

## Does It Really Matter What Church You Attend?

### Introduction:

- I. It has often been said that when it comes to religious matters, many people “major in minors and minor in majors.” What that means is that they make a big deal out of things that really are not that important in the eyes of God, but then seem to be indifferent towards things that are very important. For example, there are some who might fuss and fight over what time services should start on the Lord’s Day, but won’t spend a moment’s time in preaching the gospel to the lost. Listen to me: there are some things that don’t really matter. That’s what Roman’s 14 is all about. It doesn’t matter if you eat meat or not and we shouldn’t spend countless hours debating the issue with someone who disagrees with us over such a minor issue (**Rom. 14:1-3**). Hear me on this: it doesn’t matter what color the carpet is in the building where we worship. It doesn’t matter if we partake of the Lord’s Supper before or after the preacher preaches. It doesn’t matter if we sing four songs or five. It doesn’t matter how many windows we have in the building. We may all have some opinions about those things, and on a certain level there may be attached some importance to them, but so far as pleasing God and making it to heaven is concerned, those things really don’t matter.
  
- II. Now, having said that, I want to suggest to you that while some things don’t matter, there are some things that do matter. We live in a religious climate today where very few things, outside of believing in Jesus, seems to matter to most people. How we worship God doesn’t matter they say. What church we go to really doesn’t matter. What doctrine we espouse isn’t all that important so it really doesn’t matter. Well, I want to say to you that some things really do matter. With that in mind, I want to ask the question in this sermon “Does It Really Matter What Church You Attend?” Many people say no. I once read on the back of a big semi-truck the words, “Go to the church of your choice.” Many people are doing that very thing because when it is all said and done they believe that it really doesn’t matter. Well, does it really matter? The answer is yes it does matter and let me tell you why?

### Lesson:

#### I. The Lord Only Has One Church!

In Matt. 16:18 Jesus promised to build His church. Take careful note that He never promised to build a plurality of churches, just His church. So then, we are not surprised when we only find one church in the New Testament, are we? We shouldn’t be (**Eph. 4:4; Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:22-23**). But let’s approach this from another standpoint. The Lord only has one house. Now listen to the Psalmist:

***“Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it” (Psa. 127:1).*** Did the Lord build a house? Yes he did and that house is the church (**1 Tim. 3:15**). Now, there are many churches, but there is only one house. You may have the right as an American citizen to join the church of your choice, but there is salvation only in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, and there is just one of those. Listen: if Jesus had more than one house, He would be a spiritual polygamist. No, Jesus only has one house and that house is the church you read about in the New Testament as always being singular (**Heb. 3:3-6; Heb. 10:21; 1 Pet. 2:5; 1 Pet. 4:17**). And so the question that you must ask yourself is, “Am I a member of the house of God, i.e., the church that the Lord built, or am I a member of a church that was built by man?” You may say, “I’m not quite sure so how can I tell?” Let me show you.

## **II. Identifying the Lord’s Church.**

### **A. If your church was built after the first century, it’s not the Lord’s house (Isa. 2:2; Acts 2:1-5, 16-17, 36-41, 47).**

Can you not see that if you are attending a church that was built after the first century, it can’t be the Lord’s house? Can you not see that if you are a member of a church that was built after the first century, it is a man-made church in which there is no salvation? Listen to me: if you are a member of a denominational church, you are a member of a church other than the one you read of in the New Testament for there were no denominations in existence in the first century. Every denominational church came hundreds of years after the house of God was built.

- Catholic Church – 606 AD.
- Lutheran Church – 1520 AD.
- Episcopalian Church – 1534 AD.
- Presbyterian Church – 1536 AD.
- Baptist Church – 1607 AD.

Jesus didn’t have anything to do with establishing these denominations. Jesus built His church just like He promised He would (**Matt. 16:18**), and He never established anything else. When did He do it? He did it in the first century.

