

## The Churches of Christ

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • March 17, In the year of our Lord Christ, 2024

Scripture Reader and Reading: Adam Peugh – Matthew 16.18

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Nash Crisp – No Suggestions

### Prelude:

#### **I. What most people know about the Churches of Christ is**

- A. that they do not use instruments of music in their services,
- B. that they tend to be fairly conservative (which means different things to different people), and
- C. that they teach baptism is for the remission of sins.

#### **II. There are perhaps some other teachings and practices, but**

- A. these are things that set us apart in the modern world.
- B. The questions are:
  - 1. Why do we believe those things?
  - 2. Why do we practice those things?

### Persuasion:

#### **I. The Restoration Movement**

- A. Jesus built his church in the first century:

**18 “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”**

**– Matthew 16.18**

- B. However, everyone agrees
  - 1. that over the centuries
  - 2. a lot of things have been added.
- C. The Scriptures inform us
  - 1. that departures would begin even in the first century.

2. Acts 20.29–30

**29 “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.”**

**– Acts 20.29–30**

3. First Timothy 4.1–3

**1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.**

**– 1 Timothy 4.1–3**

4. Second Timothy 3.1–5

**1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!**

**– 2 Timothy 3.1–5**

5. Second Thessalonians 2, but note:

**1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that**

**he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.**

**– 2 Thessalonians 2.1–4**

D. Therefore, for many centuries

1. various preachers and churches
2. saw a need to deal with this problem.

E. The move for correction really took off with Martin Luther in 1517.

1. He believed, along with many others,
2. that the prevalent church at the time needed some serious reformation.

a) Therefore, the movement was called

b) The Reformation Movement,

(1) which was an attempt to reform the Catholic Church in particular.

(2) Many good things came out of that effort.

(a) I don't want to spend all my time speaking on this movement or

(b) the one that followed, except to mention briefly the goal.

F. The Reformation Movement sought to reform,

1. to clean up,
2. the Catholic Church, but
  - a) by the late 1700s and early 1800s,
  - b) many saw a need to go clear back to the Bible,
    - (1) bypassing all the innovations
    - (2) that had sprung up since the first century.

G. They did not seek to make something new,

1. just to go back to the Bible and
2. be whatever they were back then.

H. That describes us well.

1. I know that almost all churches would make that claim,
2. with only few not making the claim.
  - a) Therefore, we cannot merely make the claim,
  - b) we have to back it up,
  - c) at least making an honest attempt to try to go by the Scriptures alone,
    - (1) by teaching what they taught in first century and
    - (2) by doing what they did in the first century,
      - (a) not adding to the teaching,
      - (b) nor taking away from the teaching, and
        - i) not adding to the works,
        - ii) nor taking away from them.

## **II. To Be What They Were in the New Testament**

- A. I have known some people who say
  1. that all of us are automatically a denomination and
  2. have embraced some departure from the faith.
    - a) The moment you align yourself with a church,
    - b) they claim you have become denominational.
- B. Was it that way in the first century?
  1. The church at Corinth
    - a) had more troubles than any church spoken in the New Testament, yet
    - b) Paul began First Corinthians in this manner:

**2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

– 1 Corinthians 1.2–3

2. The church at Thessalonica,
  - a) was off on the Second Coming of Christ and
  - b) some of their members were sponging off others:

**1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

– 2 Thessalonians 1.1–2

### III. Bible Things

- A. Do the following make sense?
  1. Speak as the Bible speaks and be silent as the Bible is silent.
  2. Call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways.
- B. First Peter 4.11

**11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God.**

– 1 Peter 4.11

- C. What would result if we all did that?

### IV. The Churches of Christ Seek to Stay within What Is Written

- A. First Corinthians 4.6

**6 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.**

– 1 Corinthians 4.6

1. Who is wise enough to think that God has not given us enough?

2. To go beyond what is written, suggests a power greater than God.

B. Luke 10.25–29

1. shows the way to think, but

2. it also shows where we stray from Scripture:

**25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" 27 So he answered and said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'" 28 And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." 29 But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"**

– **Luke 10.25–29**

a) Jesus did not ask for the man's

(1) feelings,

(2) thoughts, or

(3) anything that came from the man himself.

b) The standard for many people: I don't see anything wrong with it.

**Exhortation:**

I. First Point