

The Congregation Is Not Subject To The Ordinances Of Man

I. Introduction:

A. In our lesson last week, we addressed each of us as individuals choosing the way of truth (**Psalms 119:111**).

1. Such individual choices are independent of anyone else (**Luke 10:38-42**).
2. This is why we will stand individually before the Lord in Judgment (**Matthew 16:27** and **II Corinthians 5:10-11**).

B. There are also instructions in the Scriptures, which we must rightly divide to properly understand (**II Timothy 2:15**), that govern our collective actions as the local assembly of Christ (**I Timothy 3:14-15**).

1. We must always remember that the church was/is to be about glorifying our Father by Christ Jesus (**Ephesians 3:14-21**).
2. And as the body of Christ, we are collectively to be without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing (**Ephesians 5:27**).

II. Body: **Colossians 2:20-23**

A. Let us start off from here reminding ourselves whose house we are when we are together and working as the congregation in this city (**Hebrews 3:1-6**).

1. As the house of the Lord, our citizenship is not of this world (**Ephesians 2:19-21** and **Hebrews 12:22-23**).
2. Therefore, let's not look to the world for how we are to function as the body of our Lord (**Ephesians 4:15-16**).

B. While individually accountable, for a reason, to the ordinances of man (**I Peter 2:13-17**), no so collectively (**Ephesians 1:22-23** and **Colossians 1:18**). The problem is, many cannot see the difference in the Scriptures between the individual Christian or several Christians apart from the assembly, from that which applies to us collectively.

1. Consider how one, or even several brethren doing spiritual work is no the church in action until all are involved (**Matthew 18:15-17**).
2. Consider the same principle in how such is shown in taking care of widows indeed (**I Timothy 5:3-16**).
3. If you cannot see the two above, let me illustrate with the most carnal I can think of to reach the carnally minded (**John 3:12** and **I Corinthians 2:14-3:3**). Is two faithful Christians in the marital bed the church at work (**Hebrews 13:4**). Consider this point further in illustration of a principle of biblical study.
 - a. There was a letter written (**I Corinthians 1:1-2**) that addressed congregational matters (i.e. **I Corinthians 5:1-9**, **I Corinthians 11:18-34**, etc.).

- b. Yet, within that same letter individual responsibilities was addressed as well, such as sexual activity in the marriage (**I Corinthians 7:1-5**).
 - c. We must be capable of discerning what applies to the individual, several, and the whole collective body within the written word of God or perish for failing (**II Peter 3:15-17**).
- C. Even when the Lord grants authority for saints to be subject to one another or (**Ephesians 5:21**), He still governs when, how, limitations, etc.
1. We can tarry for one another (**I Corinthians 11:33**), but not until Monday (**Acts 20:7**).
 2. We can bear with the brother or sister that has an overbearing conscience (**Romans 15:1-3**), but not if such causes doubtful disputes (**Romans 14:1-3**).
 3. When men were sent to teach (**Matthew 28:17-20**) and others given authority to obey those men (**Acts 2:42**); they could not and did not teach whatever they wanted (**John 16:13**, **I Corinthians 4:1-6**, **I Corinthians 4:17**, **I Corinthians 11:1**, **I Corinthians 14:37**, and **II Timothy 2:2**).
 4. Even in contexts regarding spiritual gifts, what is done in the body of Christ was as it pleased God (**I Corinthians 12:18**).
- D. What if our civil government says...
1. ...Women must be granted roles of authority in the churches (**I Corinthians 14:34-35** and **I Timothy 2:11-12**)?
 2. ...That churches must have presidents, vice presidents, secretaries, etc. (**Ephesians 4:7-12** and **Philippians 1:1**)?
 3. ...Homosexuals must be accepted in the churches (**I Corinthians 5:11** and **Ephesians 5:1-3**; cf. **Acts 2:47**)?
 4. ...Churches must pay taxes or fees to the government out of that congregations treasuries (**I Corinthians 16:1-4**, **II Corinthians 8:1-9:13**, **II Corinthians 11:8-9**, **Philippians 4:10-18**, and **I Timothy 5:16-18**)?
 5. ...Churches cannot assemble (**Hebrews 10:25**)?

III. Conclusion: As saints AND collectively as the body of Christ, let's not allow civil laws to supersede THE WAY OF TRUTH (**Acts 5:17-29**).