

The church of Christ

Has:

- One Builder – Jesus Christ (**Matt. 16:18; Eph. 3:9-11**)
- One Purchaser – Jesus Christ (**Acts 20:28**)
- One Head – Jesus Christ (**Eph. 1:22-23**)
- One Savior – Jesus Christ (**Eph. 5:23**)
- One destiny – eternal salvation (**Eph. 5:23**)

IS:

- The spiritual body of Christ (**Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23**)
- The kingdom of Christ (**Matt. 16:18-19; Heb. 12:28**)
- The depository of those saved (**Acts 2:47**)
- One body, not many bodies (**Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23**)
- One way to be added to the church:
- One must believeth that Christ is the Son of God (**Jno. 8:24**)
- One must repent of sins (**Lk. 13:3**)
- One must confess that Christ is the Son of God (**Rom. 10:9-10**) •

The Nature Of The Kingdom Of God

IS NOT

1. Of This World (**John 18:36**).
2. Eating and Drinking (**Rom. 14:17**).
3. In Word (**1 Cor. 4:20**).
4. With Observation (**Luke 17:20**).

IS

1. In Power (**1 Cor. 4:20**).
2. Righteousness (**Rom. 14:17**).
3. Peace (**Rom. 14:17**).
4. Joy (**Rom. 14:17**).
5. Within You (**Luke 17:21**).
6. Unshakable (**Heb. 12:28**). •

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - **Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3**
 Believe - **Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24**
 Repent - **Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30**
 Confess the Lord - **Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21**
 Be Baptized - **Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27**
 Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - **Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17**

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

Evangelist: Jimmy Pettigrew

How to Contact Us

Telephone: (920)499-5677
E-mail: hillcrestcofc@live.com



Our Address

1621 Hillcrest Drive
 Green Bay, WI 54313

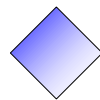


Schedule of Assembly

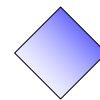
Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com



The Voice of Truth



February 12, 2012

You're A Legalist!
 By Jimmy Pettigrew

I have often been branded as a legalist. I have often heard my brethren being called by such an expression. Why are we recognized by some by this term? What do they mean when they call us by such a name? What precisely does it mean when they taint you as being legalistic?

They ridicule and condemn us because we stand for truth, that in the matters of faith we have a "Thus saith the Lord" for the things we do and practice. "Jimmy, you are just too concerned about obedience; you're what we call a Bible thumper; you're just determined to keep God's commandments; you're just a Pharisee!" How presumptuous for some to denounce one who exhibits loyalty and faithfulness to God's words, as if we are doing a bad thing!

Look at the Pharisees: yes, they were guilty of hypocrisy (**Matthew 23:1ff**); yes, they pretended to be righteous, "but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (**Matthew 23:27**). Yes, their righteousness was only an outward appearance of righteousness (**Matthew 23:28**); yes, they went about to establish "their own righteousness" (**Romans 10:3**) by authorizing and observing man-made traditions. Yes, they gave attention to some Biblical truths but also neglected others of greater importance (**Matthew 23:23-24**). But, I do want you to notice that the Pharisees were not condemned because they were too zealous about strict obedience to God's will. They were condemned because "they say, and do not" (**Matthew 23:2**).

People need to wake up! God has always been pleased with the person who maintains absolute loyalty to the specifics of His commands (**John 14:15; 15:14; Hebrews 5:9**). Shame on a person who calls one a legalist, fundamentalist, a Bible thumper or a Pharisee for the purpose of denouncing him because he exhibits loyalty, faithfulness, and obedience to God's word. "To obey is better than sacrifice" (**1 Samuel 15:22**). Samuel made it clear that no amount of sacrifice can take the place of obedience to

God's Word. Nothing is acceptable to God unless it is done according to His will (**Leviticus 10:1ff**).

