

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

These are some questions we are frequently asked at Pisgah Church of Christ

## Why do you teach that a person has to be baptized to be saved?

Because that's what Jesus Himself said: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). It's also what His apostles taught through the rest of the New Testament, beginning with Peter at Pentecost. In response to the question the multitude asked at the end of Peter's sermon ("What must we do?"), the apostle responded, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:37-38). Peter would later state plainly that baptism saves (1 Peter 3:21).

## Doesn't the Bible say we are saved by faith only?

Many religious teachers say this, but the Bible does not. In fact, the one place in the New Testament where the words "faith" and "only" ("alone" in some translations) appear together is in James 2:24, which reads, "You see that a man is justified by works and **not by faith only.**"

The Bible teaches that many factors contribute to our salvation: **God's grace** (Ephesians 2:5,8); **the gospel** (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 15:1-2); **love and knowledge of the truth** (2 Thessalonians 2:10; 1 Timothy 2:4); **the blood of Jesus** (Romans 5:9); **the life of Christ** (Romans 5:10); **repentance** (Acts 2:38; Acts 11:18); **hope** (Romans 8:24); **the name of Jesus** (Acts 4:12); **calling on the name of the Lord** (Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13); **confession** (Romans 10:9); **faith** (Acts 16:31) and **baptism** (1 Peter 3:21; Titus 3:5). None of these can be emphasized to the exclusion of the others. Nor can any one be dispensed with. All are necessary.

## Can't I just accept Jesus into my heart, or pray a "sinner's prayer," to become a Christian?

Although both of these teachings are quite common today, you won't find either in the Bible.

The New Testament book of Acts, a history of the early church, records **several specific instances of conversion** to Christ: **three thousand people** on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection (Acts 2:37-42); a large number of **men and women in Samaria**, including a former magician named **Simon** (Acts 8:12-13); the **royal treasurer** from Ethiopia (Acts 8:26-40); **Saul of Tarsus**, who became the apostle Paul (Acts 9:1-19); a Roman centurion named **Cornelius** (Acts 10); a wealthy woman named **Lydia** and her household (Acts 16:13-15); a **jailer in Philippi** of Macedonia (Acts 16:25-34); **Crispus**, the leader of the synagogue at Corinth (Acts 18:8); **twelve men** who had been disciples of John the baptist (Acts 19:1-7). In each of these cases, **without exception**, people **heard** and **believed** the gospel and were **baptized**.

Search as you may, you won't find a **single recorded incident** where a person "accepted Jesus into his or her heart" or prayed a "sinner's prayer," (or any other kind of prayer) in order to be saved, or where anyone was commanded by the apostles to do any of these things.

### **Why do you not have music in your worship services?**

As a point of fact, we do have music: vocal music, congregational singing in which every worshiper participates. What we don't have is music made using mechanical instruments. The reason is simple — the Bible only authorizes Christians to sing praises to God. We are told to "speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," to "sing and make melody in our hearts to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). Our sacrifice of praise is to be "the fruit of our lips" (Hebrews 13:15).

Although we are told to "sing psalms," we are never told to "play psalms" in the New Testament. Nor do we have any example in Scripture of the early Christians, as led by the apostles of Jesus, using instrumental music. For us to add this practice to our worship when God has not authorized it would be to "think beyond what is written" (1 Corinthians 4:6) and to fail to abide in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9). We don't employ musical entertainers, such as choirs or soloists, for the same reason — God's Word does not instruct us to have these.

### **What denomination are you?**

The true church of Christ is not a denomination. Though there may be some denominations that wear the name "Church of Christ", the true church is not. The notion of multiple religious groups, each bearing a different name and doctrine, is not supported by any scripture. Here is what the Bible does say about the church.

*"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Eph 4:4-6 KJV)*

The word "Body" here refers to the church. Therefore, there is one global church, not multiple global organizations.

*"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;" (Rom 12:4-6 KJV)*

This passage speaks of members but the word "members" does not refer to branches of the church or the church being made up of multiple religious organizations. Here the word "members" is used in reference to individual people. The passage points out that people have been blessed with different talents and that we should use the abilities that God gives us. We have one common church but as members we have differing responsibilities because of our varied abilities.

*"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit". (1Co 12:12-13 KJV)*

This passage again speaks of the church being one body with members but this time show the members of the church are made up of all races and classes of people (not different religious groups).

*"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." (1Co 3:3-6 KJV)*

This passage shows early divisions in the church partly because people were labeling themselves. Paul writing, points out that this sort of reasoning is carnal and that they needed to understand that it is God, not himself or Apollos, who was responsible for their salvation.

The Bible simply does not support the idea of having multiple religious organizations and multiple doctrines. It does support singleness of mind as stated, *"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart"* (Act 2:46 KJV). This is something that the denominational world cannot truly claim today. Today's denominational world contains multiple plans of salvation, multiple methods of worshiping, multiple interpretations of sin and multiple instructions for daily living.

### **How does the church raise money?**

The only means that a congregation has been given to collect money by the contributing of congregation members upon the first day of the week. Here are passages that teach us about giving.

- *Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. (1 Corinthians 16:2 KJV)*
- *Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:7 KJV)*

This shows that giving should be done

- Upon the first day of the week
- As we have prospered from God
- As we purpose in our hearts
- In a cheerful manner (not grudgingly)

No other method of raising money is instructed in the New Testament. Therefore we are not at liberty to hold auctions, bake sales, bingo or any other means that are prevalent throughout the religious society.

## **Why do you observe the Lord's Supper every first day of the week?**

This is an excellent question! As Christians, we learn what we should or should not practice in regards to our worship to God through His word...the bible. Jesus told His disciples, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven...". The apostles then echo these words of Christ in their teachings:

- Philippians 4:9 - Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.
- I Corinthians 4:16 - Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.
- Philippians 3:17 - Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example.
- II Thessalonians 3:9 - Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us.
- I Corinthians 11:1 - Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.
- Hebrews 6:12 - That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.
- I Thessalonians 1:6 - And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord ...

So we see that the Bible actually commands us to follow the approved examples of the apostles. But did the apostles bind anything concerning what day we should partake of the Lord's Supper and the frequency of our partaking?

Acts 20:7 provides an example of disciples eating the Lord's supper on the first day of the week: "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."

This certainly demonstrates "the first day of the week" as the designated day, but how do we know which first days of the week we are supposed to partake of the Lord's Supper? Once a month? A few times a year? Every first day of the week?

To provide proof that Acts 20:7 is teaching that we must eat the Lord's supper every first day of the week, compare it with Exodus 20:8 which reads, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." The verse does not say, "remember every sabbath day," it just says, "remember the sabbath day." How did the Israelites know they were supposed to keep every seventh day holy? Because every week has a seventh day in it. Likewise, we know that we must eat the Lord's supper every first day of the week, because every week has a first day in it.

Also we should notice that our examples are not of Christians partaking of the Lord's Supper by themselves randomly upon the first day of the week; it was done by a congregation meeting together (I Cor 11:18, 20, 33) during a worship service.