

MEDINA MESSENGER

HELPING MEDINA COUNTY DISCOVER THE TRUTHS OF GOD'S WORD

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY?

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Introduction. It is my hope that you have a burning desire within your heart to do what is right – regardless of any consequences that doing the right thing may bring! Perhaps you have looked around the religious world for the truth, but, you have found that the denominations are simply not practicing New Testament (NT) Christianity. But, what if I told you that you can be a NT Christian today? What if I told you that you could be part of a NT church? Would you be interested?

You might wonder if that is even possible today (nearly 2,000 years removed from the writing of the NT). However, consider a very simple illustration. Jesus told a parable about a sower who went out to sow his seed (Luke 8:5-18). The seed is the word of God (Luke 8:11). Our hearts are represented by the different types of soil. Now, it is a fundamental law of agriculture that seed produces after its kind (Genesis 1:11-12). Therefore, you expect to plant corn and reap corn. You would not expect to plant corn and reap tomatoes. Now, suppose that we were to preserve corn seed planted in Medina County, Ohio, this spring and plant it in Africa 2,000 years from now.... If the climate and soil conditions were right, what would it produce? Quite simply, it would produce the same kind of corn which was harvested in Ohio in the fall! In like manner, when the original seed of the word of God is planted in honest and good hearts in any community and age, it will produce Christians identical with those we read about in the NT!

Is This NT Christianity? Ask yourself a

question: "Can an individual truly be a NT Christian if he/she does not follow the teachings of the NT?" Sadly, there are many individuals who want to have "Christianity" and "church" their own ways! However, true Bible Christianity is not a "smorgasbord" religious system – where you can pick and choose what you want and leave what you don't want!

Here is a list of some words/phrases that describe how many folks live – while still professing to be "Christians": Involvement in the things of the world, participating in sin, sexual relations outside of marriage, divorce and remarriage for causes other than fornication, using God's name in vain, slander, gossip, cursing, approval of homosexuality, involvement in social drinking, smoking, failure to teach others the Gospel of Christ, failure to fulfill roles within the home, and many, many others! Is *this* NT Christianity? This simply cannot be – it is contrary to the teachings of the NT Scriptures!

Here is a list of some words/phrases that describe many "churches": Money-hungry, entertainment-centered, division, political, politically-correct, social club, open fellowship, kitchens, gymnasiums, rummage sales, bakes sales, movie nights, and many, many others! Is *this* NT Christianity? This simply cannot be – it is contrary to the teachings of the NT Scriptures!

Why NT Christianity? Why should you be interested to know about NT Christianity? Why should you determine to be a NT Christian? Let's observe!

(1) You will be judged. There is a Day com-

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ing on which all people will be judged (Hebrews 9:27; 2 Corinthians 5:10). Therefore, what you do while you live on earth matters! Jesus even teaches that there will be many who profess to be “Christians” who will be lost (Matthew 7:21-23)! Since Jesus teaches that many who profess Him as “Lord” will still be lost, we must understand that there is something else that is important: Obedience to God!

(2) There is only one “kind” of Christian! Some view “Christianity” as being a large umbrella – with many different “brands” of “Christians” that fall under it. For instance: “Catholic Christian,” “Baptist Christian,” “Methodist Christian,” “Presbyterian Christian,” “Lutheran Christian,” and many, many others. In this way of thinking, one “church” becomes just as good as another – just as long as you believe in Jesus! However, you will find no such teaching in the NT Scriptures! Take a moment to consider who were called “Christians” in the Bible (Acts 11:26). Christians are disciples. Disciples of Jesus Christ are those who imitate Christ and learn from Christ (thus, learning and following all NT doctrine). Furthermore, there were to be no divisions among those who were Christians (unlike the division found in the religious world today). Read and consider 1 Corinthians 1:10. Thus, there were not to be different “brands” of “Christianity.” Rather, those who followed Jesus Christ were to be joined together, working for the faith of the Gospel (Philippians 1:27).

So, you should be interested in NT Christianity because you will be judged and because no other form of “Christianity” will be sufficient! There is only one type of true Christianity – Christianity as described in the NT! Again, consider the illustration about sowing seed that was given at the beginning of this article. If only the doctrines and instructions contained in the NT are planted, a Baptist/Methodist/Lutheran/Wesleyan/Catholic/etc. is *not* produced! In or-

der for an individual to become any of these (i.e. Catholic, Baptist, etc.), there must have been a different *seed* planted (i.e. Catholic doctrine, Baptist doctrine, etc.)! If the doctrines and instructions contained in the NT are planted in good and honest hearts, NT Christianity will be produced!

What Is NT Christianity? NT Christianity seeks to replicate the pattern set for local churches in the NT. It seeks to practice the same discipleship approved in the NT. For a moment, let’s imagine that you lived in NT times. There would be many things that were different – traveling, houses, technology, etc. Yet, these would not be the only differences you would observe. If you wanted to follow Christ... what plan of salvation would you obey? What church would you belong to? What would local churches do during their assemblies? What work would local churches be involved in? How would local churches be organized? If you desire to practice true NT Christianity today, you must be diligent to “Hold fast the pattern of sound words” (2 Timothy 1:13). That is, you must be able to establish Bible authority for everything that is taught and practiced in religion. So, the plan of salvation you should follow today is the same plan of salvation they followed in the NT (hear, believe, repent, confess Christ, be baptized, and remain faithful). Local churches should be organized in the same way NT churches were organized. Local churches should worship and work the same way that NT churches worshiped and worked.

Conclusion. There is a pattern of approved belief, teaching, and practice in religion. This pattern is contained within the pages of the NT. You must search the scriptures diligently so that you can learn and follow this pattern – so that you can be found faithful on the Day of Judgment! Are sure that you currently practicing NT Christianity? If not, why not?

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