

Identifying Marks of the New Testament Church

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. Trucks often carry the sign, "Attend the church of your choice."
 - 1. That sign implies:
 - a. I have the right to choose where I worship.
 - b. One church is as good as another.
 - 2. However,
 - a. Jesus promised to build his church (Mt 16:18).
 - b. Religious division is wrong (Jn 17:21).
- B. This morning, we want to examine the Bible & see what the New Testament church looks like.

II. THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH WEARS A BIBLICAL NAME.

- A. There are descriptions of the church in the New Testament.
 - 1. "My church" (Mt 16:18).
 - 2. "The church" (Acts 8:1).
 - 3. "The Way" (Acts 9:2).
 - 4. "Church of God" (1 Cor 1:2).
 - 5. "Churches of Christ" (Rm 16:16).
 - 6. "Body of Christ" (Eph 4:12).
 - 7. "House of God"; "Church of the living God"; "Pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tm 3:15).
 - 8. "Church of the firstborn" (Heb 12:23).
- B. The New Testament church has no official "name;" these are simply different ways of describing the church.
- C. However, any church which attempts to follow Scripture will wear one of these descriptions, because these are inspired descriptions.

III. THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH HAS NO WRITTEN CREED.

- A. The Bible teaches that it alone should be the standard of religious life.
 - 1. 2 Tm 3:16-17.
 - 2. 2 Pt 1:3.
 - 3. Gal 1:6-9.
- B. I have no right, therefore, to write a creed for the church.

IV. THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH HAS PROPER ORGANIZATION.

- A. Jesus is the head of the church (Mt 16:18; Col 1:18; Eph 4:15; Eph 5:23).
- B. Elders lead individual congregations.
 - 1. The New Testament speaks of elders overseeing individual congregations (1 Pt 5:2; Acts 20:28).
 - 2. The Bible gives qualifications for these men (1 Tm 3:1-7; Tit 1:5-9).
 - 3. The New Testament always speaks of a plurality of elders.
- C. The New Testament also speaks of deacons.
 - 1. Deacons work with the elders (Phil 1:1).
 - 2. The deacons deal with physical needs while elders work with spiritual needs (Acts 6:1-7).

3. The New Testament gives qualifications for these men (1 Tm 3:8-13).

V. THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH WORSHIPS ACCORDING TO THE NEW TESTAMENT.

- A. Worshiping according to the New Testament means that men lead the worship (1 Tm 2:11-14).
- B. Worshiping according to the New Testament means that we pray (1 Thess 5:17).
- C. Worshiping according to the New Testament means that Scripture is preached (Acts 20:7; 1 Tm 4:13).
- D. Worshiping according to the New Testament means that we give of our means (1 Cor 16:1-2).
- E. Worshiping according to the New Testament means that we take the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 16:1-2).
 - 1. We need to take the Lord's Supper every first day of the week.
 - 2. The Israelites understood that they were to keep the Sabbath every seventh day of the week (Ex 20:8-11).
 - 3. The Corinthian church was coming together each first day of the week for take the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:20; cf. 16:1-2).
- F. Worshiping according to the New Testament means that I sing without the use of instrumental music.
 - 1. The New Testament teaches that we are to sing (Mt 26:30; Acts 16:25; Rm 15:9; 1 Cor 14:15; Eph 5:19; Col 3:16; Heb 2:12; 13:15; Js 5:13).
 - 2. A mechanical instrument is not mentioned in any of these passages.
 - 3. We are not to add to Scripture (Deut 12:32; 1 Cor 4:6; Rv 22:18-19).

VI. THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH TEACHES GOD'S PLAN FOR SAVING MAN.

- A. Many churches teach one can be saved in a variety of ways, but not so the New Testament church.
- B. The New Testament church will teach what the New Testament teaches.
 - 1. One must have faith to be saved (Jn 8:24).
 - 2. One must repent of his sins (Lk 13:3, 5).
 - 3. One must confess his faith in Christ (Mt 10:32-33).
 - 4. One must be baptized (Mk 16:16).
 - a. One is saved at the point of baptism, not before (1 Pt 3:21; Acts 2:28).
 - b. Baptism is by immersion (cf. Mt 3:16).
- C. The Lord, not Christians, adds to the church (Acts 2:47).