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ANTI, LIBERAL or SIMPLY A CHRISTIAN? (6)

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Article 1 discussed how labels can be used properly & improperly. Article 2 looked at attempts to justify musical instruments in worship, as well as organizational perversions (the missionary society & sponsoring church arrangement) which change local organization to a more centralized organization. Article 3 examined the role of the church and of individuals relating to widows & orphans, eating, socializing, entertaining, etc. The above issues are ones where brethren ADDED to God's word. In article 4 we looked at examples where brethren have SUBTRACTED from God's word by binding their opinions, such as the no-Bible-class position and those against women being teachers over women & children. In number 5 we examined the "one-container" issue & the "no-located-preacher" idea. Now let us consider what some say concerning the Sunday evening Lord's Supper.

There are brethren who believe that it is a sin to offer the Lord's Supper in a second service on Sunday evening. This is expressed in various ways, saying: It is sinful, it is unscriptural, there is no authority for it, etc. But the result is the same - "It is wrong to do." These effectively believe it is only to be provided once per Sunday.

As with all topics, this is a matter of understanding the principles & properly applying them. Everything we do must be according to God's word (Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 4:6). So let us look at what God's word says of the Lord's Supper.

(1) It must be on the first day of the week. We see the Lord's Supper taken on Pentecost (the first day of the week) in Acts 2:42 and again on the first day of the week in Acts 20:7. There are no further commands, examples or necessary inferences that grant permission for it to be taken upon another day. To change the day would be to transgress the Word of God.

But is offering the Supper Sunday morning AND Sunday evening doing it on another day? No. It is STILL Sunday. It is STILL the first day of the week. By providing an opportunity for brethren who were hindered from the morning services to partake, there is no violation of this principle.

(2) It must be done in the assembly. In 1 Cor. 11:17-34, Paul repeatedly indicates that the memorial of the Lord was to be taken when the church assembles together. Thus, it is **inappropriate** to dispense the Supper outside of the assembly.

But is offering the Supper on Sunday evening violating this principle? No. It is STILL in the assembly of the church.

(3) We are also specifically told to receive those who were not able to arrive earlier (1 Cor. 11:33). A number of problems were going on at Corinth. Not only were they mingling a common meal with the Lord's Supper, but their attitudes toward brethren were selfish. Certain ones would assemble & begin partaking & there would be little to no consideration for others who had not yet arrived. Paul's command is for them to "wait one for another". What does he mean by "wait"? Literally the Greek word for "wait" means "accept, expect, wait for", etc. In other words, make provision for them, do **not** exclude them from the Lord's Supper!

So, in order to fulfill this command we would be wrong to forbid or resist providing an opportunity for brethren to partake who were hindered from the am service! The very gist of this passage tells us to make provision for others to partake, not forbid them. So, when brethren go the opposite direction - they are in error.

Now please understand, people can be in error for various reasons. Some do it knowingly. But others could be deceived or beguiled into error. Whether it is out of unsteadfastness or out of ignorance, it is still spiritually destructive to those who follow it (2 Pet. 3:16, Rom. 16:17-18).

Also, regarding those who are beguiled, this happens by the fair speech and smooth words of those who are in error. We must always remember that errorists will present themselves even as angels of light (2 Cor. 11:13-15). Let us always & in every way examine what is said, taught or practiced (Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1ff).

I know certain brethren who have been caught up in the no Sunday evening Lord's Supper position. From what I can see, they did not begin down this road due to willful contention, they just happened to become associated with those who teach this - and over time have begun to believe it as well. It is sad, but true, that this is still error. For even in innocence or ignorance, false doctrine will damn souls (2 Pet. 3:16), for when scriptures are twisted, nothing good results from it.

And without fail, error begets error, sin begets sin, corruption begets corruption. A fig cannot bear thorns, nor thorns figs. While ones who are in error may teach much that is true, their one error will necessitate further error in order to bolster & sustain their first error. Then more will be needed to sustain the second... etc. As it is written, "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." (2 Tim. 3:13)

But coming back to our discussion of the Lord's Supper, consider also the nature of general authority versus

specific authority. When authority is expressed it involves general and specific aspects. Instructions which are more general leave room to wiggle; but instructions that are more specific are more exclusive & restricting. For example, the scriptures that reveal the first day of the week as the day the Lord's Supper was taken by Christians - is specific regarding the day to partake. Therefore, we have no Biblical authority to partake of it on Monday, Tuesday, etc. Yet that same authority that requires us to partake on the first day of the week is also generic as to the specific timing of partaking on Sunday & the number of times it may be offered on each Sunday. It is no where required by God that we offer the Lord's Supper at 9 am, or 10 am versus noon or later. Nor is it specified that we offer the Supper only once. In fact, we have seen at least one principle (1 Cor. 11:33) that indicates it is entirely right & proper to provide for those who were hindered from partaking earlier that same day.

