

SUNDAY MORNING

Announcements
Mike Davis

Song Leader
Daniel Allgor

Lord's Supper
Jon Barry Bill Brittenham
Cole Meador Jerry Schnelle

Prayers
Mark Davis Melvin Potts

SUNDAY EVENING

Announcements
Mike Davis

Song Leader
Jack Calvert

Lord's Supper
Bill Brittenham Cole Meador

Prayers
Gerald Eaton Pete Rowland

WEDNESDAY

Announcements
Pete Rowland

Song Leader
Jack Calvert

Prayers
Daniel Allgor Joseph Barry

Invitation
Bryan Garlock

ABOUT US

Elders
Jack Calvert Rodney Ellis

Deacons
Jon Barry Bill Brittenham
Mike Davis Dave Massey

Evangelist
Bryan Garlock

SERVICE TIMES

Sunday
Bible Study9:30 A.M.
Worship10:15 A.M.
Worship6:00 P.M.

Wednesday
Bible Study7:00 P.M.

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GOD'S PLAN FOR SALVATION

Hear the word of truth Romans 10:13-17

Believe the truth..... Hebrews 11:6; John 8:24

Repent from all sins Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38

Confess the name of Christ ... Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 8:35-30

Be Baptized in His name Mark 16:16;
1 Peter 3:21; Colossians 2:12

Walk in newness of life and **be faithful** unto death Romans 6:1-4; Revelation 2:10

Think On These Things

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Issue 25

What Constitutes a Sound Church?

Bryan Garlock

When we travel or move to a new area, we begin searching for a “sound church.” Oftentimes what we mean is: Do they exclude mechanical instruments from their worship? Do they use the Lord’s money for things unauthorized? For example, do they have dining halls? Playgrounds? Baseball fields? These are things that typically run through our minds, and rightfully so.

Oftentimes churches of Christ think they are scriptural and sound because the “right name” is on the sign, they pattern themselves after the right organization (elders, deacons, preacher, members), and the worship service is scriptural in the acts of worship engaged, yet they hardly introduce themselves to visitors, there is no evangelistic effort on their part, their concern for one another is lacking, there is no joy and emotion in their worship, they are not abounding in love and faith, and they tolerate and accept sin and unruly brethren. Can one honestly say these churches are sound churches?

The Bible instructs Christians, “Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 1.13, ESV). To be sound is to be in good health; metaphorically, it is to be free of any mixture of error (Thayer and Vines). Simply put, to be sound in the faith is to be spiritually healthy and free from the contamination of sin. Therefore, sound, biblical words formulate sound doctrine and sound doctrine builds sound churches.

If sound words help to create sound churches, then perverted words help to destroy whatever soundness a church enjoys. Paul wrote, “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1.6-8, ESV). If the

FAMILY TALK

Continue to remember and check on our shut-ins: **L. G. Clemmons, Willie Margaret Mobley, Bob Buls, Bonnie Allgor, Max Thomas, Maxine Burnham** and **Mary Alice Turner**. Cards, calls and visits are ALWAYS needed and appreciated.

Joey Avance is still at the Mayo Clinic. After running many tests, the doctors have identified a few areas that seem to be causing some of his problems. He is scheduled for throat surgery tomorrow. He may be coming back to Texarkana this week. Please continue to keep all of the family in your prayers.

Beth Ellen Rowland went to Little Rock this past week for her treatment.

Our sympathies are with **Rodney Ellis** and his family at the death of his brother-in-law, **Ray Weeks** last Sunday.

It's great to have the **Garlock's** back safely with us.

Front Page Article (concl.)

churches of Galatia were believing and obeying a twisted, perverted gospel, they were not observing the pattern of sound words. Therefore, we find the Galatians doing things contrary to God's word (see Gal. 4.10-11; 5.1-4, etc.). This affected their spiritual health and well-being.

