

***Should We seek to Restore 1st Century Christianity?
(The Foundation of God's Way of Holiness)***

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Introduction: The essence of Christianity is coming to know God.

- A. Jesus wanted all men to find eternal life. **(Jn 17:3-4)**
- B. God wants us to know Him so that we might have fellowship with Him.
 - 1. Consider how you might begin a relationship with another. What must you learn?
 - 2. God wants us to know what He is like so that we might change! God has let us know that He cannot change! **(Mal 3:6; James 1:17; Heb 13:8)**

I. God reveals His nature to Moses

- A. God first wants Moses to know that He is holy. **(Ex 3:1-5)**
 - 1. God tells Him to take off his shoes. Holiness demands a special approach.
 - 2. How can we have a relationship with a holy God without being consumed?
- B. What does it mean for God to be holy?
 - 1. Consider the perfect holiness of God. **(1 Sam 2:2; Isa 40:25; Hosea 11:9)**
 - 2. "In the Old Testament, the verb holy in the Hebrew is "quodesh", meaning "to consecrate, to sanctify, to prepare, to dedicate, to be separate."
- C. God appealed to His holiness to teach His people how to have a relationship with Him. **(Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:26)**
 - 1. Fire represents the purity and holiness of God. There should be a dread brought on the unholy one who is brought into his presence. You must not ignore this!
 - 2. On Mt. Sinai there was an awesome show of His holiness. **(Heb 12:18-21, 29)**
 - 3. God wants us to show us how to have a relationship with Him and live!

II. God has revealed His holiness by delivering words that teach us to change

- A. God delivered words in the O.T. that men were expected to understand and obey.
 - 1. The Ten Commandments were words written on stone. These were holy words.
 - 2. God delivered words to the prophets that were to be handled very differently than the words of men. These words were holy! **(Deut 4:4-5, 10; Jer 1:9-10)**
 - 3. There were things that were inherently true about these words because they came from God and thus were holy! **(2 Sam 22:31)**
 - 4. Nadab and Abihu were priests. Moses and Aaron knew that because God is holy men must stay within what God has revealed. **(Lev 10:1-3; Ex 28:36)**
- B. Jesus showed us how to handle the holy words given Him by the Father!
 - 1. Jesus would only do those things that He saw the Father do. Without instruction He would do nothing! **(Jn 5:19-20, 30)**
 - 2. He wanted others to test doctrine! **(Jn 7:16-17)**
 - 3. The respect for the words of God would lead Jesus only to act when the Father gives Him instruction. **(Jn 8:28-32; 12:32-33)**
 - 4. This same attitude was to be expected of all us whom this precious word would be delivered! These words would become the N. T. **(Jn 12:48-50)**
 - 5. This carefully delivered message would not be added to by Jesus, the Holy Spirit or the Apostles. They delivered these words! **(Jn 16:12-13; Eph 3:5)**
 - 6. Staying within these holy words alone is how we glorify God. **(1 Pt 4:11)**

III. God's holy way is only found through the work of the apostles and prophets

- A. Jesus chose apostles that would deliver these words. (**Jn 17:6-8, 17-20**)
 - 1. It is these words that were delivered on Pentecost. (**Acts 2:14, 22, 38-40**)
 - 2. This highway of holiness was also prophesied. The common man can read and understand it! (**Isa 35:8-10; Eph 3:3-4**)
 - 3. The early church was founded upon and sustained by the apostle's doctrine. (**Acts 2:42; Eph 2:20; Jn 17:20**)
- B. All of the teachings and practices of the early church came from the apostles. When we speak of "restoring 1st century Christianity" this is what we do!
 - 1. The Apostles simply "handed down" what they had received from Jesus. Pay attention when you see these words: "tradition, delivered and received" (**1 Cor 11:2, 23; 15:3**)
 - 2. To fail to obey this "tradition" delivered from the apostles is to forsake Jesus Christ Himself. (**2 Thess 3:3-4, 6, 12, 14**)
- C. When a question or a doctrinal dispute arose they were to ask "what was delivered?"
 - 1. If it was not delivered, it was to be rejected! (**Gal 1:8; Acts 15:24**)
 - 2. When we take this stand, what would local churches look like?

IV. Should we restore the church to the 1st century way of holiness?

- A. Some say that we cannot use the Bible this way because of "cultural context."
 - 1. Some assert that you cannot understand without the help of other men!
 - 2. When an epistle was given to one church it was to be given to other churches (cultures, generations) with understanding. (**Col 4:16; 1 Thess 5:27; 2 Pt 3:1-2**)
- B. Do not let men take your Bible from you! (**Isa 35:8; Acts 11:14**)

V. One application of this foundation – Instrumental Music

- A. The Lord's Supper was delivered to the Corinthians from which there would be a right way and a wrong way to keep it! (**1 Cor 11:23, 20**)
 - 1. Does the outward form matter? Suppose we substituted hamburger and coke for the "fruit of the vine" and "bread?"
 - 2. Could we use "bread" and "fruit of the vine" but add some peanut butter to it?
- B. How should we praise God in our worship?
 - 1. When God wanted instruments in the OT He said so! (**2 Chron 29:25-26**)
 - 2. Why not look at every verse in the New Covenant and see what God wants? (**Mt 26:30, Acts 16:25; Rom 15:9; Eph 5:19; Col 3:16; Heb 2:12; Heb 13:15; Jas 5:13**)
 - 3. This is an application of the foundation. This takes time and maturity!
 - 4. Misunderstandings often arise because the foundations are not present!
- C. Have we created a "man-made hermeneutic" in "CENI?" God's word communicates!
 - 1. Because God used words to reveal His will then we must understand that these words will: 1. **Tell us something** (direct statement or command)
2. **Show us something** (example) 3. **ImPLY something** (we draw conclusions).
 - 2. When you reject any of these principles you have rejected the use of words.
- D. Consider who God honors in heaven! The work of the apostles is much more than a narrative! (**Rev 18:20; 21:14**)

Conclusion: The holiness of God demands that we seek only that which is apostolic!

