

MYTH BUSTERS

DAY THREE: MYTHS ABOUT THE CHURCH *THE DAY OF PENTECOST*

Acts 2

Introduction:

1. The church is the eternal purpose of God – meaning, that it has always been a part of God’s plan for man’s redemption (Eph. 3:10-11).
2. Sadly, the religious world is filled misconceptions and false teachings about the Lord’s church.
3. As a result, the Bible truth about the church is often misunderstood, ignored, or rejected.
4. Our job in this lesson will be to investigate what the Bible really says about the church.
5. We will find out what the church is and why we should be a part of it.

I. Myths about the Church

A. **Myth One:** *The church is a building.*

1. Many people refer to the building where Christians assemble for worship as the church.
2. However, this is not the correct use of the term; and, it results in a dangerous misunderstanding of what the church is.
 - a. If one thinks that the church is a building, then one can go to church and one can leave church.
 - b. Thus, many believe that you must act differently in the church building that you would anywhere else.
 - c. The truth is: a Christian must live as a Christian in all places at all times!
3. The Bible teaches that the church is not a building.
 - a. The church is able to hear and speak (Matthew 18:17; Acts 11:22).
 - b. The church is able to fear (Acts 5:11).
 - c. The church is able to suffer (Acts 8:1, 3).
 - d. The church is able to rest (Acts 9:31).
 - e. The church is able to pray (Acts 12:5).
 - f. The church is able to send and receive (Acts 15:3-4).
 - g. Obviously, none of these things are true of a physical building.
4. The Bible teaches that the church is a body – the body of Christ.
 - a. The church has a head, Jesus (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15-16; Col. 1:18; 2:19).
 - b. The church is a body, comprised of members (1 Corinthians 12).
 - c. There is only one head and only one body (Eph. 2:16; 4:4, 12; 5:23).
5. The Bible teaches that the church is a spiritual body.
 - a. Jesus promised to build His church on a spiritual rock (Matt. 16:16-19).

- b. Jesus paid a spiritual price to purchase His church (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Heb. 9:12-14).
 - c. Jesus built His church on a spiritual foundation (Acts 4:11-12; Eph. 2:20).
 - d. Jesus taught that His church would be a spiritual kingdom (Matt. 4:17; 5:3; 11:11; Mark 9:1; Luke 17:20-21; John 3:3-5; 6:15; 18:36).
6. The Greek word for 'church' means, "The called out."
- a. It refers to people who are called out of the world and into the body of Christ.
 - b. It refers to those who are called out of sin and into salvation.
 - c. They are called by the Gospel and answer by submitting to it in obedience.
7. Thus, the church is not a building; rather, it is the people who assemble to worship God (often in a building).
- B. Myth Two: *The church is different from the kingdom of Jesus.***
1. The "kingdom of heaven" is another name for the church (Matt. 16:18-19).
 - a. Jesus promised to build His church.
 - b. Yet, He would give Peter the keys to the kingdom of heaven.
 - c. This passage makes no sense if Jesus was talking about two separate and different institutions.
 - d. Instead, when Peter preached the Gospel on the Day of Pentecost, he used the Lord's keys to open the door to the kingdom – and the church came into existence (Acts 2:38, 41, 47).
 2. The church is called a kingdom because that describes its government.
 - a. It is not a democracy nor a republic.
 - b. It is not an oligarchy nor an anarchy.
 - c. It is not communist, socialist, or Marxist.
 3. The church is an absolute monarchy with one and only one King – Jesus (Matt. 27:31, 37; John 18:37; Acts 17:7; 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16).
 - a. He is its leader.
 - b. He is its law-maker.
 - c. He is its judge.
 4. Thus, members of the Lord's church are also citizens of His kingdom (cf. Col. 1:12-14; 2 Thes. 1:5; Heb. 12:28; Rev. 1:9).
 5. Jesus is not coming back to set up a kingdom on the earth; His kingdom already exists and He is already on the throne (Acts 2:29-36).
 6. When Jesus returns, it will be to deliver the kingdom (the church) to the Father in Heaven (1 Cor. 15:24).
- C. Myth Three: *The church is not essential to man's salvation.***
1. Many claim that the church is a good thing, but not needed for salvation.
 - a. They say that a person "gets saved" by accepting Jesus as their Savior, and then they can join the church of their choice (or, not join a church at all).
 - b. First, the Bible does not teach that this is the way to be saved.
 - c. Also, the Bible nowhere teaches that one can join any church – much less join the church of his or her choice.
 2. The religious world often says, "Give me Christ, but not the church."
 - a. By this, they mean that one can have fellowship with Christ without being a part of any church.
 - b. They try to separate one's need for Jesus from the church or any form of "religion."

