

# ***“Why I’m a Member of Christ’s Church!”***

**1 Peter 3:15**

**Intro.** – Years ago in Jackson, Mississippi a second grade teacher sent four students to the chalkboard to work a problem. One of the four students was a boy whom upon arriving at the board said, “I ain’t got no chalk.” The teacher immediately corrected him. She said, “The right way to say it is, ‘I don’t have any chalk; he doesn’t have any chalk; and they don’t have any chalk. Now do you understand?’” she asked. The little boy said “yes” he understood, but then added, “What happened to all the chalk anyway?”

Following this line of thought, do we understand why we are a member Church of Christ? Can we give a reason, as instructed in our text, as to our hope in being a member of Christ’s Church? Surely, you are aware there are other churches, as a matter of fact, there are over 300 different denominations in the United States alone. Why not belong to one of them?

In response to these questions, I’m hearing too many people give the following: “One church is just as good as another,” “We’re all headed for the same place, just going different ways,” “There’s nothing in the name on the sign or over the door.” Such responses show as much understanding in what the Bible says concerning the church as our little friend understanding his grammar lesson! Because of this disturbing situation, it would be wise of all assembled here today to address this matter.

*Purpose: to look at Biblical reasons one should be a member of Christ’s Church*

Believing Christian Churches and Churches of Christ come as close as to holding forth the divine pattern as revealed in Scripture as does any other church, I hope to accomplish this purpose by giving five reasons “Why I’m a Member of Christ’s Church!”

## **I Because of Her MEMBERSHIP**

- as recorded in the Bible, to be a part of Christ’s Church there are some stipulations. To develop this idea let’s look at the past and the present:
  - A. What These Requirements Were
    - turning to the Bible alone, we find how one became a part of the Body of Christ:
      1. One heard the Gospel message...
      2. After hearing the message, faith was established...
      3. Repentance was called upon – Acts 2:38
      4. Willingness to confess Christ Before men...
      5. Baptism (immersion) for the forgiveness of sins and the gift of God’s Spirit...
      6. Growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ the Lord...

Sound familiar? Yes, the path to being *added* to the church in the New Testament was the path to receiving the grace of God...!

- B. What These Requirements Are
  1. In the denominational world:
    - a. membership by baptism... (even by immersion) BUT often done “into the church” and not “into Christ” for the remission of sins and the gift of God’s Spirit...
    - b. membership by proxy = i.e. grandparents and parents members... then you are too...
    - c. membership by approval = some churches literally “vote” on who can be a member...
    - d. membership by ritual = i.e. after going through a certain ceremonies then become member...
    - e. membership by experience = become member proving your “salvation experience”...All of this and more glaringly ignores what God’s Word, the Bible says...
  2. In Christ’s Church today:
    - a. the requirements of the N.T. stand = faith, repentance, confession, immersion, faithfulness (i.e. accepting the free gift of God’s grace according to His requirements...)
    - b. the same process that “saved” 1<sup>st</sup> Century Christians from sin, put them into Christ, and permitted them to be “added” to the Church is the same process men/women/young people today must follow in order to be a member of Christ Church!

I personally want to be IDENTIFIED with Christ, His Body/Bride. The Churches of Christ/ Christian Churches stand on this, that's why I'm a member of Christ's Church here in Eaton, Ohio!

