

The Doctrine of the Church that Jesus Built

(by Bob Pulliam)

Not only does the name offer a great deal in seeking the church that Jesus built, the doctrines taught also speak volumes. The word "doctrine" means teaching. When we talk about the doctrine of the church we refer to what she teaches. The church in the first century was united in doctrine. A very distinct, understandable doctrine. In this article we will consider some important points in the doctrine of the first century church.

Doctrine of Apostles and Christ...

While the prophecies of the Old Testament are frequently quoted in the New Testament, first century Christians followed the teachings of Christ and the apostles. You've never heard of them referring to the "doctrine of Moses". Many today want to believe that the church is just a building addition to what Moses built. But the church had it's own foundation and cornerstone:

I Cor 3:11 No other foundation.

Eph 2:20 Christ Jesus is the chief cornerstone.

Doctrine of the Resurrection...

The bodily resurrection of Jesus was a central teaching (doctrine) of the first century church. We can see it very clearly as the apostles went forth. Their first trouble began because they were preaching "in Jesus the resurrection of the dead" (Acts 4:2). This was what Peter first proclaimed on Pentecost in Acts 2:24. Paul and Barnabas were preaching it in their journey through Asia Minor (Acts 13:30f). The Corinthians had false teachers among them who denied the resurrection, to which Paul responded with a powerful affirmation (I Cor 15, esp. 12-20).

There are some today who deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus. Some want to make that event into a recreation, rather than a resurrection. Although it seems like an elementary doctrine of the Bible, it is still pertinent to finding the church today. If a church does not teach the bodily resurrection of Jesus, then it is not the church that Jesus built.

Doctrine of Salvation in Christ...

Jesus had already taught about His death for the sins of mankind (Jn 3:14ff). He had declared the necessity of faith, for He said, "... if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." (Jn 8:24) He had also stated, "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish." (Lk 13:3). Along with faith, one must also be baptized, for Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mk 16:16). All of these things that man is to do are otherwise known as obedience in the scriptures. "And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him," (Heb 5:9).

Some would call these works that do not avail anything. While the scriptures do speak of works that do not (and can not) save (e.g. Eph 2:8f), these are not in that category. James spoke of works that do save (Jms 2:24), and Jesus called believing a work. In just these three sentences, I'm sure you can see that there is more than one kind of work mentioned

in scripture (for more on this, see [Works](#)). But most important is the fact that we are to obey the commands of Jesus and the apostles to get into Christ.

You'll hear people say a great deal on getting into Christ. Unfortunately, they usually do not say the same thing the Bible does. In pulpits all across the land, preachers are not giving people the accurate picture as it is presented in the New Testament. I know that sounds judgmental, but should false doctrine go unchecked? Should we allow error to be taught without a challenge? I will not!

One primary point of error on this matter involves the subject of baptism. How does one get into Christ? The Bible is so simple and clear on this point:

"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" (Rom 6:3)

Now there are some people who just do not believe that. It says that the Romans were baptized into Christ Jesus. And as if that were not enough, Paul spells out the connection:

"Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection," (Rom 6:4f)

Baptism is the connection between us and the death of Jesus. The death of Jesus is when His blood was offered for the remission of our sins. If we wish to take advantage of Jesus' blood, we must obey to make this connection. If the church of which you are a member does not teach this, it is not teaching the doctrine taught by the first century church. Lamentable is the fact that the deficiency in this matter is widespread. Everyone in the religious community seems to take comfort in the fact that everyone else is teaching the same thing. The problem is, we're all looking at each other instead of the New Testament.

Conclusion...

Many other areas of doctrine could be noted. These two point serve to press home the unique, and clear teaching of the New Testament. If the church of which you are a member teaches something different than the first century church, can it be the same church? The distinct doctrine (teachings) of the first century church are an important aspect of her identity. Any claiming to be the true church of Jesus Christ must adhere to the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42), which is the doctrine of Christ who gave it (Jn 16:13-15; II Jn 9f).