

HOW TO LIVE IN THE CHURCH

Int.

1. Aim: To show some of the characteristics we should have as growing Christians.
2. In other sermons we have studied the steps essential to salvation.
3. But in this sermon we are going to consider: "How to Live in the Church."
 - a. Mt. 28:20 "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."
 - b. The church is the body of the saved - not the building
 - c. Membership in the church is no guarantee of a home in heaven. We must be faithful in our life as a Christian.
 - d. Being a Christian means that we REPRODUCE the life of Christ in our life. When we do this we are learning how to live in the church.
4. This process of learning how to live is a growth process - I I Pet. 3:18 "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."
 - a. This growth is of the soul - that part of us made in the image of God
 - b. There are certain fundamental laws of growth that must be followed if we would grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord.
 - c. Fundamental laws of growth:
 - (1) Wholesome Atmosphere - Plants will not grow unless they are in a good atmosphere [soil and air] **** the soul also needs a good atmosphere
 - (2) Wholesome food - Plants, animals, and our soul must have good food
 - (3) Exercise - it is required of all living organisms
 - (4) Rest - there must also be a resting period -- even spiritually we need to rest occasionally.
5. Notice these scriptures that teach us how to live in the church.

Discussion

I. WHOLESOME ATMOSPHERE - I Cor. 3:1-6

A. Conditions of the church at Corinth

1. Carnal = fleshly
 - a. We generally think of carnality as referring to immorality like adultery, drinking etc. And it is!!!
 - b. Paul includes partyism and division as being carnal
 - c. Jealousy and Strife are examples of carnality
 - d. Division in the church is in the same category as adultery and drunkenness.
 - e. When God's people are guilty of strife [contention, wrangling] they are not contending for the faith, but for an argument.
 - f. It is one thing to stand up for Jesus, and to support His cause, but it is quite another thing to argue to a split for one's private interpretation of a verse of scripture.
 - g. A Christian who likes to argue is a babe in Christ.
 - h. The type of action prohibited in II Tim. 2:24 **"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,"**
 - (1) "striving". That means to be battlesome, pugnacious, belligerent, argumentative, quarrelsome, fussy.
 - (2) One who strives and debates with such an attitude always makes things worse.
2. We must have an atmosphere in the church that is free from arguing and quarreling and fussing with one another.

B. Another major problem was "preacheritis" - v.4

1. Preacheritis is a sin, but preachers are important

a. Rom. 10:13-15 "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 14. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15. And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

b. Preachers are merely to be messengers.

c. In I Cor. 3:5-7 Paul explains that preachers are planters and waterers, but God gives the increase. "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6. I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."

2. But some carnal Christians have looked more to human leaders than to Christ.

a. I Cor. 1:11-13 "For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. 13. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"

b. Paul wanted to know if the body could be broken up into small bits, cut to pieces and divided out to human leaders.

c. Was Paul or anyone else crucified besides Christ?

- d. They were baptized into the name of Christ and they ought to wear his name and not of anyone else.
 - e. Preacheritis was a sin and it was condemned.
 - f. It leads to friction and division.
 - g. We are to be loyal to Christ not to a preacher. This is the way to have unity
- C. Learning how to live in the church involves growing
- 1. The first law of growth is a wholesome atmosphere
 - 2. The church at Corinth did not have the proper atmosphere and Paul tried to correct the problems.
 - 3. We must have an atmosphere of love and unity in order to Grow.
 - 4. This process of having and maintaining unity is essential in learning how to live in the Church.

II. WHOLESOME FOOD - Heb. 5:11-14

- A. These Christians had not grown properly
- 1. They were immature and still needed milk
 - 2. They were like little children because they were in a state of immaturity
 - 3. This is a common situation among us today:
 - a. We have members in congregations who obeyed the gospel years ago but know very little about the Bible
 - b. They have failed to grow spiritually

B. They could have grown

1. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers..."
2. By now they could have grown and developed into teachers of the word
3. Jn. 8:32 We can know the truth - we can grow in the truth
4. "Ye have need that one teach you again..."
 - a. They had known at one time
 - b. But if you don't use what you have you will loose it.

C. They could have exercised

1. V. 14 "senses exercised"
2. Those who have practiced gain more proficiency
3. These could have used their opportunities, but they didn't

D. Learning how to live in the Church involves growth.

1. Wholesome food is necessary for growth
2. The food - God's word was and is present - but they did not choose to study and therefore did not grow.
 - a. Ignorance of God's word is the major reason Christians do not know how to live in the Church
 - b. If we will study and learn God's will there will be an answer to every problem and situation that may arise.
 - c. **II Tim. 2:15**
 - d. When we eat properly then we will grow and in time we will be teachers of God's word.

III. EXERCISE - I Pet. 1:5-11

A. Exercise - We must practice what we have learned

- a. If we are not doers of the word, but hearers only then we will not grow.
- b. Jas. 1:22 "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."
- c. As we grow and mature then we become skillful in the use of the word.
- d. This is what each of us must do in order to know how to live in the Church

B. Christians are to change - or grow - and that involves exercise

1. Eph. 4:22-24 "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24. And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."
2. Put off the old man and put on the new man
3. How is this done? - Add these to our character

C. Christian Graces - 2 Pet. 1:5-11

1. VIRTUE - courage and conviction to stand for what we believe
2. KNOWLEDGE = gained by studying the Bible - courage without knowledge could be dangerous
3. TEMPERANCE = or self control, ability to abstain from participating in anything that is wrong
4. PATIENCE = ability to bear the burdens of life without complaining
5. GODLINESS = Godlikeness

6. BROTHERLY KINDNESS = the love which Christians cherish for each other as brethren
7. LOVE = affection expressed in good deeds for others

D. As we reproduce the life of Christ in our life these characteristics must be adopted for each of us.

1. They will certainly be involved in our growth as a Christian
2. These graces will help us develop and follow the fundamental laws of growth:
 - a. A wholesome atmosphere will surely be developed by having these attributes - a loving, peaceful living together
 - b. Wholesome food will certainly be consumed because we will be adding knowledge. This is the knowledge from God's word
 - c. Exercise will come because we are practicing what we know.
 - (1) Temperance
 - (2) Brotherly kindness
 - (3) Love
3. A Christian must be developing these graces throughout his life time.

CONCLUSION

1. How to live in the church is just as important as how to get into the church
 - a. The epistles are written to Christians to teach them how to live I Tim. 3:15 "...that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God."
 - b. We must grow or we will fall - there is no standing still on an inclined surface. - Go up or you will go down.

2. Ps. 1:1-2 "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."
 - a. Meditate - contemplate *Go over and over in our mind
 - b. Let it sink in slowly
 - c. This is the "rest" in the fundamental laws of growth
3. Laws of Growth
 - a. Wholesome atmosphere
 - b. Wholesome food
 - c. Exercise
 - d. Rest
4. As we learn how to live in the church it will create a wholesome atmosphere of love.
5. This will only be accomplished if we consume wholesome food, or the word of God
6. Then we must practice what we know to be right. - Exercise
7. As we meditate on the truth it will sink into our hearts - Ps. 119:11 -- Rest

1. Adult Gospel Quarterly - Mar. 19, 67
2. A.L.C. - Mar. 19, 67