## II Because of Her WORSHIP

- it must be readily admitted that form used to worship God are often dictated by man's desires and not God's will; thus, 2 forms of worship result = acceptable and unacceptable:
- A. Unacceptable Worship to God
  - 1. Ignorant worship:
    - a. Acts 17:22-23 – Apostle Paul addresses the Greeks on Mars Hill – altar inscription "... *'To An Unknown God' What therefore you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.*"
    - b. denominational world shows its willing ignorance of God's Word just in forms worship used!
    - c. challenge you to ask your neighbors, friends and even family members why they worship the way they do. If they respond, you know it won't be because the Bible says so!
    - d. challenge you to ask yourself to see if you know why you worship the way you do. Is it based on Biblical precedent or human traditions?
  - 2. Worship according to human traditions
    - a. Matthew 15:6-9 "...*And thus you invalidated the word of God for the sake of tradition. You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you saying, 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.'*"
    - b. sadly, the brunt of denominational worship is based in man's traditions and not God's Word...
    - c. such worship, according to God's Words, is in vain.
- B. Acceptable Worship to God
  - 1. The only acceptable standard for worship to God is His Word, the Bible!
  - 2. Acts 2:42 gives a summary statement to NT worship "*And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*"
  - 3. Other portions of the Bible show further what NT worship included:
    - a. The Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7)...
    - b. giving (1 Corinthians 16:1-2)...
    - c. preaching and teaching (Acts 20:7; 1 Timothy 4:13 etc.)...
    - d. singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16 etc.)...

Though in constant need of improving, Christ's Church practices its form of worship according to Word!

## III Because of Her NAMES

- the name attached to any church is significant – the Bible makes this clear!
- this is why Bible gave the divine names of Christian/Church of Christ
- A. These Names Properly Identify
  - 1. Church is Christ's Body; thus, these names properly identify individuals making up local churches
  - 2. I am a Christian *ONLY*; thus, I want to be a part of a church that properly identifies me. Do you not want the same for yourself and your family?
- B. These Names Properly Explain
  - 1. They explain immediately what people believe who make up the church locally...!
  - 2. They explain Who is the Head and what their authority is...!
- C. These Names Give Reason for Our Hope
  - 1. The name *Christian* ("follower, disciple of Christ") is a divinely given name and clearly identifies our hope – Christ alone!
  - 2. Most denominational churches, by choice, don't even have this hope in their name...
  - 3. Encumbered with human names, is a practice condemned in 1 Corinthians 1:10-15 and gives a false reason for hope...

Thus, I'm a member of Christ's Church because of Her name!

#### IV Because of Her PLEA

- A. Denominational Plea for Union
  - 1. Modern day *Ecumenical Movement* includes all efforts for *UNION* amongst all churches: in short what they are saying is, “Let’s forget our differences and just get along in *union*.”
  - 2. It sounds noble, but, a closer examination will reveal just how deceptive and wrong it is.
  - 3. What is really being said, “Let’s have *union* even at the expense of Scriptural authority...”
- B. Christ’s Church Plea for Unity
  - 1. We too are interested in *cooperation*. Nothing would please us more than to be able to worship and serve with other churches, BUT, not at the expense of Biblical authority!
  - 2. Thus, as long as denominational bodies insist on having human names, human headquarters, creeds etc. unity will be impossible...
  - 3. The Bible alone is the basis for true unity. “The Bible Alone Makes Christians Only.” This is the unity advocated by Christ and is another reason why I’m a member of Christ’s Church!...

#### V Because of Her PURPOSE

- A. Not a Political Force
  - Bible makes abundantly clear the Church is spiritual in design and mission...
- B. Not a Social Club
  - 1. Church is not given to entertain people...
  - 2. Church not given to provide community services...
  - 3. Church not given to provide physical needs of the world...
    - some fine to do as long as it leads to the ultimate purpose of the Church – win/build lost!
- C. Seek and Building
  - 1. Seeking the lost... as a part of evangelism there is nothing more important to be doing in the Lord’s Church!
  - 2. Building the won... as a part of evangelism there is nothing more important to be doing in the Lord’s Church!

**Conclusion:** Remember our little chalk friend? He really didn’t understand his lesson did he? Do we understand ours? Can we give more reasons we are a member of this particular local church? Can we give reasons to those not involved as to why they should be involved? It is my firm conviction that if you believe one church is just as good as another, you really are missing the fundamental message of God’s Word. Thus, I conclude with this challenge: may each of us be ready to give a reason for our hope in Christ and His Church!