

FOLLOWING CHRIST

MATTHEW 16:24

INTRODUCTION:

Matthew 16:24: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

I. IF ANY MAN WILL COME AFTER ME

- A. Some will not come to Christ. (John 5.40)
- B. Coming to Christ begins with a willing mind.
 1. **2 CORINTHIANS 8.12:** "For if there be first a willing mind..."
 2. **ACTS 17.11:** The Bereans "searched the scriptures"

II. LET HIM DENY HIMSELF

- A. Denying yourself requires mortifying the deeds of the body for, "if ye through the spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8.13)
- B. Self denial is living "not to please ourselves" (Rom. 15.1-3)
- C. Have we crucified the flesh?
 1. **GALATIANS 2.20:** "I am crucified with Christ..."
 2. **GALATIANS 5.24:** "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

III. TAKE UP HIS CROSS

- A. The rich man would not bear his cross. (Mark 10.21,22)
- B. Paul gloried in the cross. (Gal. 6.14)
- C. **ROMANS 8.17:** "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

IV. FOLLOW ME

- A. Those who follow Christ "shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8.12)
- B. Like the Shepherd and the sheep, Christians hear the voice of Christ and follow Him. (John 10.27)
- C. We follow Christ by following His example. (1 Pet. 2.21)

CONCLUSION: Are we a congregation worthy of imitation?

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MEETING TIMES:

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS :	9:00AM
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP:	9:50AM
SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP:	6:00PM
WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE CLASS	7:30PM

*Worshipping
God "in Spirit
and truth"
(John 4.23)*

JUNE 28ST, 2009

BREAKING BREAD AND FELLOWSHIP HALLS

We often hear of congregations of the Lord's church building fellowship halls for the purpose of encouraging social interactions and togetherness between brethren. But can such structures and activities be biblically supported?

It must be admitted that Christians did get together and socialize. We can read of disciples "breaking bread from house to house" eating their food "with simplicity and gladness of heart" (Acts 2.46). Paul frequently warned that when brethren came together to share a common meal that caution must be exercised lest one eat something that would be offensive to another (Rom. 14.2,3; 1 Cor. 8.7-13).

Socializing has its place, and brethren are welcome and even encouraged to get together for potlucks, game nights, and other such things to better get to know one another. However, the Bible makes a clear distinction between the work of the church and the responsibilities and activities of individual Christians.

While socializing with brethren is beneficial, to build a fellowship hall and sponsor social activities is to make it the work of the church. Not only is there no justification for such things, but the inspired writers specifically condemn it! Twice Paul writes that eating a meal is not to be done as a collective church work. Instead, he writes, "If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home" (1 Cor. 11.22,34).

We must respect biblical authority. Fellow Christians getting together individually is good, but to make it the work of the church is to "go beyond what is written" (1 Cor. 4.6). CLP

THINGS ON WHICH CHRISTIANS CAN RELY

JOSHUA 23.14

INTRODUCTION:

1. In a world of doubt, there seems to be few things on which one can rely. The only thing certain is uncertainty.
2. Christians have an advantage which lifts them from the depths of despair. But can we rely upon God for all things?
3. Consider three things on which Christians can rely.

I. THE PROMISES OF GOD

- A. Joshua wrote of the certainty of God's promises.
 1. Concerning God's promises to Israel, "*not one word of them has failed*" (Josh. 21.45; 23.14; Heb. 6.13-18)
 2. However, the promise of punishment is just as reliable as the promise of blessings. (Josh. 23.15; 2 Thes. 1.7-9)
- B. Are God's promises effected by outside factors?
 1. The passage of time has no effect. (2 Pet. 3.4,8,9)
 2. However, promises are conditional. (Josh. 23.16)

II. THE PROVISIONS OF GOD

- A. Provision: From a variety of Greek words, it means to provide. (Luke 9.12; KJV – "victuals"; Rom 13.14)
- B. What provisions can we rely upon God to provide?
 1. God provides His revelation. (Jer. 10.23; Deut. 29.29)
 2. God provided a system of grace. (2 Tim. 1.9; Acts 26.18)
 3. God provides material necessities. (Matt. 6.7,8; 31-33)
 4. God provides a way of escape. (1 Cor. 10.13)

III. THE PROTECTION OF GOD

- A. For Christians, this world is a dangerous place.
 1. The threat of the world to undermine our faith is always present. (2 Tim. 3.12; Matt. 10.25)
 2. Powerful temptations which challenge. (James 1.14,15)
 3. False doctrines weaken truth. (2 Cor. 11.1-4,13-15)
- B. How does God protect us from ever present dangers?
 1. Temptations will never be beyond our ability to overcome. (Gen. 4.7; 1 Cor. 10.13; Heb. 3.13)
 2. The world cannot destroy the soul. (Heb. 13.6)
 3. The signs of an apostle. (2 Cor. 12.12; 1 John 4.1)

CONCLUSION: Only in Christ are all spiritual blessing found.

SATISFACTION

We are a grasping society. We want more entertainment. We want more recognition. We want more advancement. We want more control. The fact is, we want more things. We're not satisfied with what we have.

There is a sense of frustration which accompanies dissatisfaction. There is a reason for such frustration. We tend to try to satisfy with that which can only pacify. We find things that pacify for a while, but they soon wane and our thirst reappears with an even fiercer bite to it. Off we go, searching for some new invention, only to find that the same fierce appetite curse.

We're trying to satisfy ourselves with paltry means. Satisfaction can come only when we feed the whole man -- and with the things He (God) intended. It's not wrong to have things; things satisfy. But what about the other appetites we have?

God Has Given Us A Soul: -- This soul must be fed just like the body (Matt. 4:4). There is a hunger that attends man's moral nature just like that which is physical, and when it is not attended to there is not only an unfulfilled appetite. God has given His Word to satisfy man's hunger for the soul (Jno. 6:35). His conscience cries out to God for relief out of his recognition of his sins, and God provides (1 Pet. 3:21). "The appeal to God for a clear conscience" is an effort to satisfy the longing for forgiveness. Worship is the provision for man's inherent need for recognition by his Creator. The local church and its various activities serve to provide man with the need for spiritual fellowship. Man is made to glorify God.

Special things satisfy special needs. When I'm hungry for popcorn, only popcorn will satisfy. When I hunger for exercise, only some strenuous activity will satisfy. When I long for good music, nothing else will do. When I long for my beloved Norma, only she can warm my heart. And when I have an ardent longing for recognition by my Creator, only He and His methods will answer my needs.

Satisfaction is a fine feeling. Being unfulfilled has a gnawing effect on a person. The only real satisfaction is that which comes from the knowledge that you've done your best to serve and reverence God (Eccl. 12:13). After all, that's what man is all about. [Dee Bowman; condensed]