

Unfamiliar Bible Words: Church (2)

David Halbrook

In last week's article we saw that, in the Bible, *church* refers to the people saved by the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:13, 16; 1:22-23).

Today some people think of *church* as being separate from what they call "Christianity." Their idea is "I'm a Christian, but church is not for me." In the Bible, being: in Christ, saved, a Christian, and a part of the body (church) of Christ are indistinguishable (Acts 2:41, 47; 26:28; Eph. 2:13, 16).

The Bible also teaches the difference between the one church and the many churches. Paul said *there is one body*, the church is the body, and Jesus is the only head (Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23). Paul also wrote of the *churches of Christ* (Rom. 16:16). What is the difference? The *one body/church* is the group composed of every person saved by the blood of Jesus. The *churches of Christ* are individual groups of Christians who live near each other and commit to work together. For example, when the Ethiopian was baptized into Christ in a deserted area, he was added to the body of Christ but was not yet a part of one of the churches of Christ until he found other Christians to work with (Acts 8:30-39).

Visit our website to read our next article on this topic.

Editor's Note: We must realize how many different ideas people have simply when they hear the word "church." We must consistently help them to see that the way it is used in the Bible is often different than the way it is used today. Use our website or our *Arkansas Weekly* article to teach and learn.

Website update: A recording of two sermons may be listened to from our website. Others may be added by request. How can you use our website to help others study God's word? Let's maximize every opportunity we have to spread the gospel!

Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.

Pray for: Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Novela Puckett, Noleka Hopper, Samuel Southall, others with ongoing trials, and new Christians among us.

Join us each Sunday at 10AM (classes), 10:45AM, & 5PM and Wednesday at 7PM.

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*
church of Christ--Quail Valley
March 1, 2015
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True or False? (excerpt)

Irvin Lee

The Bible was written for you if you are willing to obey. (John 7:17). Christ preached his sermons to the common people who could understand. The "doctors of the law" had closed their ears so they could not understand. Are you distressed? You are if you love the church. You are if you are aware of the powerful divisive forces abroad in the land. You surely "have great heaviness and continual sorrow" in your heart as you see the Israel of God scattered as sheep having no shepherd (Romans 9:1-3). Are you confused and uncertain whom you should follow? Then remember the Lord's invitation to follow him. No man goes to the Father except by him. Are you pinned to the coat tail of some "scholar" among us? No human ties should hinder your pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul called others "false prophets." (2 Corinthians 11:13). Evidently he had been accused of being a false apostle himself. The last few chapters of 2 Corinthians defend his apostleship. Christ was here to oppose Beelzebub, but some said he was Beelzebub. True prophets were called false prophets and were bitterly persecuted. Do you know an exception? That was Stephen's question in Acts 7:52. Paul, in defending his apostleship for their sake, said, "*Not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.*"

Your senses must be "exercised to discern both good and evil." Your decisions in the coming months will effect the church in your community, your children's spiritual welfare, and your eternal destiny. If you rely on a man to point out the true servants and the true doctrine he may point to false teachers and damnable heresies. The man may be (a, *dh*) heretic himself. You could not tell by his power of oratory, his scholarship, or his personality. Let us turn to the law of Christ and to the testimony of our God. Let each of us study for himself and examine himself as we strive to "try the spirits."

The Problem of Private Lust

Connie Adams

Lust has gone public in America. No subject is too delicate for a television or movie script. Pornography is big business. Absolutely nothing is left to the imagination. Yet, this business would utterly fail were it not for the fact that it feeds the private yearnings of corrupted hearts. It is from this private cesspool of defilement that this flowing well of licentiousness comes. Polluted minds demand a diet of contamination to gratify illicit hunger. This creates a climate in which the problem only feeds itself.

No man ever rises above the quality of his own mind. One cannot be more perverse than his heart allows him to be. Conversely, pure and noble words and deeds first proceed from hearts that are pure and noble. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7).

The potentiality of private lust was recognized by Jesus when He said, "Whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). In this context Jesus not only condemned the act of adultery, but also the progressions of thought which culminate in this forbidden act. It is not wrong to recognize beauty. Some have a charm and grace which is at once attractive and appealing. But it is a far different thing to allow the mind to descend to the level of fantasizing about sexual relations with one we have found to be appealing. So then, the heart must keep a distinction between admiration and lust. It is in the heart that reserves are broken down and that schemes are devised to gain attention, then seduce the one who become the object of our obsession. Adultery committed in the heart, but which proceeds no farther, may not have the frightful consequences which the overt act does -- but it is still an affront to God and destructive to the character of the one who entertains it. Recognition of the wrong and repentance are surely required.

The problem is pervasive in our society. Many streams strive to erode a channel into our hearts to pervert them. Modern television programming, to say nothing of the movie industry, grind out a continual stream of coarseness, vulgarity, sexual innuendo and compromising scenes which could wear down the best defenses of the most godly were these allowed constant entry into the mind. The print media carry reports which often titillate the senses. Even television news programming often resorts to this device, I suppose to add what is conceived to be "spice" to an otherwise dry business. The music of our time, with incessant beat, preaches moral permissiveness and does much to break down convictions and moral reserves. Perhaps the two worst offenders in this area are today's rock and country-western music. The lyrics are not even

subtle. They are brazen. How can any of us listen repeatedly to such lyrics without being affected to some degree?

What about pornography? Is it nobody's business what a person reads or views in his own home? Should he have the Playboy channel hooked up to his cable TV? First, those who defend such right are the losers because they defile and debauch their own hearts to the destruction of their souls. Next, they contribute to a sordid business which promotes vice of every kind. Then, they run the risk of reaching a point where they cannot separate fact from fantasy and that can lead to criminal action. Unrealistic expectations develop which create disillusionment between spouses. The price for gratification of mental lust can become very expensive.

The divine mandate to "flee fornication" (1 Cor. 6:18) must surely include flight from whatever channels of thought might lead us to this tragedy. We must not be filthy dreamers" (Jude 8) with defiled minds. In contrast to that, "Unto the pure all things are pure" (Titus 1:15). It is not enough to root out impurity of thought. These must be replaced with that which is decent, ennobling, gracious, uplifting and pure. "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2:22). "Whatever things are...pure...lovely...of good report...think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

Ultimately, the victory over private lust is bound up in the admonition of Paul to bring "into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor 10:5). Christ must not only be Lord of my external conduct; He must rule my mind. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom 8:6). Paul wrote, "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom 7:23). Folks, this is a war we must win. Shall private lusts conquer us, or shall we bring our thoughts into captivity to our Lord Jesus Christ?

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer (Psalm 19:14). "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God" (Psalm 42:1).

Indeed, "a mind is a terrible thing to waste!" It was God's purpose to put His law into our hearts and write His precepts in our minds (Heb.10:16). When the mind is so filled with the knowledge of truth and right, then whatever thought-form is inconsistent with that divine system is rejected as repulsive. It cannot grow in unprepared soil. The antidote to private lust is a constantly growing knowledge of the will of God accompanied by an active life of service in which the fruits of righteousness may be seen by others.