

## *Where Do The Christians Meet?*

Joe Slater

Imagine that one of the apostles of Christ entered a time machine and transported himself to Justin, Texas, in December, 2019. When he realized it was the first day of the week, he would surely want to gather with fellow-Christians to worship the Lord and build one another up. Not knowing his way around town, he might enter a business and ask, "Where do the Christians meet?"

Aside from a bewildered look, what answer do you think he would receive? Very likely the person would say, "That depends on what kind you're looking for! The so-and-so church meets over there, and the such-and-such church over here. The something-or-other church gathers on the other side of town," and on and on it would go. Perhaps the person would offer the apostle a crash course in navigating the internet so he could consider at least eight different churches with Justin addresses.

Our poor apostle would be both confused and disappointed! You see, in the first century there were no denominations. Jesus began His church, and people who heard and obeyed the gospel were added to it by the Lord (Acts 2:47). On occasion, when division reared its ugly head, the apostles stopped it in its tracks (see, for example, 1 Corinthians 1:10-13).

Biblically, every seed produces fruit after its kind. Corn produces corn; wheat produces wheat. The gospel is like seed planted in the human heart (Luke 8:11). When the pure seed is planted into receptive hearts, it brings forth Christians (Acts 11:26). Human opinions and traditions cause division when they conflict with God's word or are bound upon others as requirements.

Let us be Christians – nothing more, nothing less, nothing else!

## **"If You Are The Son Of God . . ."**

What would it take for you to believe that Jesus is God's Son? I know, if you are reading this, chances are you already believe it. But haven't you heard someone suggest that if God would just do this or that, then he would believe? It's not at all uncommon.

Let's make sure we're getting this straight: we're going to establish the criteria to be met by God so that we will then believe that He is, and that Jesus is His Son.

Seriously?

Don't hold your breath on that one. God is not going to be jumping through our hoops. He never has.

When Satan tempted Jesus, he asked Him to prove that he was God's Son by turning stones into bread and by throwing Himself from the pinnacle of the temple (Matthew 4:3, 6). When Jesus was crucified, the soldiers said He should prove He was God's Son by coming down from the cross (Matthew 27:40). Jesus accommodated none of these; yet He was still God's Son.

He is still God's Son; and the proof still stands!

*"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30-31).*

God is not here to answer to me. I am here, though, to answer to Him.

*"Know that the Lord, He is God! It is He who made us, and we are His" (Psalm 100:3)*

--David Deffenbaugh (OKC, OK) via *Old Paths*

## **FIRST**

**"If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters-yes, even their own life-such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26 - 27).**

Earlier this year, I was contacted by several Christian families from another town who were affiliated with a Little League team. Much to their dismay, a tournament championship had abruptly been changed from Saturday to Sunday. The brethren had checked a number of area congregations (in vain) in hope of finding one with early services so that their family members could worship before participating in the tournament. Finding no place where to worship God, the families had decided to keep the players at home.

As I spoke with them, I was amazed to find such conviction. These brethren hoped to drive over two hours just to worship and planned to stay home if nothing was available. When asked if I knew of a place to worship, I said, "Let me see what I can do." I made arrangements with an area congregation and, for the first time in its history, two AM services were held - with one beginning at 8 AM. The brethren were able to worship God and accommodate their team members.

It's no secret what usually happens when such a dilemma arises. Jesus states in Matthew 16:24 that His disciples "must deny themselves," but sadly, most deny Jesus. For far too many, true discipleship is the exception and not the norm. I can only imagine how it would be if things changed and more would see the importance of serving Jesus at this level.

What would be the end result? Only heaven knows.

--Kenny Westmoreland (Celina, TN)