3. However, the Bible teaches that salvation is found in the church (Eph. 5:23).
 - a. Jesus is the Savior of the body.
 - b. The body is the church (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15; Col. 1:18).
 - c. Therefore, Jesus is the Savior of the church.
 - d. If Jesus is the Savior of the church, then there is no salvation outside of the church!
 - i. For Noah, there was no salvation outside of the ark (Gen. 7:23).
 - ii. For Israel, there was no salvation outside of the house marked with blood (Exo. 12:23).
 - iii. For Rahab, there was no salvation outside of the house with the scarlet line (Josh. 2:18-19).
 - iv. For Paul, there was no salvation outside of the ship (Acts 27:31).
 - v. For the Christian, there is no salvation outside of Jesus (John 15:4-6).
 - vi. Thus, today, there is no salvation outside of the church.
 - e. This makes the church essential to man's salvation.
 4. The Bible also teaches that the church was purchased with the blood of Jesus (Acts 20:28).
 - a. Jesus died – gave Himself – for the church (Eph. 5:25-26).
 - b. The result of the shedding of His blood is that man may be cleansed from sin (Matt. 26:28; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14).
 - c. Yet, Paul said that it also cleansed and washed the church.
 - d. Thus, the blood of Jesus that washes away an individual's sins also adds him to the Lord's church (Acts 2:41; 20:28; 22:16; Rev. 1:5).
 - e. This makes the church essential to man's salvation.
 5. Jesus had a far higher estimation of the church than so many in the religious world of today.
- D. **Myth Four:** *There are many churches.*
1. Many believe and teach that there are many churches.
 2. Thus, a person can choose the one that best suits him and become a part of it.
 3. However, the Bible teaches that there is only one church.
 - a. Jesus promised to build His church – singular (Matt. 16:18).
 - b. Thus, Jesus only built one church – His!
 - c. Paul declared that there is one body; thus, one church (Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 10:17; 12:12-13, 20; Col. 3:15; Eph. 4:4; cf. 1:22-23; 2:16; 5:30).
 - d. Jesus did not establish hundreds of denominations – each teaching different doctrines but claiming to follow the one Lord.
 - e. Nowhere in the New Testament may one read about someone becoming a part of a denomination.
 - f. There is only one body and it is the church of Christ!
- E. **Myth Five:** *The many denominations all make up the one, true church.*
1. Many teach that the one, true church of Christ is made up of all the many different denominations.
 - a. Thus, they say that one church is as good as another.
 - b. They say, "Join the church of your choice."

