
Words of Truth

“You’re Going To Prevent Me From Worshipping God”

By: Brian A. Yeager

On June 17th of this year, I received a phone call from a man who had traveled to El Paso. The first call came on that Sunday evening at 4:57 PM. The man wanted to know if we had a Sunday evening service. I told him that we do not. He then wanted to know if there were any other “churches of Christ” in El Paso. I told him there were no other sound congregations of the Lord’s people assembling in El Paso. I told him that it would have been good had he located us earlier so that he could have worshipped with us in the morning. The call ended at that point.

Three minutes after the first call, the man called back. He said he had called several other “churches of Christ”, but no one had answered. He then asked me if I would have one of the men meet him to serve him the Lord’s Supper. I replied: “Sir, we have no authority to do such a thing”. He proclaimed his disagreement. He asked me, “what about where there are two or three gathered”? This question led to a brief discussion that we will consider in this article as a study. We will start with examining the ignorance behind the twisting of Matthew 18:20.

What About “Where Two or Three Are Gather Together...”?

Many believe that Jesus’ statement in Matthew 18:20 means that the “Lord’s Supper” can be taken as long as two or three people are doing so. Yet, few even know what context Matthew 18:20 is taken from. Thus, let’s start by really learning what context this verse is in. Notice: *“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them”* (Matthew 18:15-20).

Where was the Lord talking about observing the Lord’s Supper in the context above? In fact, the Lord’s Supper was not even instituted at that time wherein Jesus was teaching what we read in the above context (cf. Matthew 26:26-29). What Jesus was teaching is discipline carries weight not only on earth, but in Heaven as well. Where there is agreement, with His authority, amongst two or three disciples; there can be action that binds and looses even in Heaven. In fact, the Apostle Paul later speaks confirmation of this truth. Notice: *“It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s*

wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Corinthians 5:1-5). Like Jesus, Paul was speaking of practicing discipline with a wayward brother (I Corinthians 5:6-13). In fact, other Scriptures regarding the Lord's Supper PROVE that it takes more than just two or three brethren to Scripturally observe His memorial (unless the congregation is only a three member congregation).

It Takes More Than Just Two or Three

Why won't most so-called "brethren" meet on Tuesday morning for the Lord's Supper? They won't because of this Scripture: "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight" (Acts 20:7). Here is a question, why can people read "upon the first day of the week" and understand that, but cannot understand "when the disciples came together"? Both are equal stipulations. This one verse (Acts 20:7) shows us that brethren are to appoint a time, on the first day of the week, wherein we can assemble together to remember the Lord's death. In fact, a study of the matter even proves that we must assemble for this purpose and wait until we can all be together before we observe the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:23-33).

After presenting some of what we have examined in this article, the man said he disagreed. He saw no problem with a brother serving him the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine as long as that brother read some Scriptures too. He then said, "You're going to prevent me from worshipping God" and he hung up the phone. The question is, who is preventing what here?

You're Responsible Not Everyone Else

The Lord desires us to worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). When traveling, YOU need to make sure that you can assemble with faithful brethren (II John 9-11) to worship Him. That worship needs to be more than just an observation of the Lord's Supper and a reading of a few Scriptures (cf. Acts 2:42, I Corinthians 16:1-2, Ephesians 5:19, etc.). Don't just assume that Christians everywhere assemble at the same times you are accustomed to. Brethren, in each local congregation, must assemble at a time expedient for them (I Corinthians 11:33; cf. Hebrews 10:24-25).

Conclusion

It is saddening to me to find supposed "brethren" who are only concerned with certain aspects of worship to God. Our whole lives need to be dedicated to pleasing our Lord (I Samuel 12:20, Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, and Mark 12:30). When you wait until Sunday (morning or night) to figure out how to worship God, you've shown that your love for Him is low on your list of priorities. Then, when you try to blame your lack of priorities on others, you've proven to all that you are just looking to justify yourself (Proverbs 16:2). If you fail to worship God, for whatever reason, that is on you! Therefore, be sure that God is ALWAYS first and foremost in your plans (Matthew 6:33).