If man is to be victorious in living life acceptably before God His Creator, then He must have a proper regard for God's authority. That which God expects of man and that upon which salvation is conditioned may be summed up in one word: **OBEDIENCE (Hebrews 5:8-9)**. And that salvation is available to such as obey Him, "but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (**John 3:36**). Obedience to the will of God is expected if we are to enter the kingdom of heaven (**Matthew 7:21-23**). Obedience to the will of God is required if we are to abide for ever (**1 John 2:17**). Obedience is required of all, and if we refuse then we have no right to call Jesus our Lord (**Luke 6:46**). "For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother" (**Mark 3:35**).

Everything we read in scripture compels us toward grateful submissions and obedience to His will. Many who have this attitude toward rigid obedience are actually demonstrating they are weak and unfaithful to God; calling one a legalist, fundamentalist, Pharisee or Bible thumper is just a cover up to give good reason for their departure from the faith and their own weakness in the faith. The religious thinking is "we want a faith without restraints or responsibilities" – no "Thou shalt nots," no laws or commandments to keep - just love and grace and freedom. These false teachers freely label emphasis on keeping the commands of God as "legalism." Truly, one is a legalist if a claim is made that obeying God's commands obligates God and, therefore, a person deserves salvation. Never have I heard any such teaching among us, nor have I known of any member boasting of obeying God. To the contrary! "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded of you, say, we are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (**Luke 17:10**). Jehovah has always required His

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children to carefully obey His commandments without addition, subtraction or substitution (**Deuteronomy 4:2; Leviticus 10:1-2; Galatians 1:6-9; 2 John. 9-11; Revelation 22:18-19**). We must do things exactly right to be pleasing to God, *"Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be done exactly for the house of the God of heaven"* (**Ezra 7:23**).

So, if you are calling me a legalist, fundamentalist, a Bible thumper or Pharisee because I show evidence of

"That's Your Interpretation"

By Mark Larson

That's just your interpretation! How many times has someone said that to you when you attempted to teach them the truth from the Scriptures? Rather than take the message of truth to heart, it is quickly dismissed as merely your opinion and not taken seriously at all.

If you have ever heard this before, you know that it is sort of like "hitting a brick wall." Further discussion of the truth with such a person can be very difficult. The potential for meaningful Bible study is not very promising.

What Is Your Interpretation?

The best way to begin in your response to someone who says: "That's just your interpretation" is to hand the passage over to them and ask for their interpretation. An interpretation in Bible study is simply an explanation of the meaning of a particular passage of Scripture. Rather than be discouraged and give up, make this offer instead: "I am willing to hear your interpretation and correct my own position if I am wrong. What is it?" This demonstrates fairness as well as humility, both which are necessary for Bible study (**Prov. 18:12-13**). Be open-minded and willing to hear any evidence that they might have for their beliefs and practices. Just as we hope for positive change in the people we teach, we too must demonstrate a willingness to change our own beliefs and practices when we are corrected (e.g., **Acts 18:24-26**).

Speak in Terms of Evidence

When making the offer to listen to other people's interpretation of Scripture, be sure to include this request: "You must have evidence to support your interpretation over mine. What is it?" Before allowing an exchange of interpretations to take place, it is important to come to a mutual agreement that true, saving faith is based on the

loyalty, faithfulness and obedience to God's word, **THANK YOU** for the comments! The disobedient will perish (**Romans 6:16-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9**). *"The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The Lord will laugh at him; for he seeth that his day is coming"* (**Psa 37:12-13**). Only those who obey Jesus as Lord are saved by the Savior (**Hebrews 5:8-9**). *"(This is) the end of the matter; all hath been heard: fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole (duty) of man"* (**Eccl. 12:13**). ♦

evidence or the teaching of the Scriptures: *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (**Rom. 10:17**).

We must speak of the importance of providing book, chapter, and verse for the beliefs that we hold (**1 Pet. 4:11; Col. 3:17**). We must emphasize that a fair hearing must be given to all that God has said on the matter to get a proper understanding of God's will. When studying any subject, *"the whole counsel of God"* (**Acts 20:27**) should be sought in the pursuit for the truth. Passages must be examined in the proper context. Concordances and Hebrew or Greek Bible dictionaries are very helpful to gather even more evidence.

No Legitimate Interpretations?

