

WHO IS IN CHARGE?

Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:21-22; 5:23b; 24a

Introduction: Who is in charge of the Church? Everybody knows that it is the pastor, right? Well, pastors know that really it is the deacons, or elders, or the board of directors. Who is really supposed to be "in charge" of the Church? Well, Jesus Christ is SUPPOSED to be in charge, after all it is HIS Church and He died to bring it into being but sadly, that is not how it is getting to be in today's time. Jesus has little to say anymore in His Church, He's not needed.

I. JESUS IS MORE OF A SYMBOL OF AUTHORITY THAN ACTUALLY BEING IN CHARGE

1. Jesus is treated more like a figure, a symbol, a representative with limited opportunity to have anything to do with the actual operation of the Church.
 - Kings of today are more of a limited, "constitutional" monarchy and is mostly a symbol of one's country but actually has little real authority.
 - He is "theoretically" head over all, but when a decision needs to be made, somebody else makes it.
2. Among the Churches of today, Jesus is little more than a beloved symbol.
 - Hymns are sung in His honor, a Christian flag is on the platform representing Christianity.
 - In the Sunday services of the Church and in the daily conduct of the Church members, it is NOT Jesus Christ who makes the decisions.
 - Those of the Church who are in actual authority decide the standards of the Church, the objectives and ways employed to achieve them, Jesus is not consulted nor invited.
 - Pastors, deacons, elders and committees all have more authority in the Church than does Jesus.
3. Jesus has little authority in the Church and has little influence as well.
 - Christmas with the baby Jesus in a manger brings tender emotions and excitement for it is a time of decorations, cards, gifts but after Christmas, Jesus is forgotten.
 - The life of Jesus is remembered, the miracles, the feeding of the thousands, the raising of the dead, the parables, the disciples, etc., are remembered, but all that place two thousand years ago and really has nothing to do with today's lifestyles.
 - The idea that this baby Jesus, this man Jesus of long ago has absolute and final authority over the entire Church and all its members is just not accepted by the average Church/Christian.
4. Whatever the "Denomination" thinks must be scriptural and is like the Lord and His disciples, no questions asked.
5. Liberal interpretations are given in the areas of the Lord's instructions of obedience, worldliness, disobedience, fleshly desires for after all that was 2,000 years ago and things have changed.
6. Jesus is recommended for people with "problems" to go to for peace of mind and to be delivered from guilt complexes and how to adjust to society and such.
7. Jesus in many of today's Churches is little more than the servant of the people.

II. EXAMPLES WHERE JESUS HAS LITTLE TO SAY IN TODAY'S CHURCHES

1. What board of deacons or elders (those in charge) consult the Lord's words to decide the matters under discussion?
 - The scripture is read at the opening of the meeting, a short formal prayer is made, and then on to business.
 - No asking Jesus what He thought or had to say.
2. Those who determine the direction of the Sunday School do so by their own guidelines, rules, plans, methods and the way it has always been done.
 - There is no asking Jesus what His instructions might be for their Sunday School studies.
3. Church business meetings are called to order by the moderator, usually the pastor, a short passage of scripture is read, a formal prayer is made, or perhaps a short time of silent prayer, and then on to the order of business.
 - No asking the Lord Jesus to direct the meeting, or what He might have to say.
4. Even the foreign mission "boards" already have their programs, agendas, methods and fund raisers all worked out and only pray that the Lord might give success to their already made plans.
 - Jesus is asked only to be their helper, not their director or Lord.
5. Consider today's "worship" services. Where is the authority of the Lord Jesus to be found?
 - Who controls the service? Is it not the choir director and the pastor?
 - Jesus is sung about, prayed to, preached about, but He is not allowed to interfere for the order of service, the bulletin has already been printed and distributed and it cannot be changed.
 - The order of service is the way it has always been and there is no reason to change it.
6. What Christian goes to the Lord's Word when faced with a moral problem? What Christian lets the words of the Lord be directive in his/her rearing of the children? Who asks the Lord what He thinks about personal habits, interests and business matters?
7. What school waving the Christian flag, going under the name of "Christian School" dare let Jesus guide and control the school? Is not Jesus Christ ignored in order for the school to teach other things than the things of Christ?

III. WHY DOES JESUS HAVE SO LITTLE TO SAY IN TODAY'S CHURCHES?

1. "We have always done it this way!"
2. Satan comes into the Church through members who lift their eyes to heaven, say that they believe in Jesus and the Church but are used by Satan to weaken, change, even destroy faith to the extent that the "supernatural" things of Jesus are not considered anymore.
 - The attitude "we don't want to offend anyone" is adopted and therefore what WAS worship among Christians has become entertainment for everybody with no specific spiritual application.
3. A test for the Christian's Church is what place does Jesus occupy in every thing that is called "religious" within the confines of that Church?
 - Is Jesus just a symbol?
 - Is Jesus in charge or is He just one of the committee members?
 - Does Jesus decide things or does He only get to help carry out the plans of "those in charge?"

CONCLUSION:

1. So, Christian, what role does Jesus have in YOUR Church? Take a good look!