GOD'S PEOPLE ARE DISTINCTIVE AND DIFFERENT

I Pet. 2: 9; II Cor. 6:16

Sermon by Donald Townsley

INTRODUCTION

1. "His own special people" (NKJV) -- I Pet. 2:9 (Tit. 2:14)

2. One of the greatest factors within the church that hinders the cause of Christ is a morbid fear of being different-- Matt. 7:13 - 14; II Cor. 6:17

3. God's people in every dispensation have been a different people, and members of the New Testament church must be fully aware of this fact from the very moment they obey the gospel, until their work on earth is over.

4. The church will never be what God has designed it should be until there is this consciousness of being different among its members.

5. Distinctiveness is the power of true Christianity.
   (1) God's people lose their distinctiveness and they lose their power to draw men to Christ -- Matt. 5: 13 - 16; I Tim. 4: 12, 16
   (2) The power of the church is not where it is, like other religions, but where it is unlike them -- Eph. 3:10
   (3) It is in its distinctiveness that it asserts its real influence -- Eph. 3:10; Eph. 4: 4 - 6

6. The church is distinctive in that it has a DIVINE MESSAGE -- I Tim. 3:15
   (1) The GOSPEL -- Mk. 16:15 - 16; II John 9; II Tim. 3: 16 - 17

I. GOD'S SPECIAL PEOPLE IN EVERY AGE

1. God had a special family in Abraham -- Gen. 12: 1 - 3
   (1) Abraham looked upon himself as a "sojourner" in this world -- Heb. 11: 9 - 10; 11:16; 11:13

2. God had a special nation in Israel -- Deut. 14: 1 - 2; Lev. 11:45; Psa. 135: 4
   (1) David said, "I am a stranger in the earth" -- Psa. 119:19; Ex. 19:5 - 6

3. God has a special people in Christ today -- the church -- Gal. 3:27; I Cor. 12:13; Acts 2:47; I Pet. 2: 9 - 12; Gal. 6:16; Tit. 2:14
   (1) God's people today are strangers, pilgrims and sojourners -- I Pet. 2:11; I Pet. 1:17

II. IT IS DIFFICULT TO BE DIFFERENT

1. From a human standpoint, it is not an easy matter to be different.

2. To be different means:
   (1) To be in the MINORITY -- Matt. 7:13 - 14
   (2) To be UNPOPULAR -- John 15: 18- 19; Matt. 10:22; John 17:14; Matt. 5: 10 - 12
(3) To be misUneRStOOD aNd MiSRePReSeNteD -- Acts 28:22

(4) To be constantly oN THe DeFeNiVe -- Acts 18: 27 - 28; I Pet. 3:15; Jude 3; Phil. 1:17

(5) To be regarded as peCuLiAR aNd ecCenTRic

3. Some are afraid to be different because of money, prestige and popularity -- Gal. 1:10; John 12: 42 - 43
   (1) Preachers are afraid to be different; sermons are not distinctive -- they could be preached in almost any denominational church.
   (2) Many elders and members want that kind of preaching.
   (3) Who then can be surprised at the members, when the preachers are weak?

III. THERE ARE GOOD REASONS FOR BEING DIFFERENT

1. The TRutH is different from error -- Heb. 5:14; Psa. 119: 104; I John 4:6
   (1) The truth will make us free -- John 8:32; Prov. 23:23; Mk. 16: 15 - 16
   (2) Error never made one soul free from sin -- Col. 2:8; Matt. 15:9; Gal. 1: 6 - 9; 2 Tim. 2: 25 - 26

2. Righteousness is different from sin -- II Cor. 6:14
   (1) God’s commandments are righteousness -- Psa. 119:172; Rom. 5:21; 1: 16 - 17
   (2) Sin is unrighteousness -- I John 5:17; I John 3:4
      1. Do righteousness -- I John 3:7; Acts 10: 34 - 35

3. Faith is different from human opinions
   (1) Faith comes by hearing God's word -- Rom. 10:17
   (2) Human opinion causes division -- Rom. 16:17

4. The New Testament church is different from denominationalism
   (1) The church of the New Testament:
      1. Has NO denominational NAME -- Rom. 16:16; Eph. 1: 22 - 23; Acts 4: 11 - 12
      2. Has NO denominational CREED; recognizes NO AUTHORITY BUT CHRIST -- Matt. 28: 18; James 4:12
      3. Has NO denominational ORGANIZATION -- Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1
      4. Has NO denominational WORSHIP -- John 4:24; Acts 2:42; Eph. 5:19
      5. Has NO denominational WORK -- Mk. 16:15 - 16; Matt. 28:19 - 20; I Cor. 16: 1 - 2; I Tim. 5:16
      6. Has NO ENTANGLING ALLIANCES -- the church must not lose its identity in secular involvements -- it must be free from political, economical and secular movements -- II Cor. 6: 14 - 18
      7. NO denominational requirements FOR MEMBERSHIP -- teaches people to do only what people were told to do apostolic days -- Mk. 16:15 - 16; Acts 2:38; 2: 41, 47
5. The only explanation for the existence of denominations in the world today is:
   (1) They are here because men have disregarded Christ's authority.
   (2) They are here because men have corrupted God's plan of teaching, work and worship.
6. If men are to be saved they must leave denominationalism and obey the gospel and be added to the Lord's church -- Acts 2:47
7. The Bible does not teach there are Christians in denominations.

IV. THERE IS A CERTAIN JOY IN BEING DIFFERENT
1. We have the assurance that though we be in the minority, we are really in the MAJORITY, for God is on our side -- Rom. 8:31
   (1) Happiness comes in assurance that we differ, not with God, but with those who oppose God.
   (2) We are unpopular with sin and the world, yet popular with God.
   (3) God's friendship means more than all earthly friendships combined -- James 2:23
2. One day there will be vindication -- Rom. 12:19

CONCLUSION
1. I believe you can see from this lesson we are a DISTINCTIVE and DIFFERENT people.
2. We must ever strive to be DISTINCTIVE and, God would have us be distinctive.
3. If you are here and out of Christ, don't you want to be a part of His people?

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