
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **What makes the church of Christ different from all other churches?**

There are several things which people could point to that makes the church of Christ different from other churches. For example:

- Some might say, *“The church of Christ is different from other churches because it doesn’t have instrumental music.”*
- Or, *“The church of Christ is different because they believe a person has to be baptized to be saved.”*
- Or, *“The church of Christ is different from everyone else because they don’t believe in having women as preachers.”*

All of those things are true, but the church of Christ is not unique from all others in those things just mentioned.

- The **Primitive Baptist Church** doesn’t have instrumental music, nor does the Greek Orthodox Church.
- The **United Pentecostal Church** believes people have to be baptized to be saved, as does the Catholic Church – or at least they used to believe that a few years ago.
- The **Southern Baptist Convention** believes (at least they used to believe) it is wrong for women to be preachers, as do other churches.

So the church of Christ is not completely unique in these respects.

If there were one thing that could be pinpointed as the major difference between the church of Christ and all other churches, it would be this: ***The church of Christ is the only church that believes there must be NT authorization for EVERYTHING practiced and taught.***

There is no other church which believes there must be NT authorization for EVERYTHING.

Colossians 3:17

17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

To do something or teach something *“in the name of the Lord Jesus,”* means to have authority from Jesus.

To have authority from Jesus means that:

- Jesus Himself must have taught it
- Or the apostles must have taught it.

Jesus plainly said He did not teach everything while He was on the earth, but He also taught that the apostles would have **all truth** revealed to them before they died.

John 16:12-13

12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into **all truth**; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

If the apostles were guided into **all truth**, that means everything the church does and everything the church teaches must have authorization from either Jesus or the apostles.

That authorization must be in written form. In other words, someone may not say, *“Jesus revealed to me that I should teach this.”* Or, *“Jesus told me I should do this.”* No ... the authorization from Jesus or the apostles must be in written form. Authorization must be found in the written NT scriptures.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Jude 3

3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

The church of Christ found in the Bible and, of which I am a member, is different from other churches in the following ways:

1) The church of Christ does not have instrumental music.

It is true, of course, that God's people used instruments of music in the OT, but the church of Christ holds to the position that the church must have authorization for everything in written form in the NT scriptures.

Since neither Jesus nor the apostles authorized instruments in the NT scriptures, the church of Christ does not have instrumental music. Instead, we sing a capella according to Eph 5:19 and Col 3:16.

2) The church of Christ does not have women preachers.

As a matter of fact, the women are not allowed to speak at all in the services of the church. They may not ask questions. They may not say "Amen." They may not make announcements because Jesus and His apostles forbade women to speak in the assembly of the church (1 Cor 14:34-35).

3) The church of Christ teaches that men must be baptized in water to be saved.

Simply saying a prayer is not acceptable, because saying a prayer alone was never authorized by Jesus nor His apostles. Instead, both Jesus and His apostles taught that

sinners are saved by the blood of Christ on the occasion of their baptism into water (Mk 16:16; Acts 2:38).

4) The church of Christ does not have communion on special occasions.

For example, you will not see the church of Christ having communion service at a wedding or funeral. They will not have communion on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. The reason is simply because neither Jesus nor the apostles authorized this. Instead, the written NT scriptures authorize weekly communion on the first day of every single week (Acts 20:7).

5) The church of Christ does not have Bible classes or Sunday school.

The reason we do not have this is simply because neither Jesus nor the apostles used nor authorized Bible classes in the written NT scriptures. Rather, they always gathered the people together and taught the people in a common assembly with one man speaking at a time to the audience (1 Cor 14:23-40).

6) The church of Christ does not have individual communion cups nor does it have a plurality of communion loaves or wafers.

The reason is simply because there is no NT authorization for these things. Rather than having individual cups, the NT authorizes only one cup which everyone must drink from (1 Cor 11:25; Mt 26:27). Rather than having a plurality of loaves, the NT scriptures authorize only a single loaf for the entire congregation to share (1 Cor 10:16-17).

There are other examples which could be given, but the point is this. The church of Christ is unique because of its insistence on Bible authority for every single thing taught and done. If there is no written NT scriptures authorizing a practice or doctrine, it is forbidden. This makes the church of Christ unique. As a matter of fact, this is why we call our selves the "*church of Christ*" – because that is what is authorized in the NT scriptures. There is no authorization to call ourselves by names never used by Christ nor the apostles.

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