

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **1Corinthians 4:17; 7:17.**
- B. The church of Christ in this country has a very rich heritage behind it which is called "The Restoration Movement."
- C. In one way or another we are a product of that movement. Tonight's lesson is by way of introduction to the American Restoration Movement of the 1800s. Why it is Biblical, and why it is still going on today.

I. THERE IS A NEW TESTAMENT PATTERN.

- A. When preachers began to inform me of the Restoration Movement in this country some 150 years ago, I didn't understand why there was a need for such a movement.
- B. Behind men saying, "Let's go back to the Bible," is the fact that God has specified, in His word, a pattern by which we are saved and how to stay faithful in this life.
- C. The pattern of the NT can be looked at three ways:
 - 1. Morally (Phil. 3:17; 1Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7).
 - 2. Technically (Heb. 8:5; Ac. 7:44).
 - 3. Doctrinally (Rom. 6:17; 2Tim. 1:13).
- D. The pattern can be illustrated in 1Cor. 4:17 and 7:17.
- E. Example of a dress pattern. Always follow the pattern and each dress will be the same.
- F. To grow Christians and churches we plant the seed of the word of God (Lk. 8:11). We plant the seed and can only come up with a Christian. It cannot be (insert denominational name).
- G. God's law of reproduction says one reaps what they sow. So if we sow (plant) preach the word and only Christians will result.

II. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "RESTORATION" AND "REFORMATION."

- A. We recognize that men depart from God's way (the pattern).
- B. During the 16th century men wanted to reform some of the practices and doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church; not to RESTORE NT Christianity.
- C. Example of the attic, and finding the rules to a game called baseball.
- D. Story of Bonnie, keys, and copies of keys.
- E. Hence, restoration means to bring back into its original condition. The church today needs to be in all aspects like the church found in the pages of the NT. All of this in doctrine, practice, love, benevolence, evangelism, and fellowship.

III. HOW TO RESTORE THE PATTERN.

- A. To restore NT Christianity we must have respect for the word of God. We must practice those things contained in the Bible.
- B. One of the slogans of the restoration movement that is still valid today is, "We speak where the Bible speaks, and we are silent where the Bible is silent" from Thomas Campbell (1Pet. 4:11).
- C. Only the Bible has withstood the test of time and all atheistic attacks to prove itself to be the word of God. We therefore must respect and obey the things written therein.
- D. Those who became Christians in the first Century did so by obeying the word of God (Ac. 2:41).

IV. THE RESTORATION IS AN ONGOING PROCESS.

- A. With all of the above, having been said, one might ask, "Since all of this has happened, haven't we restored New Testament Christianity?"
- B. The answer to this question is two-fold:

1. Yes, NT Christianity was restored in the 19th Century to the extent that men and women said no to denominational creeds and dogmas and went back to the Bible for answers to Christian service.
 2. But no, NT Christianity has not been restored in that there is always room for growth and improvement in being like Christ (as individual Christians) and like the early church (as individual congregations).
- C. We should never let ourselves be fooled into thinking that we "have arrived" as a Christian or as a church.
- D. I am not saying that I believe the church today is doing anything unscriptural. But I am saying that we must continue to grow in grace and knowledge (2Pet. 3:18).

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. The restoration of NT Christianity means to throw off all excess rules not found in the NT that would be thrust upon us, and be "Christians, and Christians only."
- B. When sin is in our lives, and we are not repenting of it, then we need to be restored to God.
- C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.