2. Often, they try to prove this by Jesus' teaching about the vine and the branches (John 15:1-11).
 - a. They claim that Jesus is the true vine and the denominations are the branches.
 - b. However, Jesus said that the branches are men (vs. 6) – individuals, not churches.
 - c. Furthermore, to abide in Jesus' love – to abide in the vine – one must keep the commandments of the Lord (vs. 10).
 - d. Yet, each denomination believes and teaches different commandments – in fact, they are doctrines of men, not of Jesus.
 3. The Bible teaches that the Lord's church is to be united in teaching.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 1:10 – Paul commanded unity.
 - b. John 17:17-21 – Jesus prayed for unity.
 - c. Romans 16:17 – the Apostles condemned division.
 - d. Ephesians 4:1-6 – the church must strive for unity.
 4. Clearly, the denominational world is not united in teaching or practice.
 - a. Agreeing to disagree does not create unity!
 - b. Each teaches a different plan of salvation.
 - c. Each teaches a different organization of the church.
 - d. Each teaches a different work of the church.
 - e. Yet, each claims to be following the Lord!
 - f. God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33).
 5. Only the church that follows the instructions of Jesus – the Bible – without adding to it, taking from it, or altering it in any way is the one, true church.
- F. Myth Six: *The church of Christ is a denomination.***
1. The word 'denomination' refers to a division, sect, party, or disunion among a group of people.
 2. Yet, as we have seen, Jesus established only one church and commanded it to remain united on the Truth of Scripture.
 3. The church of Christ is not a denomination because:
 - a. It was built by Jesus (Matt. 16:18).
 - b. It was purchased by Jesus (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25).
 - c. It was founded upon Jesus (1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20).
 - d. It began on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:37-47).
 - e. It wears the name of Christ (Rom. 16:16).
 - f. It has one head, Jesus (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23).
 - g. It follows one rule, the New Testament (Acts 2:42; Rev. 22:18-19).
 - h. It worships in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).
 - i. It is made up of the saved (Acts 2:47).
 - j. It teaches one faith and one baptism (Eph. 4:5).
 4. The church of Christ is not a denomination because:
 - a. It is the one body / one church of Christ (1 Cor. 12:20).
 - b. It was not founded by man.
 - c. It has no human head or headquarters.
 - d. It follows no human creed.
 - e. It wears no manmade name.
 - f. It does not follow the doctrines or traditions of men.
 - g. It does not preach a different gospel (Gal. 1:8-9).
 - h. It does not change with the whims of men or of times.
 - i. It cannot be joined, only the Lord can add you (Acts 2:42, 47).
 - j. It is essential to salvation (Eph. 5:23, 25).

- II. The Day of Pentecost – the Beginning of the Church
- A. Acts 2:1-4 - The Baptism of the Holy Spirit
 - B. Acts 2:5-13 - The Audience and Their Reaction
 - C. Acts 2:14-21 - The Explanation of Prophecy
 - D. Acts 2:22-36 - The Sermon of Peter
 - E. Acts 2:37-42 - The Results of Preaching Jesus
 - 1. It must be remembered that they were willing to hear what was preached (cf. Rom. 10:17).
 - 2. Upon hearing, they were “pricked in their heart” – powerfully moved by the truth about Jesus, whom they had crucified (Rom. 1:16; Heb. 4:12).
 - 3. Thus, they asked, “What shall we do?”
 - 4. Peter’s response was simple and easily understood – “Repent and be baptized... for the remission of sins.”
 - 5. They learned that repentance is essential to salvation.
 - a. Repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of action (cf. 3:19; 20:21; 26:20; Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:10; Rev. 2:5).
 - b. Faith changes one’s mind (thinking), repentance changes one’s will (determination), and baptism changes one’s state.
 - 6. They learned that baptism is essential to salvation.
 - a. It is just as essential as repentance.
 - b. It is not ‘for’ or ‘because of’ the remission of sins (cf. Matt. 26:28; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:27; 1 Pet. 3:21).
 - 7. Peter reminded them that God’s promise was to all men.
 - 8. However, they needed to do their part in order to be saved – “Save yourselves!”
 - 9. Those who “truly welcomed the word with gladness” obeyed it by being baptized.
 - 10. When they complied with the Lord’s conditions for salvation, He added them to the faithful – thus, the church was begun (cf. vs. 47).
 - 11. On that day, about 3,000 people obeyed the Gospel and became members of the Lord’s church.
 - 12. Thus, they began a new way of living...
 - a. Continuing in the apostles’ doctrine – the Truth of Scripture
 - b. Continuing in fellowship – joint association and participation
 - c. Continuing in breaking of bread – worship (the Lord’s Supper)
 - d. Continuing in prayers – thanksgiving, supplication, intercession
 - F. Acts 2:43-47 - The Beginning of the Church
 - 1. The unity of the church is built upon the steadfast continuance in Truth.
 - 2. The early church was filled with fear (wonder or awe).
 - 3. The early church was together – united in fellowship.
 - 4. The early church was sacrificial – giving to help one another.
 - 5. The early church was spiritual – focused on worship.
 - 6. The early church was happy – filled with gladness and praise.
 - 7. The early church was growing – by godly living and teaching.

Conclusion:

- 1. We should learn from the example of the early church, and imitate them.
- 2. We must correct the myths about the church so people can be members of the one, true church that belongs to the Lord.