



What Does the Bible Teach About Contemporary Casual Christianity?

December 1, 2022 Thursday Indepth Bible Class
of the Trilacoochee church of Christ
Matthew 16:18-19

Scriptural Christianity

- The church is an indispensable part of the New Testament.
 - Matt. 16:18-19 - “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”
 - Acts 2:47 - “And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

Scriptural Christianity

- Salvation is in the church.
 - Acts 5:14 - “And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.”
 - 1Cor. 12:13 - “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”
 - Gal. 3:26-28 - “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Scriptural Christianity

- Salvation is in the church.
 - Eph. 1:22-23 - “And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”
 - 2Tim. 2:10 - “Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”

Scriptural Christianity

- Many commands given to the Christian depend on personal and present involvement in and with the local church for scriptural application.
 - Acts 20:7 - “Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread...”
 - 1Cor. 16:1-2 - “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: 2 On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.”

Scriptural Christianity

- Eph. 5:19 - “Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”
- Heb. 10:24-25 - “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Emphasis On Casual

- Outreach Magazine: “Do you remember being dragged to church as a child? Well, things are different now. For one thing, you've grown up, but church is different too -- blue jeans, live band, real talk for real people... Image is everything -- or is it? (Name of church) doesn't think so. We care more about who you are than what you wear or where you've been...”
- “What if God was one of us; just a slob like one of us...” *(Song lyrics written by Eric Bazilian and performed by Joan Osborne in 1995)*

Emphasis On Casual

- The casual movement is making inroads in the Lord's Church.
- Christians are to reverently approach God.
 - Heb. 12:28-29 - “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God is a consuming fire.”

Appeal To Children

- “...Come enjoy games, crafts, music, drama and great Bible-based activities. The two week program also includes a trip to Chuck E. Cheese, a camp-out, and a musical/drama presentation starring YOUR KIDS! And your parents can come too.” (*ibid*)
 - John 6:26-27 - “Jesus answered them and said, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. 27 Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.’”

Appeal To Children

- Deut. 6:6-9 - “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.”
- Eph. 6:4 - “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”

The New Church

- “A new kind of church! If hard pews, boring sermons and rusty hymns have zapped your interest in church, then you've been waiting for (your church's name supplied). You'll find electric music, sizzling drama, powerful messages and high-voltage programs for everyone. A new kind of church -- shocking, isn't it?” *(ibid)*

The New Church

- Such an appeal for a “new church” is radically different from the simple worship and mission of the First Century church.
 - Eph. 5:19 - “Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”
 - John 4:24 - “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Reduced Emphasis On Personal Responsibility

- Titus 3:5 - “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”
- James 2:24 - “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.”

Reduced Emphasis On Personal Responsibility

- “If we could get to heaven by being good people, then Jesus wouldn't have needed to die. Now, I'm not working my way to heaven, but simply hoping for the best.” *(ibid)*
 - Phil. 2:12 - “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”

Unconditional Acceptance

- “These Christians I met blew my mind... They didn’t even seem to notice the way I looked on the outside. I expected judgment, but what I got was acceptance. I know now they accept me because God accepts me. Don’t get me wrong, I haven’t traded in my tattoos for a tie or anything. But that doesn’t really matter -- I’m accepted just the way I am.” *(ibid)*

Unconditional Acceptance

- More and more, religion today is changing to fit society rather than requiring humankind to change to comply with God's requirements.
 - 2Tim. 4:2-4 - "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."

Positive Message

- “You won’t feel like you’ve been sentenced to prison when you visit _____. We are a church for people who have given up on the traditional church but not on God. You’ll find energetic music, exciting dramas, great kids’ and teen programs, and real-life messages. So get rid of that ball and chain and come see how much church has changed.” (This impact card has a picture of a man in a prison suit with a ball and chain.) Another similar appealing card reads: “If in the past the guilt-ridden, hypocritical church experience has sent you running, come check out _____. We’re out to change the way you think about church. You’ll find upbeat music, positive messages and genuine people... We won’t scold you, judge you, or pick-pocket you...” (*ibid*)

Positive Message

- Isa. 30:10 - “Who say to the seers, ‘Do not see, And to the prophets, Do not prophesy to us right things; Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits.’”
- Jer. 23:16-17 - “Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; They speak a vision of their own heart, Not from the mouth of the LORD. 17 They continually say to those who despise Me, ‘The LORD has said, You shall have peace’; And to everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own heart, they say, ‘No evil shall come upon you.’”

Fun And Frolic

- “It’s party time! Join us at North Park Church..., we are hosting a free BBQ and community carnival and, for the adults, a special concert. We’ll close the day with a short celebration service featuring a message from an NFL Pro linebacker and a special puppet show for the kids. Please join us for this fun and exciting day...” *(ibid)*

The Appeal Of The Lord's Church

- “You are cordially invited to hear the Gospel preached in its ancient purity, simplicity, and relevancy. Come learn of sin and how to contact the forgiving blood of Jesus. The Lord's Church seeks only to worship God in spirit and in truth and to engage in the acts of worship that please and honor God. The music will be congregational, spiritual, and vocal only, just as it was rendered in the First Century Church. The atmosphere will reverence God and be conducive to the reverent worship of the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth. Following the service, we will be here to answer any questions about our teaching and further explore the teaching of God's authoritative book, the Bible.”

The Appeal Of The Lord's Church

- 2Cor. 4:2 - "But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."
- Do you see the difference in the appeal?
- What is your view of the church?