### **B. If your church wears a man-made name, it’s not the Lord’s house (Rom. 16:16).**

Who gave any church that claims to be the church that Christ built the right to wear a name other than Christ? Since the church is the bride of Christ, we find that the church of the New Testament is associated with Him by wearing His name. There is only one argument that can be made in defense of wearing man-made names as a church today and that is that

there is nothing in a name. But is it true that there is nothing in a name? When has that ever been true? What husband is there here tonight that doesn't want His wife to wear His name? There is something in a name! What parent here didn't spend any time in considering what you were going to call your child when he or she was born? There is something in a name. And when it comes to spiritual things, there is something in a name too (**Acts 4:12**). Now this we know—in the first century church, the church wore the name of Christ. This is why scholars from years gone by, endorsed wearing the name of Christ and condemned the wearing of human names.

MARTIN LUTHER

I ask that men make no reference to my name, and call themselves not Lutherans, but Christians. What is Luther? My doctrine is not mine, nor have I been crucified for any one. Paul in 1 Corinthians would not allow Christians to call themselves Pauline or Petrine, but Christians. Let us abolish all party names and call ourselves Christians.

JOHN WESLEY

I would to God that all party names and unscriptural phrases and forms which have divided the Christian world, were forgotten and that the very name (Methodist) might never be mentioned more, but be burned in eternal oblivion.

CHARLES SPURGEON

I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living. I hope that the Baptist name will soon perish, but let Christ's name last forever.

Why did these men feel the way they did? It was because they knew that there is something in a name. If you are a member of a church that wears a human name, I would encourage you to leave that church and find a church that wears the name of Christ. Listen to me: It does really matter. If you are in a church that wears a different name, it must be a different church.

### **III. If your church is dictated to by men, it's not the Lord's house (Eph. 5:23).**

Since the Lord is the head of the church, no man has a say when it comes to the work, worship, or organization of a local church. Furthermore, no man in the Lord's house has a say about what is morally right or wrong. But, believe it or not, denominational churches are constantly voting on these kind of things. The Lutheran church recently made some decisions on homosexuality. Listen to it:

#### **Lutheran Denomination to Allow Gay Clergy**

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America yesterday became the largest religious denomination in the nation to allow actively gay and lesbian clergy to serve as pastors.

Gathered in Minneapolis this week for the biennial Church-wide Assembly, representatives voted, 559-451, to permit congregations to hire homosexual men and women who are in committed relationships. The 4.8-million-member church already permitted the ordination of gays and lesbians but required them to remain celibate.

The denomination is following a theological trail blazed in recent years by the Episcopal Church USA, the United Church of Christ, and the Unitarian Universalist Church, all of which ordain homosexuals in committed relationships. (BNET, August 2009, by David O'Reilly).

#### **Hard Questions Demand Qualified Answers**

Like many other mainline denominations, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has been faced with the need to decide whether to ordain active gays and lesbians to their ministry. This issue came to a head at last week's Minneapolis convention of the body. By a narrow margin, the ELCA decided it would ordain active gays homosexuals if they were "in a lifelong, committed, monogamous, same-gender relationship." (Examiner.com)

Listen to me: The Lord's church is never faced with the need to decide anything that relates to doctrinal or moral issues because those things have already been decided by our Head, Jesus Christ. The church's role is not to instill new laws that govern the people of God. The role of the church is to walk in and obey the laws that are already in place as revealed on the pages of inspiration. If your church votes on any doctrinal or moral issues, there is one thing that is sure, it's not the Lord's house.

#### **IV. If your church has a reverend, it's not the Lord's house?**

There are no reverends in the Lord's house. In the Lord's house there are elders, deacons and saints and that's it (**Phil. 1:1**). In the Lord's house there are no religious titles that separate one member from another being worn by anyone (**Psa. 111:9; Matt. 23:1-12; Job 32:21-22**).

#### **Conclusion:**

Yes, what church you belong to does really matter. It matters because Jesus only has one church and there is no salvation in any other. It's our responsibility to obey the gospel and become a member of the church that one can read about in the Bible.