

ARE YOU CLEAR ON THE CLERGY?

Go ahead, ask just about anyone you may know and they will tell you who and what the clergy is. Why, anybody who knows anything at all knows that the clergy is a class of “Christians” who are above other “Christians” and are in charge of the church and its functions. They are the ones who know best what we ought to do and be, and generally tell us what to do and believe. These are the “right reverend pastors” and “fathers” and “bishops of diocese” that we know are next to, if not infallible. This we know because “our reverend father,” the “bishop of Rome” has told us so.

Not to be outdone, the Protestant Reformation, desiring to be all that it could be, developed its clergy system as well. Its “pastors” and “reverends” are generally made up of a body of one over a single congregation of “believers.” Their “bishops” are usually made up of one man who has authority over several congregations of “believers.” He (or in these later times, she) in turn must answer to a superior within this cleric system.

For centuries, the clergy has been dominated by men, but with the more recent on-set of various social movements within our nation and culture, more and more women have been welcomed into the ranks of the “superior in faith.” Now, are we all clear on this business of the clergy? Perhaps, perhaps not. Clear or not, let it be understood just here that ***it is not correct!*** There is no such thing! If you are observant even to a small degree, you will recognize that this kind of “clergy/laity” thinking has had its influence within the body of Christ as well. Sad as it is, far too many think of the men who preach the Word in such terms as we have been describing, holding them in far too high esteem for anyone’s own good. Many believe that “if the preacher has said it, it must be right.” This is waning some, only to be replaced by the foolishness

of thinking that “we cannot be right on anything for sure...because we cannot know anything for sure.” Again, some have even spoken of the preacher as “the pastor.” This writer has been introduced in times past as “our pastor.” Now Christian, if you have thought this way, or have spoken in such terms, or have done this, ***don’t do it again!*** It not only is erroneous but is divisive, and as James wrote, “*ye...make distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts*” (James 2:4).

The word “clergy” itself is not a bad word, but it is sorely misapplied. It actually stems from a Greek term (κλήρων, pronounced “CLAY-rone”) which is used (in this form) only one time (I Peter 5:3). Peter uses it in this form in this one text to indicate “*the charge allotted to you (elders)*.” Even here, in the use from which we get our English word “clergy,” it is referring to ***the church***, not ***the leaders*** of the church. Its root word indicates something “chosen by lot, upon a bit of wood.” Various forms are used with such references as to the choosing of a replacement apostle for Judas; for Simon the ex-sorcerer who had “neither part nor lot” in certain matters, for his heart was not right with God (Acts 8:21); and for blessings which God has chosen to give to His children, and for Christians in general.

What then, is the clergy? Certainly not what men have made it out to be. It is not Scriptural to make any kind of distinctions of superiority between God’s elect, even though some may have varying responsibilities among the flock. Having such respect of persons is not only sinful (James 2:9), but it is unfair to load a man, a woman, men or women with such burdens not intended for them to bear. I hope this helps to clear up the clergy. There is no clergy/laity system in the Word of God, and neither ought there to be among God’s people.

Sermon Notes:

"The Sermon On The Mount" Part II

We have studied His teaching regarding correct attitudes, not let us address the right actions we are to take.

- We must learn how to control our _____.
- Our goal: _____ & _____.
- First, note some things _____ to do:
 - Don't _____ off
 - Don't _____ your benevolence
 - Don't _____ your prayers
(there are no magic _____)
 - Don't _____ of your personal sacrifices
 - Don't be _____ ; you serve God, not things.
 - Don't _____ : God will give you what you need.
 - Don't _____ or by a hypocrite.
 - Don't waste your _____ on those who don't care.
- Now, note some things we _____ do:
 - Seek _____ things
 - Do good to _____
 - Be careful what _____ you enter
 - Inspect the _____ of false teachers
- Here is the key:
 - _____ & _____, v24
 - This _____ righteousness...
 - It also _____ righteousness...
 - And it _____ righteousness.

Meeting Times:

Sunday:

Bible Study: 9:30 a.m.
Worship: 10:30 a.m.
Evening: 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Study: 7:30 p.m.

Preachers:

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Wednesday's Wisdom:

"Be careful what and how you say the things you say. It will affect others." James Grayson

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in thy sight, O Jehovah, my rock, and my redeemer" (Psalm 19.14).

"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one" (Colossians 4.6).

Pray for Shirley Mendenall (forgive my misspelling), who is suffering from cancer. This was a phoned in prayer request.

Lee Hall and her son, Wes, made it ok to Florida. We look forward to their safe return.

Question/Answer night is next week. Still looking for questions in the box.

Sermon Preview:

- Jesus' Kingdom Sermon teaches us how to live as members of His church.
- He addresses not only our thoughts and attitudes, but also our actions
- There are things NOT to do and things TO do.