

Saturday Meeting
February 25-26
PREPARE!
FLYERS AVAILABLE!

Quotes about Authority

“The conclusion, when everything has been heard, is fear God and keep His commandments...” Ecclesiastes 12:13

“No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” 2 Peter 1:21

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Website:
indiochurchofchrist.com

Preacher:
Jack Critchfield

Church of Christ
81-377 Ave 46
Indio, CA 92201
(760) 342-1859

(Address Service Requested)

Indio Informer

Vol. 34 No. 5

January 29, 2023

Repurposing the Church

By Jack Critchfield

Restoring an old piece of furniture to its original glory is a beautiful thing. However, there is a huge difference between restoring and repurposing. People can be quite creative in repurposing an old piece of furniture. Since circumstances change, some relics of the past no longer serve a useful purpose today.

While repurposing an item to give it a more useful life, repurposing has no place in restoring the pattern of New Testament Christianity. Repurposing the church betrays a belief that the original is no longer adequate to meet present needs. Yet, the words of Christ are forever relevant and convey an unchanging purpose to those who are His followers (Matthew 24:35; 28:18-20). Millions in darkness stand in need of what Christ offered to those in the first century. How can we tell them that such is no longer adequate to meet their needs—that things have changed—that we are different people, living in a different culture, requiring a differing purpose?

Clearly stated in Scripture is the Lord’s purpose of seeking and saving the lost (Luke 19:10). His purpose meets our most pressing need: salvation from our sins. This basic need has not changed. The writer of Ecclesiastes states, *“There is nothing new under the sun”* (Ecclesiastes 1:9). So far as the nature of man is concerned, we are all sinners who need a Savior (Romans 3:23).

Those who seek to restore the pattern of New Testament Christianity in the 21st century must seek also to restore His purpose as the primary reason for the church’s existence. Because so many have repurposed the church to meet their own needs and desires, we have seen a corresponding lack of focus on teaching and preaching the gospel. We have been deceived into thinking that we can do His work without His word—that we can socialize lost souls into the kingdom. But, when focus is shifted away from

Christ and His word, we have repurposed the church according to our own desires.

Our mission is accomplished by preaching the gospel (Mark 16:15-16). Scripture says, *“They shall all be taught of God”* (John 6:45). We do not absorb people into His church by creating loyalty to us rather than to Christ. We do not ground people in the faith by keeping them entertained, but by making them disciples of the Lord. Many are ill-equipped to know the difference between the New Testament church and the repurposed, counterfeit version of the church as it exists in our world today. The difference is seen in “preaching the word” or accumulating *“teachers in accordance with [our] own desires”* (2 Timothy 4:2-3).

Restoring the Church to its Former Glory

By Bill Brandstatter

My wife and I enjoy watching a television program where a young lady restores old houses. She says she restores them “to their former glory.” We today need to restore the church to its former glory. When the Lord comes back, He wants the church to be glorious (Ephesians 5:27). Paul wrote, *“To Him be glory in the church by Jesus Christ”* (Ephesians 3:21). What about the church today? Does it look like what it did in the glorious days of the New Testament? Let us consider some ways to restore the church to its former glory.

We need to get back to the name and identity of the church as the New Testament records. There are thousands of churches across our great land. These all have a variety of names and have different teachings and ways of worship. The early church bore the name of Christ. It was glorious because, He was its head. All that was done was to glorify Him. In Ephesians 1:22, 23, Paul declares that Jesus is the head of the body, His church. Then in Ephesians 4:4, 5 Paul states there is one body. Paul wrote that there should be no divisions. (1 Corinthians 1:10) He taught and ordained the same thing in every church he visited (1 Corinthians 4:17; 7:17).

Does this kind of unity exist today? Does the name the church wears really make a difference? In New Testament times the name pointed to God and Christ. Often it was identified by location.

For example, Paul wrote to the “church of God which is at Corinth” (1 Corinthians 1:2). Paul mentions in Romans 16:16, *“The churches of Christ salute you.”* The early church never wore the name of a man (John 20:28). We see an amazing unity in passages that identify the church with God and Christ.

In Acts 20:28, the church is referred to as the “church of God”. This passage also tells us that the church was purchased with the blood of Jesus. When He died, the church got its start. Jesus was God before He was in the manger (John 1:1). He was also God when He came (Matthew 1:23). He stated in John 10:30, *“I and my Father are one.”* Thomas confessed Jesus as, *“My Lord, and My God”* (John 20:28). We see an amazing unity in passages that identify the church with God and Christ. The Lord wants His church to be glorious. Let’s do all we can to make it that way.

Not Worth a Plugged Nickel

Excerpts from article by Joe Slater

In early America some coins were made with a small silver disc in the center to give them value. A plugged nickel was one with the silver disc removed and replaced with a less valuable metal – thus to this day an item of little or no value is “not worth a plugged nickel.”

Tragically, subsequent generations in Israel distorted God’s word with human traditions. At the time Jesus walked this earth, the religious elite viewed those traditions as equal to Scripture or even above it! They sharply criticized Jesus and His disciples for disregarding *“the tradition of the elders”* (i.e., the ancestors). But Jesus turned the tables on them! *“Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?”* (Matthew 15:3). Those traditions weren’t worth a plugged nickel! Jesus laid it on the line, applying Isaiah 29:13 to them: *“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”* (Matthew 15:8-9).

Members of Christ’s body in our time are not immune from the temptation to elevate human tradition as being equal to God’s word or even above it...Compared to the precious word of God, nothing else is worth a plugged nickel!