

October 9, 2016

Just a Christian 1 Corinthians 1:1-10

Did you know that you can be a _____ of the church that Jesus purchased with His own _____ without belonging to any denomination? Today we're going to explore _____ you can be just a Christian, just a member of the Lord's church. The Bible is God's wonderful _____ of faith, truth, hope, and love. God gave us His _____ to teach us, to encourage us, to comfort us, to reprove us, and to give us eternal life. **Read John 20:30-31.** The more we _____ the Bible, the stronger our faith will become; and that faith leads to life in His name.

If I told you I just bought a car, you would ask, "What _____ of car did you get?" It's pretty difficult to _____ about cars without talking about some kind of car. We want to _____ the make and the model. If I said, "Well, it's _____ a car!" we would have no concept of what that meant; but the very first car was simply a car. It was the one and only car.

When you speak of being a member of the church, the first thing people _____ is, "What kind of church is it?" They want to _____ if we go to a community church or a denomination. The idea of being just a _____ and simply being a member of the church Jesus built is foreign to the thinking of most people. But as you _____ the New Testament, the church is simply "the church." There was no _____ of church. Did you know that you can be a member of that _____ church? That you can be _____ a Christian!

Our reading today comes from 1 Corinthians 1:10-13.

When people speak of the church they attend, they usually _____ themselves as denominational or nondenominational. There are _____ kinds of community churches and denominations. Various denominations developed when religious people began holding to their own _____ about God's teaching to the point that they refused to work with others. They began _____ their peculiar doctrines or practices. In time, they needed a _____ to represent themselves. This name became a sort of brand or trademark for that particular kind of church having its _____ characteristics. It _____ a denomination. Taking up a brand name implies a _____. A denomination is a "named division." The divided church at Corinth had members lining up behind individuals and _____ themselves from others by following his name. Some _____ Paul and said, "I am of Paul," some Apollos, and some Peter. Paul was _____ at that! He said, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Corinthians 1:13). Of course, the _____ to these questions is no. No, Christ isn't _____! No, Paul wasn't _____ for you! No, you weren't _____ in the name of Paul!

Many denominations ask their members to go _____ faith in Christ and vow to follow the denominational bylaws or official statements. They follow their brand of Christianity; and this commitment to their doctrines and practices _____ them as a certain kind of Christian. Isn't this _____ the kind of division that Paul was speaking against? Because so many generations have gone by with "brand name" Christianities, people have become satisfied and settled in their ways, never dreaming that the Lord _____ of the divisions that come from brand names. God has _____ approved of such division.

Have you ever _____ a favorite dish? When it happened, you probably groaned and wished you could put it back together in its _____ and _____ state. Our religious world is _____ broken. We need to leave this brokenness and go back to the _____ church, the one that you _____ about in the New Testament. We seek to _____ _____ the pure and unbroken church, as God meant for it to be, by _____ to the truth and to the ideals that are found in the New Testament.

In the early 1800s, people who loved God grew _____ of the fighting and division among Christian denominations. They believed the Lord wanted His people to be _____. They realized that all of the bad-mouthing and exclusiveness of the denominations _____ the name of the Lord. Their constant conflicts and divisive ways caused people to _____ _____ from Christ in disbelief. **Read what the Lord Jesus prayed in John 17:20-23.** They believed that the division and animosity came from people holding to _____ opinions, and creeds, and councils, and practices, and names. They believed the only way they could have _____ and unity was to unite on what the Lord commanded.

Many Christians left Europe to find religious _____ in America, but found the same conflicts here. They wanted something _____ – a pure and true Christianity free from the stains of human opinions. They believed that, "If we _____ the human and concentrate on what is truly divine, we can unite." This unity could only come from following the _____ that's found in God's Word. This meant they had to _____ _____ everything that was human and denominational and _____ to the Christianity that was found in the New Testament, a Christianity that knew nothing of denominationalism. They rejected human opinions and human innovations since these things don't find their _____ in God's Word, but in men. They believed that "nothing ought to be _____ upon Christians as articles of faith; nor required of them as terms of communion; but what is expressly taught, and enjoined upon them, in the word of God." So they said, "We _____ where the Bible speaks, and we are _____ where the Bible is silent." They wanted _____ in essentials, _____ in matters of opinion, and _____ in all things. They wanted a pure and true faith in Christ alone found in the New Testament as the _____ of their faith and practice.

