

Authoritative Blunders

04-14-19AM

Part 1: Authority in the Church Matters

Why is the church important? It is important because it was purchased with Jesus' blood (Acts 20:28) and it is the location of salvation (Acts 2:47). Too, for individual Christians it is personally important; Hebrews 10:25-26 tells us that it is a willful sin to neglect our relationship in the church.

We balance the importance of the church by being aware that not all churches are the same. Few make the distinction between the One Church and church congregations. The universal church is the "one body" (Ephesians 4:4) that we are added to at baptism, while the local congregation, the "churches of Christ" mentioned in Romans 16:16, is what we join in membership.

Whether universal (a denomination) or a local congregation, not all are the same. There is only one universal church, and local churches are not all manifestations of that universal body. We find this to be true when we study the seven churches of Asia in Revelation 2-3. Three of those churches - Ephesus, Pergamum, Thyatira – are dying due to tolerating sin and missing priorities. Two of those churches - Sardis, Laodicea – are dead; they are no longer churches of Christ. In the end, only two of the seven - Smyrna, Philadelphia – are alive; even in trial and apparent defeat they are successful towards God.

We learn something very important from the passages on the seven churches of Asia. First, doctrine matters; you are not Jesus church without the right teachings. Second, purpose matters; you are not Jesus' church without the right purpose. But we also learn that size, human viewed "success" and suffering and trials DON'T matter; a church can be small, struggling, or hurting, but still be completely acceptable before God. Church can be alive but small and struggling; they can be dying while looking strong; they can be dead and unaware of it.

Likely everyone reading this already knows this; indeed, most would say that they are part of a church following that New Testament pattern, and have fled here for refuge (Hebrews 6:18). We are here because of a desire for PURE Christianity, one straight from the Source, and desire to be confident that we please God. When we say this, we say we are seeking AUTHORITY for all we do (Commands, examples, inferences). Yet we still struggle to maintain purity when we are drawn into thinking something establishes authority that does not.

Part 2: 7 Authoritative Blunders

The point here is that for those who desire to walk in authority, there are some common missteps we make that are not authority. There are types of reasoning that we use that are good to make choices in authority, but they themselves are not the way to establish authority.

1. Results demonstrate authority

Thought: if it works, it is right

Error: Success may not be proof

Example: Moses in Numbers 20:10

2. Better safe than sorry

Thought: Can't go wrong the safest way

Error: It fails to have faith in an answer

Example: 3rd servant in Matthew 25:25

3. Dangers of a slippery slope

Thought: This might lead to an error

Error: Anything can be a slippery slope

Example: Christians in James 4:14-15

4. We always did it that way

Thought: Prior actions establish authority

Error: Prior actions can be wrong

Example: Jews in Mark 7:9

5. We never did it that way

Thought: Prior inactions establish authority

Error: Prior actions can be wrong

Example: Jesus' command in Luke 5:38

6. They do it that way

Thought: We can/cannot do like others

Error: Others can be right or wrong

Example: Israel in 1 Samuel 8:5

7. It makes sense to me

Thought: I must understand authority

Error: We are to trust God's way

Example: Abraham in Genesis 16:2

POINT: We all desire to walk in a way that pleases God. This means we walk in an manner of authority. The principles we just saw DO NOT authorize us in God. Again, they may be good to make choices we already have authority for, but they ARE NOT permissive or restrictive themselves. Authority matters. We are right to avoid authority errors, but we need to examine ourselves too.