**“What Is The church Of Christ?” (#1)**

Jarrod Jacobs

 When I talk to folks and tell them about the Caneyville church of Christ, there may be some who wonder about the church of Christ and the principles for which it stands. Those who are not familiar with the church revealed in Scripture (Rom. 16:16) generally have many questions. This is good, and I am always glad to answer Bible questions (I Pet. 3:15) and to study God’s word with others. Perhaps you have questions about the church of Christ; what we do and why we do it. I hope this writing will help you. Let us look into the Scriptures and see a description of the church of Christ.

 First, the church of Christ is not a building. Rather it is a Heavenly institution made up of people who have surrendered their lives to Christ, i.e. Christians (Acts 2:38-42, 11:26). The church was established by Christ (Matt. 16:18), and purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28; Matt. 26:28). Because this is true, the church belongs to Christ (Rom. 16:16), and Christ is the head of the church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22).

 The church of Christ (individual Christians the world over), has no earthly organization. It is simply saved people who are added to the church by God (Acts 2:47) and thus are in a relationship with God and one another (I Cor. 12:12-20). They are called living stones in a spiritual building (I Pet. 2:5). Christians are those who have been “called out of darkness and into his marvelous light” (I Pet. 2:9)

 At the same time, Christians living in certain geographic locations form local churches. This is what happened in New Testament days, and we read about several local churches and their work. Some local churches mentioned are the church at Corinth (I Cor. 1:2; Acts 18:1-8), the local churches in Galatia (Gal. 1:2), Colossae (Col. 1:2), Ephesus (Eph. 1:1; Acts 19:1-7), Rome (Rom. 16:5, 16), etc.

 While the church of Christ in the universal sense (all Christians the world over), has no earthly organization, a local congregation, in order to be Scripturally organized, is to be organized with elders, deacons, and saints (Phil. 1:1). The qualifications for the elders and deacons are found in I Timothy 3:1-7, 8-13 and Titus 1:5-9. The qualifications for saints are to hear God’s word, believe that Jesus is the Son of God, repent of sins, confess faith in Christ and be baptized (Rom. 10:17; Jn. 8:24; Acts 17:30; Matt. 10:32; Mk. 16:16). Please notice that man defines “saint” much differently than God does. When reading the New Testament, it is made clear that a saint is simply a Christian (Rom. 1:7; Col. 1:2; Eph. 1:1)!

 In addition to this, the local church has work to do. Though some churches are bigger in size, and others smaller, every congregation of God’s people can do what God expects. Each church has a work to evangelize, or spread the gospel message, both locally and world-wide (I Thess. 1:8; I Tim. 3:15). God says the church has to work to edify (spiritually build up) its saints (Eph. 4:12; I Thess. 5:11). A third aspect of a local church’s work is to show benevolence to its saints (I Tim. 5:9-10, 16). This is work that can be accomplished daily. (To be continued …)

*-- You are invited to visit with the Caneyville church of Christ. Times of services: Sun.: 10:00 am, 10:45 am, 5:00 pm; Wed.: 7:00 pm. Website: http://caneyvillechurchofchrist.com Tune in to our radio program on 99.9 FM at 1:00 pm and 1570 AM at 8:30 am, Mon-Fri. Questions? Call: (270) 589-4167*