

My Thoughts for Sunday, 25 January 2015

"The Church of Christ"

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV2011)

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

It is a fact that everything has a beginning. Life itself had a beginning as we are all believers in the six days of creation by God. When was the beginning of the Church of Christ? No, I am not referring to the Christian denomination, "The Church of Christ", but rather to the actual worldwide church of Christ. This church includes all believers in that Savior sent to us two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself spoke of this church or "gathering together" while He was still on earth. We can find this reference directly from Him in Matthew 12:30 (NIV2011) "*Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.*

Some historians state that the church started while Jesus was still on earth. Others state that the church started with the writing of the gospels. By further search of the inerrant word of God given to us in the book of Acts as the apostles were preaching to the crowds at Pentecost, we are told of many being joined to their number, or gathering of believers.. Acts 2:40-41 (NIV2011) "*With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.'* Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. Luke in this writing goes on to say that they were added to the '*fellowship of believers*'" Acts 2:42-44 (NIV2011)

So, we know from Scripture there was a "*fellowship of believers*" before Jesus crucifixion as this fellowship was added to at Pentecost. We also know that the apostles followed Jesus' command to go into the world to gather the lost sheep and bring them into the fold through teaching and baptism. Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV2011) "*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*"

We look around us today and see a great multitude of Christian churches in the entire world, all telling about Jesus Christ. But is this the only thing that has caused this multitude of gatherings to form and flourish? Is it just that the church was built on that empty grave? That tumultuous time when our Lord was crucified, died, rose and ascended to heaven? Is that all that is keeping this "Church of Christ" alive today?

There appear to be four primary common factors that remain true to the majority of the churches of Christianity. Let's take a brief look at them.

1. Proclamation of the message... Mark 16:15 (NIV2011) "*He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.'*" The commission given to all believers down through the ages to tell the good news of our salvation in Christ's crucifixion.

2. The Sacrament of Baptism...[Matthew 28:19](#) (NIV2011)
Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, "The pouring out of the Holy Spirit through water and the Word. Taught by many to be the occasion of the initiation into Christianity.
3. Weekly Worship...[Hebrews 10:25](#) (NIV2011) "*not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*" Christians have, from early on, decided to meet for worship on this day in celebration of Christ's resurrection. Even many of the Jewish faith have moved their weekly worship day to the first day of the week.
4. Fellowship of the Lords Supper...[Luke 22:19-20](#) (NIV2011) '*And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."* In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "*This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.* "
Christians have made it a habit to meet regularly on Sundays to show remembrance and celebrate their Master's death.

These four links have held together for centuries but are they all that is holding this worldwide "Church of Christ" together? Has mere man been able to hold this church together through persecution in many countries, ridicule from the unbelieving masses and opposition from all sides? The church has been attacked by legal, civil and national authorities since the very onset of Christianity in the days of the apostles, right down to the present.

Viewing society as it has become and the opposition being received from all sides I must conclude that there is definitely a stronger force at work here than mortal man who is under constant attack by the forces of evil keeping this church alive. Only one entity, in my way of thinking, is capable and interested enough in our immortal souls to continue to intervene on our behalf. As we continue to gather as "Christians" we need to remember just what that means, "followers of Christ." If we are true followers of Christ, we need to realize He is leading, and much more. We need to believe He is alive and with us, guiding us on that troubled path, as we run the race for our salvation. Without His help we would never stand a chance against the evil forces that work to overthrow us. [1 Peter 5:8](#) (NIV2011) "*Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour*"

Rejoice in our Lord Jesus that He is always with us.. [Deuteronomy 31:8](#) (NIV2011) "*The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.*"