

What Is A Sound Church?

Institutionalizing Christianity

Previously

- ▶ What is a scripturally sound church?
- ▶ What is the organization of a sound church?
- ▶ What is the work of a sound church?
- ▶ What is worship in a sound church?
- ▶ What is the name and membership of a sound church?
- ▶ Answering departures from sound doctrine (Part One)

Today

- ▶ Institutionalizing Christianity
- ▶ The Language of Ashdod and Attempting to Have Fellowship with an Unsound Church

The Rules For This Study

- ▶ Jesus has not changed His will for the church
 - Heb. 13:8 - "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."
- ▶ We will follow the pattern He authorized
 - 2Tim. 1:13 - "Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus."
- ▶ We will not consider changing His plan
 - 1Cor. 4:6 - "That you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written."

Institutionalizing Christianity

► How to justify the unjustifiable:

- Excessively emphasize emotional aspects of issues.
- De-emphasize the New Testament pattern for the work of the church.
- Exalt the relative physical good accomplished by the human institution.
- Condemn anyone who questions liberal practices.
- Followed carefully this process will justify any error.

Institutionalizing Christianity

- ▶ The institutional approach to New Testament commands is comforting and convenient to the 21st century errorist.
 - It allows the elders and deacons to avoid their duty in overseeing their stewardship by simply passing the work on to an institution.
 - It allows the members to avoid their duty of being personally involved in the needs of the afflicted, by expecting the church and the institution to take care of the problem. They come to believe they have completed their individual responsibilities the moment they make their offering.
 - Religious liberalism is just like political liberalism... set up a large, expensive, inefficient program, and avoid personal involvement by throwing money at the problem.

Institutionalism Erases The Line Between Individual And Collective Responsibilities

- ▶ Gal. 6:10 - “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”
- ▶ Is this instruction to be carried out by individual Christians or by the local church as a collectivity?
- ▶ Institutionalists say both.
- ▶ Exegete the context of Gal. 6:1-10 and see.

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- ▶ Gal. 6:1 - "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.
- ▶ 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.
- ▶ 3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.
- ▶ 4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.
- ▶ 5 For each one shall bear his own load."

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- ▶ Gal. 6:6 - "Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.
- ▶ 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.
- ▶ 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.
- ▶ 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.
- ▶ 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."

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- ▶ Consequences of making this passage collective action:
 - Takes the whole chapter out of context,
 - Defies the rules of grammar,
 - Ignores the rules of hermeneutics,
 - Engages the church in unauthorized works,
 - Promotes error and false doctrine,
 - Allows the individual to shift his responsibility to the group.

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- ▶ James 1:26 - "If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.
- ▶ 27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world."
- ▶ Compare to 1Tim. 5 and support of widows. Some were not eligible to be supported by the church; some by individuals.

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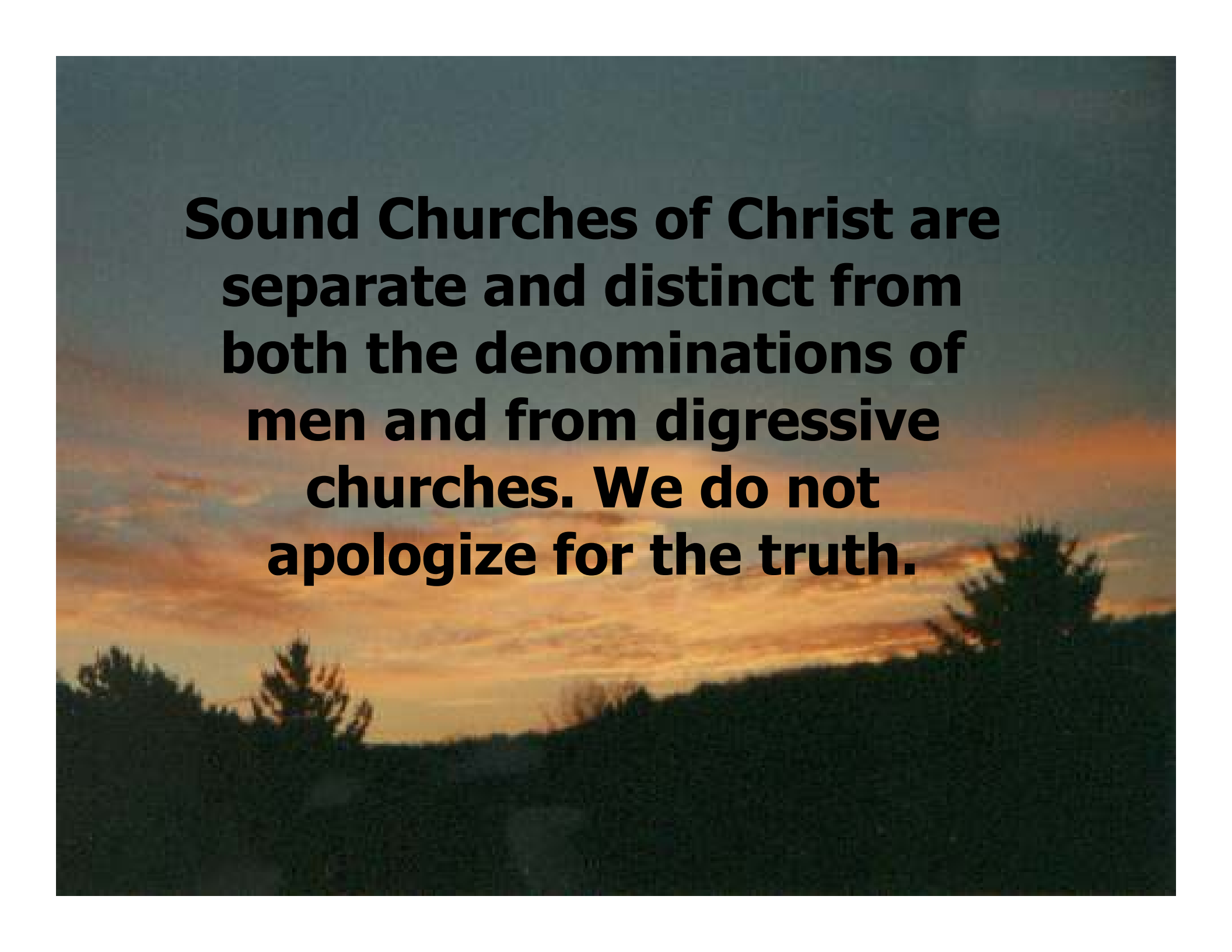
- ▶ 1Tim. 5:8-11, 16 - "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. 9 Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, and not unless she has been the wife of one man, 10 well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work. 11 But refuse the younger widows... 16 If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows."

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- ▶ The illogical nature of the "no distinction between individual and collective action" position.
 - Duties to one's wife and children; can the whole church get involved?
 - 1Cor. 16:1-2 - Can an individual maintain his own personal treasury for the work of the church?
 - 1Cor. 5:4-5 - Can one Christian discipline another without the church being involved?
 - 1Cor. 11:17-34 - Can a Christian hold a communion service for himself alone at home?
 - 1Cor. 11:22 - "What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you."

Institutionalism Erases The Line Between Individual And Collective Responsibilities

- ▶ The illogical nature of the “You can do anything in the building that you do in your home” position.
 - Can the Church operate a small business in the building?
 - Can the Church sing accompanied by an instrument?



**Sound Churches of Christ are
separate and distinct from
both the denominations of
men and from digressive
churches. We do not
apologize for the truth.**