When Jesus Does Nothing

By Larry Rouse

We would be wise to carefully listen to our Saviour who came from heaven to show us the way to God. Throughout His ministry Jesus emphasized His relationship with the Father along with the kind of heart required to know God.

It would take great humility for the Jews that heard Jesus to understand that they really did not know God and that they needed to hear the One who actually had come from God. Jesus stated the obvious to the unbelieving Jews when He said: "You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form." (**Jn 5:37**) Why would they resist listening to the One who came from Heaven and accurately testified of things that these men had never seen? They were blinded by their own relationships and religious pride so that they would not hear. "But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that *comes* from the only God?" (**Jn 5:42-44**)

Jesus Taught us how to Handle the Revealed Will of God

Jesus often told others what His relationship with God was like so that men could learn how to have that kind of relationship for themselves. Over and over Jesus described how He handled God's will. His underlying attitude towards the will of God was exactly the attitude He had towards God Himself, one of a deep reverence for all that God spoke. "But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" (**Mt 4:4**)

Jesus knew that His Father was perfect, therefore anything that God does or gives would be complete for the purpose it was given. This was especially true of the revealed will of God. Being a perfect revelation Jesus sought to only abide in what was revealed. Jesus did only what He saw or received from the Father. If He had no instruction Jesus did nothing! Consider some verses from the book of John.

1. Jesus did only what He saw the Father do. If He did not see the Father do something, Jesus did nothing. "Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner." (**Jn 5:19**)

2. Jesus demonstrated what it means to be committed to doing the will of God. If He did not hear instruction from the Father, Jesus did nothing. "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me." (**Jn 5:30**)

3. Jesus only taught and did the things that the Father taught Him. His sacrifice on the cross was evidence of the God-glorifying fruits of this attitude. If He had no teaching from the Father, Jesus did nothing. When Jesus was given instruction He yielded and obeyed. "Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and *that* I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things." (**Jn 8:28**)

Jesus Expects His Followers to Have the Same Attitude

When Jesus describes how you and I must receive God's will and not reject it, He points to the attitudes that He had already shown in His relationship with God. You and I must not speak or act without the authority of God. If we want everlasting life we must have the complete confidence in a perfect will of God so that we only speak when we have positive authority from the will of God. "He who rejects Me,

and does not receive My words, has that which judges him -- the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. "For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. "And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak." (Jn 12:48-50)

This kind of humility and reverence towards God is how you and I can give Him glory. When we only speak as the oracles of God we glorify God in the same way that Jesus glorified God! When hear of teachings and practices that are not found in the oracles of God, then you and I should be silent and do nothing in these things. "If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen." (1 Pt 4:11)

Men Today Still Reject Jesus' Words

Religious practices will be dramatically impacted by how we approach the revealed will of the Father given through Jesus. One who makes Jesus their Lord will do nothing when there is no authority given. They also will be filled with good works as they abide in those things we are told to do. Do you want a God-centered faith or one centered in the theology of the great thinkers of today?

How many in their service to God really know Jesus as the one Lord? (Eph 4:4-6) What would happen in the religious word if men begin demanding authority for all that we teach and practice? What would be the outcome if modern practices were put to the test? I do know that those committed to the Lordship of Christ will only have the simple organization, worship and teachings that are found in the New Testament. This will glorify God.

A Warning for Our "Non-traditional" Advocates

Today I am seeing a large movement within churches to surrender fundamental attitudes because they are considered "traditional." The question of instrumental music in praises to God, the role of women, the work of the church and like things are now being described as issues of "freedom" where we can make choices with no consequences. Brethren that insist on book, chapter and verse (which is a simple way of expressing that we must have authority from God) are being ridiculed as "legalists" and are slowly being pushed out of local churches.

Ask Your Preacher

I am hearing from more and more sources that there is a rising flood of men in pulpits that cannot oppose instrumental music in local churches because they have made a fundamental shift in their view towards the authority of scripture. Rather than do nothing when God is silent, these men believe that they have freedom to act. However, a large number of brethren that support and hear these men are not told of this change of beliefs.

Sadly, many of these men do not have the basic honesty to tell brethren where they stand. Please ask your preacher and the eldership where you attend to address these basic fundamental truths. Sadly, I am hearing of preachers when asked to preach on instrumental music and the silence of the scriptures, refuse.

Let each of us address the attitudes in our hearts and be sure that our goal is simply to glorify God by following Jesus as our Lord. Brethren, this is a truth worth fighting for! "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" (Lk 6:46)