Sometimes people reject the truth because they are convinced that no interpretation of Scripture can be relied on as the truth. Many are convinced that every interpretation involves man's opinions and thus everything is spun, biased, or slanted to favor a particular doctrine, practice, or personal viewpoint.

Let us admit the fact that there are indeed many interpretations of Scripture offered today that are according to man's opinions that must be rejected (**2 Pet. 3:15-17**). However, not all interpretations are false. There are real differences between interpretations. Many will lead to eternal destruction, yet only the truth will lead to eternal life (**Matt. 7:13-14**).

Finding the truth requires a recognition that there is ultimately only one right interpretation of the Scriptures. There is only one faith (**Eph. 4:5; Jude 3**) or one truth (**John 8:32; 17:17**) that God has revealed to us. God has

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promised us that we can know what the truth is (**1 Tim. 2:4; Eph. 3:4**). These facts ought to bring hope to the skeptic who says there are no legitimate interpretations.

Will Any Interpretation of Scripture Do?

Sometimes people take the opposite extreme and declare that though there is only one faith or truth, it is too confusing or difficult to find. Many people, in response to the multitude of religious groups and doctrines, conclude that almost any interpretation will do. Rather than rule out certain religious beliefs on the basis of Scripture, there is the desire to respect every belief as equal in merit or legitimacy. Many people want to "just get along" and do not want to debate or discuss their differences. The preferred "solution" of many is to just choose the interpretation that personally suits you best and call that "the truth."

Some Interpretations Are Better or More Plausible Than Others

The answer to any confusion or challenge that we may have in searching for the truth is not to choose just any interpretation of Scripture! Imagine the trouble we would have in our lives if we handled all of our decisions this way. For example, would we be willing to randomly choose a marriage partner? Would we choose just any car to drive or any house to live in? Would any of us be willing to invest our hard earned savings into just any type of investment? When we are sick, would we decide that just any medicine or treatment will make us well? Of course not! In making any important decision in life, to choose wisely requires that we learn all that we can about the issue or problem

that is at hand. The same is true in deciding what we should believe and practice in religion from the Scriptures.

So which interpretation of Scripture should one choose? To sift through the interpretations that are possible and decide on only one requires that we accept the interpretation that is most plausible, probable, or credible. Rather than foolishly accept just any interpretation of Scripture, let us choose the one that provides the most evidence (e.g., true to the context of the passage, in harmony with parallel passages on the same subject, true to the actual meaning of Bible words, etc.). *"So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is"* (**Eph. 5:17**).

God Provides Us with Rules for Interpretation

Thankfully, God provides us with some assistance on how to interpret the Scripture right in the Word itself! The Lord gives us the help we need to determine the truth for what we are to believe and practice in religion. There are four major rules He provides: (1) Direct statements or commands we must obey (e.g., **John 14:15; 2 Pet. 3:1-2**); (2) Divinely approved examples we are to follow (e.g., **1 Pet. 2:21; Phil. 3:17; Acts 2:42**); (3) Necessary implications, meaning conclusions we can make from what is implied in Scripture (e.g., **Mat. 22:41-46**); (4) Respect for the silence of God, meaning we restrict ourselves to what God has revealed in the Scriptures to determine His will (**Deut. 29:29**). We do not add to it or take away from it (**Rev. 22:18-19**). Let us all be true to God and respect His word in the interpretation of the Scriptures.

Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦

Truth Author unknown

One thing that is absolutely indispensable to the practice of pure religion is truth. *"Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding"* (**Proverbs 23:23**). Whatever truth may cost (time, money, lands, houses, or physical suffering), it is worth the price; and once obtained, it must not be sold at any price.

It matters little what we think, feel, imagine, suppose, or would like to believe; the truth is what counts. Jesus said, *"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (**John 8:31-32**).

Apollos was an eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures, fervent in spirit, bold, and convincing; but he lacked the one thing which all must have to be successful in preaching—the whole truth (**Acts 18:24-28**). Eloquence is not necessary if one has the truth; other things may be helpful, but are not essential.

To disregard, neglect, reject, or deny the truth is to dispense with the indispensable. ♦