

Learning To Please God - Lesson # 8

THE CHURCH JESUS BUILT

By Charles Box

The church in the Bible is saved people. When Saul put Christian men and women in prison he was making havoc of the church. (Acts 8:3) God adds the saved, and only the saved, to the church. (Acts 2:47) If you have read your Bible you have read about the church of Christ. The church of Christ exists anywhere people follow the Bible and the Bible only. (Acts 2:38-47)

The church in the Bible was paid for by the blood of Christ. Paul told church elders to, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28) Christ purchased the church with blood. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." (Ephesians 5:25) If a person is saved he is a member of the blood bought church of Christ.

The church in the Bible is not a denomination. The Lord's church is that house over which Christ is head. "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." (Hebrews 3:6) The church is produced through preaching the gospel. The gospel is the seed of the kingdom. (Luke 8:11) If you plant only one type seed you will reap only one type of harvest. The Bible is the seed of the kingdom. When only the Bible is planted, then only Christ's church will be produced. The same Bible cannot produce different denominations. The gospel of Christ produces the church of Christ.

The church in the Bible was built and preserved by Jesus. Jesus made two promises concerning His church. He promised to both build and He promised to preserve His church. "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18) Jesus promised to build His church and He kept that promise on the day of Pentecost following His resurrection from the dead. The church was established about 33 A.D. in the city of Jerusalem. (Acts 2:1) From the beginning there was only one way to be a member of the church. Those who were saved obeyed the gospel of Christ. To be saved people heard the gospel (Romans 10:17), believed in Jesus as the Christ (John 8:24), repented of sins (Acts 17:30), confessed Christ as Lord (Romans 10:10), and were baptized for remission of sins. (Acts 2:38) On the day the church had its beginning about three thousand believers were baptized in water for salvation. (Acts 2:41) The Lord added these three thousand saved people to the church.

How do we identify the church that Christ built? A car can be identified by certain traits or identifying marks. The traits of Christ's church, given in the Bible, make it possible for us to identify it in the world today. Any church without the Bible traits of Christ's church is not His. Let us observe some of these traits: (1) Jesus is its founder and owner. (Matthew 16:18) (2) Jesus is the foundation for the church. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is

Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:11) (3) Jesus is the head of the church. (Ephesians 1:20-23) (4) The New Testament church started at the right time. (Acts 2:1) (5) The church started at the right place. (Acts 2:5) (6) The Bible is the only guide book for the church. (2 Timothy 3:16-17) (7) The church sings in its worship, without mechanical instruments. (Ephesians 5:19) (8) The church has communion every Sunday. (Acts 20:7) (9) The church does not have women preachers. (1 Corinthians 14:34) These are only a few of the identifying marks for the church in the Bible. Have you taken time to identify the church in the Bible? Are you a member of it?

Let us love what Jesus loved. He loved the church with a sacrificial love. (Ephesians 5:25) Jesus adds the saved to the church. (Acts 2:47) If you will repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, the Lord will save you and add you to His church. (Acts 2:38-41) Are you a member of the church of Christ?

True or False:

1. _____ The church in the Bible is a physical building. (Acts 8:3)
2. _____ Jesus promised to build His church. (Matthew 16:18)
3. _____ Peter is the foundation for the church. (1 Corinthians 3:11)
4. _____ Jesus had very little concern for the church. (Ephesians 5:25)
5. _____ After being saved you should join the church. (Acts 2:47)