

Who Is My Brother?

I. Introduction: Some have very loose ideas of who are spiritual brethren are. Ideas like the term “Christendom” wherein some imply a greater body of believers than the Scriptures support has become popular amongst some circles of so-called “churches of Christ.”

A. Somebody walks into our assembly and says “I am a member of the church of Christ.” So what!?! What does that really mean today? Even in the first century, it didn’t mean as much as one would have thought (i.e. **Galatians 1:1-2; 1:6; 3:1-3** and **Revelation 2:12-17**).

1. I am not saying being a member of THE church, the body of Christ doesn’t matter. It certainly does (**Ephesians 5:23** and **Colossians 1:12-18**).

2. However, someone can be among the church physically, even having been taught and obedient to the Gospel, and still not be a faithful brother or sister in Christ (**I Corinthians 5:1-13**, **II Thessalonians 3:10-11**, **I Timothy 5:24-25**, and **I John 2:18-19**).

B. Even when someone has been faithful in the past, they come strolling in; that doesn’t mean they are faithful now (ex. Barnabas; **Acts 4:32-37**, **Acts 9:26-27**, **Acts 12:25-13:3**, and **Galatians 2:11-14**).

1. Think about one who had a reputation (**Colossians 4:14** and **Philemon 1:24**), but walked away (**II Timothy 4:10**).

2. Think about those who not only walk away, but turn to be the opposition (**II Timothy 4:14-15**).

II. Body: Jesus Made This Simple (**Luke 8:19-21**).

A. First, to even be considered a Christian a person has to have **at least**...

1. Been taught the truth (**Ephesians 4:21** and **Colossians 1:5**). Including many sub-points (i.e. **Acts 10:42**, **Acts 13:38**, **I Corinthians 15:1-12**, etc.) that are needs based depending on the audience. **More in point D.*

a. The sermon preached wherein many who killed Jesus were present was different (**Acts 2:5-41**).

b. Different from Paul’s preaching in Athens (**Acts 17:16-33**).

2. Understand what he or she was taught (**Matthew 13:19; 13:23**).

3. Receive, love, and believe the truth (**I Thessalonians 2:13** and **II Thessalonians 2:12**).

4. Repent, meaning turn from (**Ezekiel 14:6**), sin (**Acts 3:19** and **Acts 26:18-20**).

5. Commit to our Lord (**Luke 9:57-62** and **Luke 14:25-33**).

6. Confess His name (**Romans 10:9-10**).

7. Be immersed in water (**Acts 8:26-39** and **Colossians 2:12**).

8. Coming up out of the water into the faithful continued service of our Lord (**Acts 2:41-42**).

B. Is this person, that has been converted, continuing to abide in the doctrine of Christ (**II John 1:9-11**)?

1. Think about the line Jesus drew (**Matthew 12:30**).
2. Being a member of a faithful local body of believers (**Romans 12:4-5**) and a true worshipper (**John 9:31**).
3. Walking in the truth (**II John 1:4**) with no participation in works of darkness, doctrines of men, etc. (**Ephesians 5:6-11**).

C. Our fellowship has to be with those walking in the light (**I John 1:1-7**).

1. Those in light are not such because of a verbal profession, but living aright (ex. **I John 2:3-9**).
2. Those in the light are those who have cast off darkness and are not walking according to fleshly desires (**Romans 13:12-14**).
3. We simply cannot be people of the light while in fellowship with those in darkness (**II Corinthians 6:14-7:1**).

D. Among many so-called “churches of Christ” they will accept those who have been taught and baptized into denominations (denominational baptism). False doctrine does NOT produce Christians.

1. You obey what you are taught (**Romans 6:17**).
2. Christians are not born by corruptible seed (**I Peter 1:22-25**).
3. The TRUTH is what sets one free (**John 8:31-32**).
4. We are begotten by the word of truth (**James 1:18-21**).
5. Even though John’s baptism was valid for a time (**Matthew 3:1-18**), after the death of Christ those baptized with John’s baptism were not Christians (**Acts 19:1-7**).
6. Teaching the Gospel to someone includes teaching them about the kingdom (**Acts 8:12**) which is synonymous with the church (**Hebrews 12:22-28**). If denominational churches taught that, they would expose themselves as being false!

III. Conclusion: Our brethren are those in a faithful relationship with Jesus. As Jesus said, “*these which hear the word of God, and do it*” (**Luke 8:21**; cf. **John 14:21-24**).