HOW TO IDENTIFY CHRIST'S CHURCH

Sermon by Donald Townsley

INTRODUCTION
1. The Bible teaches that Christ built only ONE church -- Eph. 4:4; 1: 22 - 23; Matt. 16:18
2. The New Testament says He gave Himself for "it" not "them" -- Eph. 5:25
3. Even though Christ built ONE CHURCH, we find hundreds of different churches in this land or ours today.
4. At this point, we recognize the problem which confronts the honest inquirer -- His question is "Which one is the Lord's?"
5. There is only one quick and sure way -- Go to the New Testament and study the various phases of the church as it is revealed.
   (1) Learn what the church looked like in the New Testament times, then find the one today that is exactly like that one in the Bible.
   (2) We identify anything by its characteristics:
       1. We identify a man by his name, place of birth, height, weight and age, etc.
       (1) If one of these marks is lacking, the right man has not been found.
6. You must find one exactly like the one in the New Testament.
7. The Word of God, planted in the hearts of men, will produce exactly what it produced 1900 years ago -- Luke 8:11; Matt. 13:19
8. Let us notice some marks of identification by which we can know the church of the Lord.

I. THE ORIGIN OF CHRIST'S CHURCH
   1. PLACE it started -- JERUSALEM -- Isa. 2: 2-3; Micah 4: 1 - 2
      (1) Last days
      (2) In Jerusalem
      (3) Law goes forth from Jerusalem
      (4) All nations flow into it.
   3. On PENTECOST A.D. 33 was the beginning of the "last days" -- Acts 2: 16 - 17
      (1) It was in Jerusalem, and the law of the Lord went forth -- Acts 2: 37 - 38; Luke 24: 47 - 49; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2: 1 - 4

II. THE BUILDER AND FOUNDATION
   1. Jesus Christ is the BUILDER of His church -- Matt. 16:18
   2. He is the FOUNDATION -- I Cor. 3:11; Matt. 16: 13 - 18
   3. If you are a member of a church built by Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, or any other than Jesus Christ, then you are not a member of the Lord's church -- Psa. 127: 1
III. THE DIVINE NAMES -- (a word or phrase by which a person, thing or class of things is known)

1. The individuals were called CHRISTIANS -- Isa. 62:2; Acts 11:26; I Pet. 4:16; Isa. 56: 4 - 5; Acts 8: 26 - 38
2. The church is called:
   (1) The church of God -- I Cor. 1:2; 15:9; I Thess. 2:14 (churches of God)
   (2) “My” church -- Matt. 16:18
   (3) Churches of Christ -- Rom. 16:16
   (4) The house of God -- I Tim. 3:15
   (5) Body of Christ -- Eph. 1: 22 - 23

IV. THE DIVINE GUIDE

1. The true church has no rule of faith but the NEW TESTAMENT -- James 1: 25
2. The Bible itself says this is enough -- II Tim. 3:16 - 17; II Pet. 1:3
3. It contains all we need -- I Cor. 4:6; II John 9; John 12: 48
4. A church that uses more or less is not the true church -- Rev. 22: 18 - 19

V. FORM OF WORSHIP

2. They met upon the FIRST DAY of the week to BREAK BREAD-- Acts 20:7
3. They GAVE as they were PROSPERED upon the FIRST DAY of the week -- I Cor. 16:1 - 2
4. They had PREACHING, TEACHING and SCRIPTURE READING -- Acts 2:42; 20 :7; Col. 4:16; I Thess. 5:27
5. They PRAYED -- Acts 2: 42; Matt. 18:19
6. They had SINGING -- Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16
   (1) Congregational singing

VI. THE ORGANIZATION AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH

1. The organization of the church was simple.
2. Each congregation was independent with its own elders, deacons and members -- Phil. 1;1; Acts 14:23
3. There were no national councils, synods or other governing bodies.
4. Its mission was:
   (1) To PREACH THE GOSPEL-- I Tim. 3:15; Mark 16: 15 - 16
   (2) EDIFY saints -- Eph. 4: 11 - 12; Matt. 28:20
   (3) HELP NEEDY SAINTS -- Acts 2: 44 - 45; I Cor. 16: 1- 2; I Tim. 5:16
   (4) NOT SOCIAL -- I Cor. 11: 22 ,34

VII. TERMS OF ADMISSION
1. HEARING the gospel -- Rom. 10:17

2. BELIEVING the gospel -- Mark 16:16


4. CONFESSING Christ -- Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10

5. BEING BAPTIZED -- Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16-- Added to the church -- Acts 2:47

CONCLUSION