

ISSUE

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BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

November 20,
2016

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Steve Dixon
Ryan Ferguson
Arend Gressley
Ben Hight
Blake McAlister
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott
Justin Smiley
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



Will Only Members of the Church of Christ be Saved? By Kyle Pope

The question posed in the title of this article is one we encounter frequently in our interaction with people in the religious world. Because of this, it is important that we are prepared to answer it properly.

Definition of Terms

Let's start by defining some terms used in this question. Three terms are significant:

“Church of Christ” The Bible teaches that Jesus, while upon earth declared His intention to build His church. In Matthew 16:18, after Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ, Jesus told him **“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church...”** (NKJV). We note that He did not plan to build His *churches* but His **“church”** (singular). After Jesus ascended back into heaven, those who followed Him in truth were said to be **“added”** to this church He had built. When people accepted the gospel on Pentecost, the Bible says of them, **“...And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved”** (Acts 2:47).* We note from this that Christ's church is made up of those whom the Lord has **“added”** to it who are those **“being saved.”**

The Bible makes it clear that God is not pleased with, nor ever intended those who follow Christ in truth to be divided. When people who claimed to follow Christ became divided, the Holy Spirit said such division was **“carnal”** (i.e. *fleshly*, as opposed to *spiritual*). The church in Corinth began to divide and declare, **“I am of Paul,’ or ‘I am of Apollos,’ or ‘I am of Cephas,’ or ‘I am of Christ’”** (1 Cor. 1:12). To which Paul asked rhetorically, **“Is Christ divided?”** (1 Cor. 1:13a). The inferred answer being **“No!”** Later in the same epistle Paul declared, **“For when one says, ‘I am of Paul,’ and another, ‘I am**

of Apollos,’ are you not carnal?” (1 Cor. 3:4). This shows us that the church Christ built was not intended to be a division of diverse groups, but one church. It is to this church that the Hebrew writer says true Christians have come. He writes, **“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven...”** (Heb. 12:22- 23a, NKJV). So, the Lord’s church is made up of those living and dead whose names are **“registered in heaven.”**

“Members.” The New Testament frequently uses the term *members* of parts of the physical body. Christ’s church is often figured as His *body* with His followers here on earth as *members* of that body. Colossians 1:24 equates the His *church* with His *body*—speaking of, **“...His body, which is the church.”** Having left sin, Christians used to be **“strangers and foreigners”** but in Christ they become **“members of the household of God”** (Eph. 2:19). These members are diverse and very different from one another, but they are part of **“one body.”** Paul declares, **“For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ...”** (Rom. 12:4-5a). This is speaks of the different gifts, strengths, and talents that individual Christians have as a part of the church.

“Be Saved.” We have already seen that the church is made up of those **“registered in heaven”** (Heb. 12:23). We have also seen that on the day of Pentecost, the Lord added to the church **“those who were being saved”** (Acts 2:47). Thus, the church by definition is made up of those members of Christ’s body who are saved by His blood and added to Him. So, under these definitions we may say *yes*, only



members of the Lord's church (i.e. the church of Christ) will be saved because the church by definition is composed of the saved.

What This Does Not Mean

This is easy enough to understand but, let's also clearly define what this does not mean. This does not mean...

Those who are members of some human denomination that calls itself "the church of Christ" or "the church of God." The Bible makes it clear that the Lord knows "those who are His." Paul declared to Timothy, "...the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity'" (2 Tim. 2:19a). It is not about what people may call themselves—it is about what the Lord established and what the Lord identifies through His word. It is about those whom the Lord recognizes as His. The Bible makes it clear that what the Lord has not established will be uprooted. Jesus told His disciples, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted" (Matt. 15:13b). It is not enough to wear a certain name but follow human traditions and man-made religion. Jesus condemned this attitude, declaring, "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:8, 9).



Unless our faith and practice is grounded upon the word of God it is futile and useless. Further this does not mean...

Simply those who have obeyed the gospel. Just as the "church" is, by definition, those who are saved, those who are saved must abide in the word. Jesus said, "...If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed" (John 8:31). We may stand against the false doctrine of "once saved, always saved," yet if we imagine that our responsibility to the Lord ends when we come up out of the waters of baptism, we are espousing the same thing. Those who follow Christ in truth are His. Paul said to the Romans, through the Holy



reader—Why be a member of a human denomination? Why not seek, together with those at this place to be members of nothing more and nothing less than the Lord's church? You can do that by right away by obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Spirit, **“But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His”** (Rom. 8:9). The **“Spirit of Christ”** was obedient to the will of the Father. We must do the same.

Conclusion. We end this study with a few simply questions to you the

* Some early manuscripts. Do not use the word **“church”** in Acts 2:47. In reflection of this the American Standard Version and the New American Standard Bible omit it. It is subject to debate whether such an omission is warranted by all of the evidence. Even so, the conclusion is the same, God **“added to them”** those who were being saved. To whom does **“them”** refer? Clearly, those who had come to Christ (i.e. His church which He promised to build). The same people are called **“the church”** only a few chapters later (Acts 5:11).



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🕒 Let us know if you have any questions.