
Words of Truth

“I Grew Up In The Church”

By: Brian A. Yeager

In recent months I have had several biblical discussions and emails with individuals who, to prove their faithfulness, said: “I grew up in the church.” That statement is abundantly ignorant in the way it is often stated. Being a child and attending “services” offered amongst congregations calling themselves “churches of Christ” doesn’t make anyone a faithful disciple of Christ. If it means anything in our present day, it means you have most likely (99% of the time) been taught a lot of false doctrines. The church of Christ is currently in a great state of apostasy. Like Revelation chapters 2-3, there are few congregations faithful to the will of our Lord today. Saying you attend or even are a member of some “church of Christ” is more troubling than comforting. That is just the sad reality of our day.

I find myself often explaining to people that I belong to the church of Christ you read about in the Scriptures (Matthew 16:13-18, Acts 2:47, Romans 16:16, Ephesians 1:22-23, Ephesians 5:23-25, Colossians 1:12-18, etc.) rather than the denominational churches of Christ that are common today. I hate having to say that. Yet, it is the reality of our day. The church our Lord died to establish is rarely found in the world. There is and always will be a remnant (Romans 11:1-5), but that remnant is very small.

Here locally we realize this more than most. All of the visitors that come through El Paso that are “members of the church” or “grew up in the church” are in the state of many errors. I often say that I’d rather an atheist visit with us and me try to teach them than those who are members of the denominational church of Christ today. Even worse, is when those foolish individuals start talking about growing up in the church. That language is foreign to us whom are true students of the Scriptures. It is denominational terminology. It is a statement that affirms ownership of traditionalism rather than an education in the Scriptures. To illustrate this, let’s consider how Paul spoke of one whom was taught the truth as a child.

Timothy Wasn’t Faithful Because He “Grew Up In The Church”

First off, none of us should commend ourselves (Proverbs 25:27, Proverbs 27:2, and II Corinthians 10:12-18). When one speaks of “growing up in the church” they are generally trying to state that they know more than the average person. They are tooting their own ignorant horn (so to speak). Having said that, notice what was said about Timothy by Paul: *“When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy*

grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also... But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (II Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15). Think hard about what you just read. Timothy’s upbringing towards the faith was not about where he attended, but rather how he was taught the holy scriptures from his youth. It is the word of God that makes a disciple, not just assembling with a group of people.

The Question Is Not About Where, But Rather What You Have Been Taught

The worst, most self-righteous people I have biblical discussions with are members of modern day churches of Christ. They are so loyal to the traditions of men taught in churches of Christ and confused about how those things **did not** start from the Scriptures, that they are most often unteachable (i.e. Matthew 15:1-14). They have the “I grew up in the church” mentality that translates into making the church they are members of their standard of faith. That is Catholicism. The church, an assembly of people, is not the source of the truth. The word of God is the truth (John 17:17, Colossians 1:5, and II Timothy 2:15).

A faithful disciple of Christ [a.k.a. a “Christian” (Acts 11:26)] is one who continues in the words of our Lord (John 8:31-32). Sitting in a seat, among those calling themselves “the church of Christ” doesn’t make anyone a faithful disciple of Christ. Learning from that seat doesn’t make anyone faithful either. Only the word of God makes one a faithful Christian and they are the only faithful Christians at that (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 14:22, Colossians 1:21-23, James 1:18-25, I John 2:24, and II John 1:9).

People have long erred by following the established traditions of men and confusing that with the truth (II Kings 8:16-18, II Kings 8:25-27, II Kings 16:1-3, II Kings 17:19, Galatians 1:6-9, etc.). “Churches of Christ” often proclaim to: “speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent.” Yet, many things said and done by those “congregations” are foreign to the Scriptures. Those who “grew up” in those churches will most often take those errors and carry them even further (Jeremiah 16:12 and II Timothy 3:13). Be aware of that!

Conclusion

We [the faithful in Christ] get irritated when we see and hear the ignorance espoused by those whom erringly proclaim to be our “brethren”. That is a proper reaction (Psalms 101:3, Psalms 119:104, and Romans 12:9). Let’s not be hypocrites though (Matthew 7:1-5). For us to have a righteous indignation against the rampant apostasy amongst so-called “churches of Christ” today, we have to keep our act clean. We can’t become self-righteous and puffed up (Luke 18:9-14 and I Corinthians 8:1). We need to constantly remind ourselves that we are not the standard (Luke 4:4, John 5:39, John 6:63, I Corinthians 4:6, and II Timothy 3:16-17).