

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Brad has asked me to be part of this series on the restoration. My specific topic is, "Weaknesses of the Restoration Principle." This is a difficult task!
- B. It is difficult because I believe in the restoration of NT Xianity. Usually when one believes it something, and tries to live by it he can find very little wrong with it.
- C. Yet, when restoration-ism is carried to an extreme there are some problems that develop. We can practice restoration-ism to such an extent that we cease to practice NT Xianity!
- D. Three main problems are:
 1. Restoration-ism may bring a lack of true knowledge.
 2. Restoration-ism may cause us to fail to practice unity.
 3. Restoration-ism may cause us to fail to keep X as the focal point of our faith.

I. A LACK OF TRUE KNOWLEDGE.

- A. Scripture text: John 4:23,24.
- B. We are still people of the book. At the "Unity Meetings" it is clear that we still strive in our scholarship and Bible exegesis. And this is good.
- C. One criticism of the denominations is they worship in spirit and not in truth. One criticism of the churches of Christ is they worship in truth but not in spirit. Both are reasonably true, yet a balance of the two is necessary.
- D. True worshippers realize that attitude in worship is just as important as the doctrine followed.
- E. Jesus had perfect knowledge of the Law and how to interpret it. He tried to get the Jews to follow the Law for in that they would see Himself has the fulfillment of it (Jn. 5:39). Yet, He also had compassion for the people (Mt. 9:36).
- F. Restoration-ism, when taken to extremes will restore only the practices and doctrines of the NT. A full restoration of the ancient order also gives pattern to the attitudes of the early Xians (Ac. 2:47).
- G. True knowledge, according to Peter, was to have the Xian graces and increasing (2Pet. 1:5-8).
- H. Those who only restore doctrine can alienate people. We need to love people, show the fruit of the Spirit, the Xian graces, and then teach people the truth. See Mt. 23:23.

II. A FAILURE TO PRACTICE UNITY.

- A. The real goal of the restoration movement was the unity of all believers in the one church spoken of in the NT. The way in which to do this was to restore the doctrine and practices of the apostles and early church.
- B. But when restoration-ism is carried too far, it leads to promote sectarianism and it destroys that which it intended to promote.
- C. There are times that division is right and times when it is wrong.
- D. Things that cause division:
 1. There can be no unity between the believers and non-believer (2Cor. 6:14-18).
 2. There is no unity between brethren when one embraces a doctrine contrary to the essential elements of the Xian faith (2Jn. v7-9; 1Jn. 2:20-23).
 3. There is no unity between brethren when one forces his views on another, thereby destroying fellowship (Gal. 4:9-11; Col. 2:16-17).
 4. There is no unity when a brother/sister commits sinful behaviors (1Cor. 5:2-11; Titus 3:10-11).
- E. But yet, for the sake of unity only in one case of the above (#4) does the apostle Paul ask that the sinful one be dis-fellowshipped. In the cases of sin talked about in 1Cor. he pleads for unity.
- F. What Xian must do:

1. Love the sinner while hating the sin; do not erect walls and fences that completely ostracize the non-Xian (Jn. 3:16-17; Rom. 12:9).
 2. Teach those who are ignorant, do not separate from them (Heb. 5:12-14; 6:1-3,9).
 3. Accept one another until the unity of the faith can be achieved (Rom. 12:16-18).
 4. Bear one another's burdens, try to gently restore, see to it one soul does not fall away (Gal. 6:1; Heb. 3:12-13).
- G. To restore NT Xianity is to work toward unity, cooperation and understanding between brethren. Too often in the name of the restoration (or remaining faithful) we have promoted division within the body of X (1Cor. 3:16,17).

III. **A FAILURE TO KEEP CHRIST AS THE FOCAL POINT OF OUR FAITH.**

- A. Mankind does not need the right set of doctrines, nor the right church as opposed to denominationalism to save him.
- B. Mankind needs JC. When man sees his need for a Savior the right doctrines, right church, and right worship will naturally follow.
- C. Unfortunately, restoration-ism is sometimes more concerned with the right set of doctrines, right worship and right plan of salvation than it is with making sure that every man is preached J, and Him crucified.
- D. Look at the statements of the apostle Paul:
 1. "To know nothing except Christ, and Him crucified" (1Cor. 2:2-5).
 2. "Counting all things as loss to gain Christ" (Phil. 3:8-11).
 3. "Filling up what is lacking in X's sufferings" (Col. 1:24).
 4. "We strive to present every man complete in Christ" (Col. 1:28).
- E. When our love for X is strong; our relationship with Him is growing; and when we learn to follow His example in suffering; the right doctrines, right worship, and right church will naturally follow.
- F. True restoration-ism must teach that every man needs a relationship with God through Jesus.

CONCLUSION.

- A. We have discussed the following tonight:
 1. We must be ready to restore not only the doctrines and form of true worship but also the spirit and attitude thereof.
 2. We must be ready to sacrifice for the sake of unity and work with our brethren with whom we disagree instead of drawing lines of division.
 3. We must be sure that we strive to present everyone complete in X. And that the life, death and resurrection of X is the motivating factor behind all that we do.
- B. Restoration-ism is good, but like all good things it can be ruined if we allow ourselves to go too far and fall into problems by going extremes,
- C. May we work for the restoration of NT Xianity in all of its forms.