
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **Should you "come as you are" to church?**

Some churches have a message on their sign that reads, "*Come as you are.*" If this means "come dressed as you are – don't change your clothes and show respect to God by how you dress," if that is the message that is being communicated, then I disagree with this. The Bible doesn't teach this. The Bible teaches we should render to God the very best that we have. We should show respect to God by how we dress.

But if "come as you are" refers to how people live their lives, what should we think about that? Should the church be encouraging people to come with their sins and habits?

"Come as you are" says to me, "don't change; don't worry about ever changing."

Now ... maybe I'm missing something here, but that's what it seems to be saying to me.

When churches say, "come as you are," and they mean by that, "we will accept you just as you are – you won't have to change anything," what they are saying in reality is, "we have no standards."

Think about that – no standards. When there are no standards, anything goes.

Judges 21:25

25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

These were the "dark ages" of Israel's history. Everyone did what they thought was right. There were no standards. No one was expected to change.

God warned His people not to act like this:

Deuteronomy 12:8

8 "You shall **not** at all do as we are doing here today — every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes —

Listen to that. It is forbidden for every person to do what is right in their own eyes.

If someone who is living in sin wants to come to church and stop their sinning – if they want to change their lives and begin living the way God has instructed – then yes ... these people are more than welcome to come and the church will help them change. The church is more than glad to help people quit their bad habits.

But if "come as you are" means come with your sins and continue practicing those sins and we will accept you ... then here is a church with no standards – allowing everyone to "do what is right in their own eyes." This is a travesty. This is wrong.

1 Timothy 3:15

15 but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

The church of Christ is the "pillar and ground of the truth." This means the church of Christ upholds the truth of God's word.

If you want to come to the church of Christ – and I mean the church which Jesus Christ Himself built (Mt 16:18) – then come expecting to change. God has standards and He expects His church to uphold those standards. Rather than the church lowering her standards to draw bigger crowds, God expects people to change their lives to conform to the truth.

Sometimes I hear of politicians who have their staff take polls. These politicians want to know what the public is thinking – what the public wants. After they hear what the majority of the public wants and thinks, that becomes what the politician is advocating.

Sadly, this is what's happening in churches. They want to grow so badly they are willing to take opinion polls and whatever the majority of the people think and want, that's what the church begins to advocate. This is wrong.

Acts 17:30

30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,

Listen to that. God commands all men everywhere to repent. Repent means change. God is not asking His church to lower any standards to accommodate what people think. God is calling on people to change their ways to conform to His unchanging word.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Well ... thanks for listening to our message this week. We invite you to visit our website www.WillOfTheLord.com. There you may download the notes and the audio file of the message you just listened to.

Call again next week when we consider a new subject on ***Bible Talk***.