

FINDING THE RIGHT DENOMINATION

WHAT'S IN A NAME

*"Then Agrippa said unto Paul,
Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."*

~ Acts 26:28

1. What's in a Name

- a. Can words mean anything you want them to? Who is the master, you or the word?
- b. In post-truth era, labels, names, word definitions and boundaries are spurned.
- c. 5 reasons names are useful: (for people, places, things, groups, ideas - nouns)
 - i. Distinction (from others) – taxonomy, classification, description (male/female)
 - ii. Association (with others) – to find commonality/unity (e.g. family, vocation)
 - iii. Heritage – History, where you come from (your past, name changes, parents)
 - iv. Identity – Who/what are you? What are you called? – Rom 1:7
 - v. Reputation – A good name better than wealth - Prov 22:1, Ecc 7:1
- d. Clear communication cannot occur without a common concordance of names.

2. What's Wrong with Denominations

- a. Denomination ~def. A name: a collection of individuals called by the same name.
- b. Denominations err due to false doctrine, fallible men, corrupt w/power (reputation)
- c. *"If Christianity is true, why are there so many denominations? Which one is right?"*
- d. *"Aren't they all the same, anyway?"* Right, like all food is the same, music, people.
- e. Name reductions attempt to generalize: Jesus follower, Christian, Bible-believer.
- f. Denominations exist due to naming different beliefs – Baptists, RC, Calvary, KJB
 - i. Removing names, removes the importance of doctrinal differences.
 - ii. Definitions and doctrines matter. You distinguish with names, adj, qualifiers

3. Are We Christian?

- a. Most common denomination used in the church epistles = Brethren or saint.
- b. The world does not understand what God calls us. 1Co 1:2,6:11,12:1,12, Eph 4:12,5:8
- c. *"called Christians first in Antioch"* - Acts 11:26
- d. Paul tried to persuade Agrippa into being a Christian - Acts 26:28-29
- e. Christian ~def. "little Christ one", those that name Christ, believers of Christ. 26:27
- f. Using a certain name does not grant identity ("who is the master?") God does.
- g. To be nameless is contrary to scripture – 2 Tim 2:19, Eph 3:15, 3 John 7, 14, Phi 2:10

4. Finding the Right Name

- a. Why should you care? Because there is a history and a landscape, where do you sit?
- b. When names are wrong, removed, or indistinguishable, confusion ensues.
 - i. 'Grace' does not distinguish: Grace... Lutheran, Baptists?, Presbyterian.
 - ii. Everyone claims to 'rightly divide', and noble Bereans were Jews! Acts 17:10
- c. Dispensationalists care about differences, then care about what you are called!
- d. People avoid names because 1) they don't know, 2) won't hold, 3) want to hide
- e. Be persuaded in your own mind, hold fast, walk in it - Rom 14:5, 2 Tim 1:13, Eph 4:1
- f. You should know your name, what you believe, claim it, stand fast in it – 1 Cor 16:13