It shouldn't _____ us that people left the pure, inspired teaching and pursued what they wanted. The New Testament _____ that Christians would fall away from the truth of the gospel into error and false religion. God knew the hearts of men would often follow their _____ paths. **Read what Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus in Acts 20:29-30.** Paul, by inspiration, realized that when you _____ the teaching, you cause people to fall away from the truth and from God. **Read what Paul warned Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:1-3.** The devil is a deceiver; he intends to lead people to believe _____ teachings and lies he about certain practices being God's will. He doesn't care who he hurts by _____ people. Paul knew that Christians would be _____ like ancient Israel and would _____ away from God's teaching. He knew they would rather believe a comforting _____ than to hold to the gospel _____. **Read what Paul, inspired of God, predicted in 2 Timothy 4:3-4.** Once a lie gets perpetuated, later generations become _____ that this falsehood is true. They don't even _____ they've been deceived.

Many today want salvation, but they don't want to take up a cross to _____ Jesus. They want a Savior, but not a _____. They're comfortable believing a lie and will actually _____ the truth. They are so settled in what they believe, they don't want to _____ it could actually be wrong. For instance, early church history _____ that Christians wandered away from the teaching and practices that were found in the New Testament. The New Testament says absolutely _____ about things like holy water, lent, penance, infant baptism, intercession of the saints, sprinkling for baptism, sacrifice of mass, celibacy of priests, purgatory, priestly absolution, a pope, instrumental music in Christian worship, salvation by faith only, or the doctrine of "once saved, always saved."

Century by century believers moved _____ away from the simplicity of the New Testament and its Christianity. They no longer followed God's _____ for the church in the New Testament, but became something different. If we are to please God, we must _____ to what God willed in the New Testament. Returning is necessary, because repentance from _____ is necessary. One cannot remain in error and still _____ God. **Read James 5:19-20.** By ceasing to follow man-made doctrines and practices, the church could _____ the doctrine, worship, and organization of the New Testament church.

Our intent is to _____ the teaching and the ideals of the New Testament. The Lord Jesus built His church _____ any denomination existed. We want to be in _____ church, the church purchased with His blood. His church is _____ denominational, inter-denominational, or even non-denominational. The church that Jesus built was undenominational. Moreover, it was pre-denominational. Jesus would never approve of unifying the _____ with _____, because Jesus wants the church to remain _____ and _____. Churches of Christ _____ to "do Bible things in Bible ways and call Bible things by Bible names." They believe they must "discard

from their faith and their practice everything that isn't authorized by the New Testament of the Lord and Savior, and to believe and practice whatever is there enjoined."

This desire to _____ New Testament Christianity grew out of a conviction that the Bible is the complete and final authority. Therefore, it was and still is sufficient to _____ us all that we need to know for eternal life and for godliness. Just as a _____ will produce only after its own kind, so the seed of God's Word will produce the same Christianity today that it did in the first century. The Lord Jesus said in Luke 8:11 that the seed of the kingdom is the _____. The Bible gives us _____ of God's revealed will for life and godliness. Jesus promised His apostles that they would be guided into _____ the truth (John 16:12-13). If men go beyond this Word and begin to preach other things, they will not only _____ their relationship with God, according to 2 John 9, they will also _____ a different product than the church that Jesus built. Who would really want that?

Some believe the primary goal of restoration is to _____ all churches. They believe that Jesus' prayer for unity in John 17 means all churches should _____ one another on the basis of the most fundamental things. Some feel as long as a person believes in and loves Jesus, he is _____ with God. They seem to _____ everything else that Jesus said and they _____ only what He said about unity. Before Jesus prayed for unity in John 17:20-23, He first prayed for His followers to be sanctified or "set apart" in the _____ (John 17:17). We can't have unity _____ the truth. We can't _____ truth with all kinds of error and still have unity. Jesus said, "If you _____ in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you _____" (John 8:31-32).

Christ didn't pray for a unity that sacrifices or compromises the _____. Actually, it's our _____ in the revealed _____ that unites us. Christian unity is not ecumenism, where groups unite but _____ conflicting and contradictory beliefs and practices. Uniting with those who teach or worship in error _____ the truth for compromise. To be faithful and true to the Lord, Christians cannot ignore or tolerate _____ like the ancient churches at Pergamum or Thyatira did (Revelation 2). Jesus called them to _____ and He calls us to repentance as well. When people believe or practice something false, God _____ them to repent.

Calling people _____ to the truth is to save their souls. To follow Christ, we _____ to put away what comes from man and follow what comes from God. Love the Lord, and get involved in the Lord's church. Place your _____ in Jesus as the Christ; _____ of every sin; _____ Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God; and be _____ into Christ. Peter told the people at Pentecost, "Repent and be baptized _____ of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Both repentance and baptism are _____.