Once the gospel is perverted with additions or subtractions, it no longer saves (Rom. 1.16); any church that accepts an unsound or unhealthy word is not a church that holds fast the

pattern of sound words. Therefore, a church that receives unsound words "does not have God" (2 John 9-11) and if they do not repent will not enjoy fellowship with Him (Rev. 2.5). Additionally, once a doctrine is tested (1 John 4.1; Acts 17.11) and found wanting, we are not to receive it "but rather expose" it (Eph. 5.11). Thus, a church that stands for the truth and exposes error is a patterned church (see Rev. 2.2).

Standing for the truth and exposing error does not only include the church's position on treasury use or mechanical instruments, etc., but her position on prayer, love, sin, etc. What we mean is this: while searching for a church that does not have the things mentioned in our introduction, do we also search for a church that is abounding in love, diligent in prayer, enthusiastic in worship and evangelism, and that has a hatred for sin, will not tolerate it and therefore engages in church discipline?

Additionally, Jesus spoke of a time when true worshippers would worship "in spirit and truth" (John 4.23-24). We look to the New Testament for how our worship is to be conducted. Luke recorded that the church at Jerusalem "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching [preaching] and the fellowship [giving], to the breaking of bread [Lord's Supper] and the prayers" (Acts 2.42). To the church at Ephesus and Colossae, the Holy Spirit instructed singing also (Eph. 5.19; Col. 3.16). The assembly on the Lord's Day, therefore, must be patterned after true worship. Subsequently, a sound church is full of true worshippers engaging in true worship. Unfortunately, any deviation from sound doctrine, including the addition of human traditions, causes true worship to become only

lip service to our Savior (Matt. 15.8-9). That's unhealthy!

What is the measure of a sound church? It is not its size. It is not its location or its building. It is not merely the absence of mechanical instruments from its worship or the rejection of subsidizing organizations foreign to scripture. Instead, a sound church is a united body of believers as Jesus prayed (John 17.20-21), without division as Paul pleaded (1 Cor. 1.10), and kind and loving to one another, believing and practicing right attitudes and doctrines (Eph. 4.1-6). Additionally, these believers are following the Scripture's pattern and never digressing from it (1 Cor. 4.6; 2 John 9, etc.) by recognizing Christ in His authoritative role (Matt. 28.18; Col. 3.17) and subscribing to the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2.42).

Consequently, if a church is diligently studying and observing sound words, they can truly say they are a healthy church. Brethren, are we striving to be sound individuals and together, a sound church? BG

I DWELL AMONG MY OWN PEOPLE

Aaron Kemple

And he said to him, "Say now to her, 'Look, you have been concerned for us with all this care. What can I do for you? Do you want me to speak on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?' " She answered, "I dwell among my own people." (2 Kings 4:13)

Today's thought comes from a statement made by the Shunammite woman in 2 Kings 4-5. This woman was a "notable" woman (2 Kings 4:8) who took the initiative to provide food for Elisha whenever he passed by that

way. She took it a step further and worked with her husband to make an addition to their house to provide a furnished apartment for Elisha whenever he traveled through the area (2 Kings 4:9-10). What a wonderful example of godly people using their resources and energy to serve God and His people!

What is even more remarkable than that to me is how she responded when Elisha asked her what he could do for her. How did the Shunammite woman respond?

"I dwell among my own people," she replied.

That is a statement of contentment. It is a sentence that comes from a person who is at peace with God and others. She, like any other person, had desires and wishes; you can see later in chapter 4 that one big one was that she wanted a baby. But she did not serve God and do things for Elisha so that she could have something in return. She served because she truly was grateful for her blessings and position in life, and she wanted to share that with someone. She didn't want praise and attention for it. There was not clamoring for kickback and rewards. The Shunammite woman just served.

Do you and I "dwell among our own people"? Are we serving God and others with the same heart and motives as this lovely Shunammite lady?

Something to think about today.

1 Tim. 6:6-8 But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.