



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

August 21, 2016

THE LORD'S CHURCH

The title of this article is one that is being met with much displeasure these days. I am sorry to say it, but many do not like to hear about it. People don't like the description. They think it is exclusionary, arrogant, and egotistical.

For example, when someone asks me what church I am a member of, I often reply, "I am a member of the Lords church." Perhaps I might say, "I am a member of the church you can read about in the Bible." Again, I could say, "I am a member of the body of Christ", or of the "church of Christ." Now that last one gives them what they want. Now they can categorize me into their own opinion about what they think I believe.

I would like to examine this within the light of Scripture. What does the Bible say about the idea of the Lord's church?

Matthew 16:18 – "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."

Acts 2:47 – "Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."

Acts 20:28 – "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."

Ephesians 1:22-23 – "And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

Ephesians 5:23-25 – "For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her."

If the Lord built the church, added to the church, purchased the church, is head of the church, and if the church is His body, and it is subject to Him in everything, doesn't it make sense that it belongs to Him? I think the real problem lies with those who have attempted to organize a church to be something other than the Lord's. Unfortunately, they have accomplished their goal.

But as for me and my house, we will continue to let the church be His, and urge and teach others to flow into it. "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (**Joshua 24:15**).

Jeremiah Tatum

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EVIL EXISTS

“I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men” (Revelation 2:2).

Modern philosophy suggests that there is something good in everyone. Thoroughly “bad” or “evil” persons are not even considered to exist.

Everyone who commits particularly heinous deeds do so because they are innocent products of their environment. The young man who disobeys the police and is shot suffers not because of any wrong doing on his part but because of racism. The woman who kills her children is mentally imbalanced. The drunk driver who strays into an oncoming car is the victim of a disorder.

One truth taught by the rise of ISIS as a terrorist organization is that these people are very easily recognized as evil. There is no doubt. Anyone who beheads innocent people is evil. Anyone who kills others simply because they disagree religiously is evil. Anyone who teaches children that murder and propagating terror is virtuous is evil. We are on target when we say, “ISIS is evil!”

The Bible also is clear that some people, by their behavior, should be classified as evil. This is why Jesus commended the church at Ephesus, *“You cannot tolerate evil men.”*

There are some necessary implications one can draw from this statement in the verse above.

FIRST, IT IS POSSIBLE TO KNOW WHEN A PERSON IS EVIL. A determination can be made. It is a judgment that is based upon the evil doer’s deeds and absence of remorse. Everyone will sin, but an evil person does not care that he sins. A truly evil person only feels the regret of getting caught.

SECOND, THERE IS AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE OF THE RIGHTEOUS TOWARD THE EVIL. Regarding the atrocities of ISIS and the depth of evil they have embraced, I personally have no problem with military force and exterminating them like one would a disgusting cockroach. This is one of the God-ordained, primary functions of government, to “bear the sword” for a purpose (**see Romans 13:1-4**).

In these particularly uncertain times when evil abounds and some think that evil can be reasoned with, it is important for Christians to know that while we should offer the gospel of Christ to all men, not all are going to accept it. While the gospel is a deterrent to sin for us, for many, it will not matter.

Some around us are evil and will not change but will simply go from bad to worse.

Floyd Kaiser

As A Man Thinks

By Todd Houston

A brief survey of this sin sick world leaves one bewildered as to why people behave in such ways. If you want to feel depressed and anxious, simply turn on the news and watch as scenes of remarkable human debauchery unfold before your very eyes.

Violence is on the rise at an alarming pace. Sexual sin is not only tolerated but glamorized by the majority. As a result, there are more and more children forced to live with the consequences of their parent's decisions; many are unwanted leading to abuse, neglect, or abandonment. Not only are helpless children mistreated, but the elderly are likewise abused. The entire family structure has been perverted in our culture as our nation has even twisted the meaning of marriage. Materialism has produced a society so greedy that often times the haves are willing to abuse the have nots to build their empires while the have nots are happy to rob the haves due to an attitude of entitlement coupled with a poor work ethic (**cf. 2 Thess. 3:1**). The list of offenses could fill volumes.

In response many believe better legislation is the solution to our problems. While we certainly could have a better system of law, I submit this would do little to solve the problems we now face. The reason for this is a growing number of people have lost respect for authority. Understanding that this is true does little to help. What people need to know is why so many have lost respect for mankind, even their own lives.

What we face in our culture today is the result of what some call "stinkin thinkin." I submit that our problems are produced by a faulty worldview. **Proverbs 23:7** rightly says "*For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.*" After all, it is from the heart that "*...evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies*" flow (**Mt. 15:19**). Jesus further explained "*The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness*" (**Lk. 11:34**). It is all a matter of perception.

Every action is preceded by and flows out of a thought. Wayne Jackson rightly said, "If you convince a man he is an ape, he will soon begin to act like one." As James Allen put it, "A man's mind may be likened to a garden, which may be intelligently cultivated or allowed to run wild; but whether cultivated or neglected, it must, and will, bring forth. If no useful seeds are put into it, then an abundance of useless weed seeds will fall therein, and will continue to produce their kind."

With all this in mind, it is clear a change of worldview is what is needed in our world. As a survivor of years of "stinkin thinkin", I am certain the only true solution is to saturate our culture with the pure gospel of Jesus Christ. It alone contains "*...all things that pertain to life and godliness*" (**2 Pet. 1:3**) and is therefore able to thoroughly equip mankind for every good work (**2 Tim. 3:16-17**). Through the transformation of our minds, we come to know "*...what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God*" (**Rom. 12:2**). So if we really want to make a difference in our world, let us strive to infuse the leaven of the gospel into the world as we "*...make disciples of all nations*" (**Mt. 28:19**).