Compare singing & praying. These are not limited to Sundays only, but we are commanded by God to pray & sing (Eph. 5:19; Acts 2:42). The parallel is that we are not specifically told how many times in a day we are to sing & pray. Would it be appropriate & right to say that we can only sing & pray once per day? Would you generally consider a congregation very strong that limited itself to one song and one prayer each day they assembled? What would they do for brethren who were sick or hindered from being there during the one opportunity to sing & pray? Would it be edifying (1 Cor. 14:26) & loving (Phil. 2:1-4) for us to refuse to accommodate those who have not been able to come and participate? How then could they fulfill what God requires of them? Is it sinful to offer a second song and a second prayer?

There are more points that echo the above. If you are interested, I have an old outline on the Sunday evening Lord's Supper that someone else did. It contains many good points and answers many arguments. It is a very thorough study. If you would like a copy of it, just let me know.

In this series we have looked at a number of issues that have divided brethren, but there are many more. And new ones will arise in the future which will divide even further. The bottom line in all such matters is: "What sayeth the Lord?" If we require what the Lord requires, nothing more and nothing less - then we will be right where we need to be to be pleasing to God and promote the unity & peace that is found in Truth.

Beloved, Truth is why & how we are brethren. We are born of one God, in baptism. We are in one body, through Christ. We have one hope, through the Gospel. We have one standard, through the work of the Spirit. If we abide in these things - then we will have unity & peace. But when we deviate & depart from Heaven's high & holy way - then we will tumble down and crumble apart. So demonstrate that living faith by obeying from the heart the pattern of doctrine which has been delivered unto us (Rom. 16:16-17). Set your sights on heaven, not on earthly things.

In Truth, it doesn't matter what your opinions or practices are **as long as they don't contradict Truth**. If you personally refrain from the Lord's Supper Sunday evening because you are unsure - that is your call (Rom.

14:2, 5). Just remember that God will examine your actions in even this matter. From what I know, God understands when we are hindered from a Sunday morning assembly (for example due to sickness). But I really have a hard time seeing how one can **choose to not partake** of the Supper on Sunday because it is a "second offering". And again, we have just as much authority for the second offering of the Supper, as we do for a second song, a second prayer, a second assembly, etc. This is general authority in application.

But when it comes to (1) judging others who do partake of what is authorized or (2) influencing brethren in such a way that they cease practicing & allowing what God allows, or (3) even unintentionally implying that brethren have erred by expressing principles that contradict Truth - then Truth is being violated (Rom. 14:3, 14). In such a case, you will (rightly) find brethren opposing fellowship with you until you change your mind (repent) (2 Cor. 12:19 - 13:10). When it comes to revealed Truth we are to be very particular, exacting, strict and narrow (Mt. 7:13-14). But when it comes to things that do not contradict Truth, we do very well to keep a lid on our opinions & to be exceedingly patient and gracious toward one another (Rom. 14:15, 22).

Beloved, may you be filled with His Spirit, in all knowledge & wisdom, guided by love & walking in peace; that you may abound in good works, bearing righteous fruit in Christ, unto the glory, praise and adoration of our magnificent God. Unto Him be all power, dominion, rule and authority with honor & praise. Amen.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Home Bible Study** – Sat., Dec. 9.
- **Business Meeting** – Tentatively Jan. 4.
- **GM** - Jeff Smith, April 15-20, 2007.
- **GM** - R. McPherson, Oct.14-19, 2007.
- **GM** - TBA April 2008.
- **GM** - Lanny Smith, Oct.12-17, 2008.

PRAY FOR

Othena Kinnard, Mag Bumbalough (Recovering from surgery), **Thelma Cunningham, Mary Cox, Monie Petty, Dave Poteet, Joshua & Misty Poteet, Rose Taylor, Dorris Williams, Robert England, Johanna Fletcher, Ed Williams, Joe Smith** (cancer), **Lydia Poe, Mike Tenpenny** (back), **Thelma Klein**, . Also, **Sierra Frasier** (arm), **Reba Jones** (Dorris Williams' niece), **Jackie Tindle** (cancer, relative of the Sims), **John Ross Key** (Mary Cox's son), **Marci Miller** (Alisa Fletcher's mother), **Ocia Bell Jones** (Doris William's mother), **Ruth Williams** (Betty England's niece), **Pauline Hickey, Nanny Wtaker, Dylan Roberts** (grandson of Marilyn's friend); **Kitty Mahan** (Kathy Tenpenny's mother), **Dwayne Williams** (Dorris William's son, back surgery).

Please remember those who have lost loved ones. The funeral for **Holly Jernigan**, Joyce Gardner's niece, was Friday at Manchester. Also, Mike Tenpenny's aunt, **Joanna Garret**, passed away.