



Paul was inspired to write that all **spiritual blessings are *in* Christ** (Eph. 1:3) and he goes on to proclaim the ***in Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace*** (Eph 1:7), but this begs the question “Who is *in* Christ?” Didn’t Paul also say that all of those who are baptized *into*

Christ have clothed themselves with Christ? (Gal. 3:27) The verb “clothed” simply means to *go into* as *into* raiment, and thus we find at least part of the answer: one must be baptized into Christ. In so doing have we earned our salvation? Certainly not! We have simply fulfilled the command of the Lord so that *He* will “**circumcise us with the circumcision made without hands**” (Col. 2:11) and put to death the old person we were so that we may walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4).

Let us take care then, in fighting this misconception that has run rampant throughout the denominational world and make clear that we believe and rely upon the grace of God for our salvation, but let us never shrink from preaching the *obedience* of faith (Rom. 1:5; 16:26).



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4700 Andrews Ave.
Amarillo TX 79106
806-352-2809
www.olsenpark.com

Welcome Visitors

We are so glad that you joined us today.
Please come again.

● Let us know if you have any questions.

ISSUE

12.28

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

July 11
2010



Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Charles Kelley
Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Steve Dixon
Pat Goguen
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelists:

Kyle Pope
Curtis Carwile
Jason Garcia

Is the Church of Christ Legalistic?

By Jason Garcia

For many years it has been popular for the denomination al world to label members of the Lord’s church as “legalistic.” What is usually meant by this accusation is that we are pharisaical in our thinking, or that we seek to *merit* our salvation in observing a strict adherence to the law of Christ. Is this accusation true? Of course not, but often in the mind of the accuser “legalism” embodies more than trying to merit or earn salvation, it can encompass additional meanings which need to be addressed when answering this misconception about the church.

Legalism is *not*...

Loyalty to and trust in the Word of God. The Lord has said, “**If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him**” (John 14:23 NASB). Jesus and the Apostles taught that we need to have absolute trust in the Word of God.

Stressing the need to obey the Scriptures. The Lord has said, “**If you love Me, you will keep my commandments**” (John 14:15) and His Apostles affirm by the Spirit, “**Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God**” (1 Cor. 7:19).



Olsen Park church of Christ

Linking salvation with obedience to the Word of God. The Spirit says in Hebrews “**And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him...**” (Hebrews 5:9 KJV) and again we read, “**By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in same manner He walked**” (1 John 2:5, 6 NASB). God *is* merciful and full of grace, but He has deliberately linked salvation with obedience to His teaching.

Arguing about details within the Scriptures. The Lord Himself did this in order to make a point to the Sadducees (Matt. 22:31, 32). We can also learn from His perfect and exemplary attitude when He said, “**but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do EXACTLY as the Father commanded Me**” (John 14:31, emphasis mine).

Believing that every word in Scripture is important. “**All scripture is inspired of God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness...**” (2 Tim. 3:16). We can never stress enough that we believe in the whole counsel of God and that the *sum* of His Word is truth (Psalm 119:160).

If legalism (in the mind of our critics) has come to include the definitions previously discussed, the Scriptures refute any such thinking and teaching. However, there is one additional definition of legalism that we now need to consider, concerning the accusation that we are trying to earn our salvation. We must be diligent to dispel any notion that we believe in a merit system with God. Indeed, all we find are teachings to the contrary in the New Testament. The verse that is often set before us by opponents under the allegation that we do not abide in its teaching, is Ephesians 2:8-9, which says “**For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as the result of works so that no one may boast.**” Amen! We can confidently assert we believe every word of this passage, and recognize that we must rely upon God’s grace freely given through the blood of Christ to be saved. Jesus Himself taught that, “**When you do all the things which are commanded you, say ‘We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done’**” (Luke 17:10). The Bible is saturated with passages that tell us of God’s mercy, love, and grace, but the Scriptures are also very clear on who will receive the wonderful gifts He has promised. I fear that too often when we tell our denominational friends



“you need to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins,” what is heard and understood in their mind as a substitute to *faith only* is, “you need to earn your salvation by being baptized *exclusively*”. But, as we’ve already noticed, faith is needed in order to please God because without it, it is impossible to please Him (Heb. 11:6) —but not faith *exclusively* (James 2:24).