

The Church - Built by God or Man?

January 6, 2019

Do we want a Church built by man or built by God? How would we know the difference?

2 Timothy 4:1-4 ESV

1 **I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom:**

2 **preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.**

3 **For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions,**

4 **and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.**

2 Corinthians 2:17 ESV

17 **For we are not, like so many, peddlers (*kapēleuō - to make money by selling, to corrupt, to adulterate for the sake of gain*) of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.**

- *Peddlers are those who manipulate or alter the product to be more appealing to the buyer.*
- *Peddling the Word of God means:*
 - *Worldly growth strategies of branding and marketing, competing for the same customer base.*
 - *Appealing to carnal desires and human wisdom - giving the "customer" what they want.*
 - *Removing any offense of the Cross, the Lordship of Jesus and holiness.*

"My dear brethren, do not try to make the Gospel tasteful to carnal minds. Hide not the offense of the cross, lest you make it of none effect. The angles and corners of the Gospel are its strength: to pare them off is to deprive it of power. Toning down is not the increase of strength, but the death of it." — Charles H. Spurgeon

1 Corinthians 1:10-24 ESV

10 **I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.**

11 **For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers.**

12 **What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ."**

13 **Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?**

14 **I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,**

15 **so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name.**

16 **(I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.)**

17 For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

19 For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.

22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom,

23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,

24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

- *For those who are seeking to be served by the Church according to their individual needs and preferences - the Apostle Paul never catered to them in that way.*
- *Paul never gave what the people wanted, but what the people needed, as prescribed by God in His Word.*
- *He stayed true to the mission and the message of the Head of the Church - Jesus Christ.*

Philippians 1:15-18 ESV

15 Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will.

16 The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel.

17 The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment.

18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5 ESV

1 And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom.

2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling,

4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

5 so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

- *Paul never tried to sell himself, or a ministry, or a "brand."*
- *When you followed Paul's ministry, you came for Christ alone.*

1 Samuel 16:6-7 ESV

6 When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is before him."

7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature,

because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."

Isaiah 53:2 ESV

2 ...he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.

2 Corinthians 10:10 NASB

10 For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible."

1 Corinthians 1:26-31 ESV

26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.

27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;

28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,

29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

31 so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

- *God wants to build a Church that no man can claim as his own or take credit for.*
- *It's a Church where the only explanation is that God, not man, was the builder and that God is in their midst.*

"During the 1880s a group of American ministers visited England, prompted especially by a desire to hear some of the celebrated preachers of that land.

On a Sunday morning they attended the City Temple where Dr. Joseph Parker was the pastor. Some two thousand people filled the building, and Parker's forceful personality dominated the service. His voice was commanding, his language descriptive, his imagination lively, and his manner animated. The sermon was scriptural, the congregation hung upon his words, and the Americans came away saying, 'What a wonderful preacher is Joseph Parker!'

In the evening they went to hear Spurgeon at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. The building was much larger than the City Temple, and the congregation was more than twice the size. Spurgeon's voice was much more expressive and moving and his oratory noticeably superior. But they soon forgot all about the great building, the immense congregation, and the magnificent voice. They even overlooked their intention to compare the various features of the two preachers, and when the service was over they found themselves saying, 'What a wonderful Savior is Jesus Christ!'"

—Arnold A. Dallimore, "Spurgeon: A Biography"

What is the one discriminator between the true Church and the false?

Matthew 18:20 ESV

20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.

2 Corinthians 6:16-17 ESV

16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

17 Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you.

John 14:23 ESV

23 Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

Exodus 33:15-16 ESV

15 And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.

16 For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?"

John 17:23 ESV

23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.