptable; one church isn't as good as another.

DISCERNMENT BELONGS TO MAN

- A. If one church is as good as another, man can decide for himself what to believe and what to practice.
 - 1. If I like having elders, I can have them; if I don't like having elders, I can not have them.
 - 2. If I want to sprinkle for baptism, I can sprinkle; if I'd rather immerse, I can immerse.
 - 3. I can do whatever I want.
- B. Man is not able to determine what is best.
 - 1. "O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jer. 10:23).
 - a. Man isn't wise enough to decide what to do.
 - b. Man needs God's guidance.
 - 2. God has made foolish the wisdom of this world (1 Cor. 1:19-20).
 - 3. God told us to listen to Jesus (Mt. 17:5).
- C. Illustration about Irving Fisher of Yale, Illustrations for Biblical Preaching, p. 397.
- D. Man cannot decide for himself what is right; one church is not as good as another.

CONCLUSION

- A. One church is not as good as another.
 - 1. Jesus built his church (Mt. 16:18).
 - 2. Jesus is head of the church (Col. 1:18).

3. Jesus gave himself for the church (Eph. 5:25).
- B. We need to be members of the church Jesus established.
1. Those who are baptized for the remission of sins become members of Jesus' church (Acts 2:41, 47).
 2. Are you a member of Jesus' church?