



Cape Coral Church of Christ

1010 S.W. 20th Avenue

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<http://www.thelordsway.com/capecoralfl>

Schedule of Services

Sunday: Bible Study: 9:30 A.M.

Worship: 10:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday: Bible Study: 6:00 P.M.

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When You Follow Jesus, Something Dies

"If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory" (Colossians 3:1-4 NASB).

There are many common mistakes when it comes to the concept of being a Christian. Some think it is nothing more than an affirmation. For some, it is a matter of adopting a vocabulary. For some, adopting a set of "dos and don'ts." For some, adopting a personal routine. For some, adopting a specific cause. For some, adopting a specific church. For some, adopting a view of God.

The problem: all those fail to fulfill the New Testament concept of a Christian. They are all important, but they are all partial. Those things, or any combination of them, are only a partial concept of the New Testament view of the meaning of being a Christian.

Being a Christian means something important dies. Paul, who wrote Colossians, said this death was a crucifixion (Galatians 5:24).

That means it was deliberate, as was Jesus death. It also means it was relatively slow. This death was not an accident that "just happened," but was a deliberate act that the person knew was happening. Each understands that the life of Jesus' resurrection could not infuse the person unless this death occurred.

What death? The death to self – the death to the way one lived, acted, thought, and was motivated prior to meeting Jesus. Jesus literally would define who one was, how one thought, how one saw others, how one acted, how one used life, one's involvements, one's use of abilities, one's motives, and how one defined and viewed right and wrong.

That is quite a death! It is a total remake job! It continues from birth into Jesus Christ until physical death in Jesus Christ! It obviously is a serious, life-changing commitment that is not for sissies! This death is evident in a person's trust and behavior!

Do you have the courage, with the help of God's grace, to be a Christian?



What Are You Singing?

Over the years, I've had song leaders that will ask me the topic of my sermon so that they can pick an invitation song that will fit. The invitation song that flows along with the message can be that tipping point that might make someone respond. However, I noticed that many already have their own invitation song. Not that everyone's singing their own tune, but rather it is the song of their heart and mind that is influencing their response.

You see, some are singing, "I Shall Not Be Moved." No matter what the lesson was about, no matter how important it is that they make a change, they are firmly planted where they are, refusing to budge.

For some, their invitation song is "Farther Along." The message may have hit home but the thinking is the response can be delayed. Sometime farther along I will make a change, farther along, I'll obey the gospel, farther along I'll repent.

Others might be on a chorus of "Faith of Our Fathers." "Dad was a preacher, Mom was a Bible class teacher, so I'm good since they were.

It might be their song is "When This Passing World Is Done." They would respond, but are not ready to give up their worldly ways.

But there are those that hear in their hearts, "I Am Resolved." They know what they need to do and have taken the courageous step to do just that. They understand the danger of delay and that next, a personal response is demanded. So they are willing to do what the scriptures teach.

When the next invitation is offered, what will you be singing?

Condemned by Ignorance

"God will like it because I like it" is the claim that many make. Many assume that our Heavenly Father will accept whatever they do simply because it pleases them. Note what Paul writes to the Ephesians about this type of mindset:

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Ephesians 4:17-18).

The majority of people will be separated from God through eternity because of their own ignorance.

People fail to understand that God expects complete obedience to His will. We cannot decide for ourselves what is acceptable to God and what isn't. Because people do not search the scriptures for themselves (Acts 17:11) they leave themselves open to being deceived by false teachers:

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Timothy 4:1-2).

Just as in the secular world, God tells us that "ignorance of the law is no excuse." We will all be judged by the word of God (John 12:48) and that word will continue until the day of judgment (Revelation 20:12).

In order to be ready for the return of Christ, study the Bible often, read it daily, and do what it says. Do not let ignorance of the word of God keep you from entering heaven.

Unable to Blush

We have all experienced those moments when blood rushes to our faces and we turn that noticeable shade of red. Maybe it was an embarrassing or uncomfortable moment that involved public recognition. It may have come from getting stuck in a situation where friends open a bottle of alcohol, or pop in a movie that you know you shouldn't be watching. The blush betrays uncomfortable feelings that we often encounter.

The prophet Jeremiah told God's people in Judea that they had lost the ability to blush (Jeremiah 8:12). They were guilty of idolatry, deception, greed, and spiritual ignorance. However, when confronted with their transgressions, there was no repentance, no remorse nor even shame or guilt. For many in our culture, the blush has gone away. We watch things on TV now such as nakedness or vulgar language and we never blush. We break promises without regret; we listen to sermons and feel no shame or need for forgiveness. It is as if we look at God and feel no embarrassment, even though we are in the presence of His holiness.

Paul warned Timothy that some would teach false doctrines with no sense of shame. He said that they would be people whose consciences were seared by a branding iron (1 Timothy 4:2). While guilt and shame are uncomfortable emotions, and blushing is not fashionable, those traits indicate a heart that is sensitive to the will of God. May we never become so used to sin and calloused towards our own error that we forget to blush.

Give Thanks!

"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). "Give thanks" is from one Greek word meaning "grace." God owes us nothing and we owe Him everything! We deserve to have eternal condemnation, but He gives us eternal life and a multitude of good things we don't deserve.

Thankfulness is to be all-inclusive: "in all circumstances." It's hard to give thanks when bad things happen but we are told to give thanks under every circumstance in life.

Thankfulness is a command – "Give thanks!" God knew this would be a difficult thing to do, that's why he gave us this command. The commands of God are designed to help us break through the barriers that are unnatural and harmful to us.

Thankfulness is God's will – "This is God's will for us!" Being able to thank God in the circumstances is not just good advice, it is His will that we thank Him in all circumstances: even those that we do not like. Part of pleasing God is to do His will. When we don't thank God for everything, we move outside the will of God. Thankfulness is accomplished by our connection to Christ. It is "in Christ Jesus" we can give thanks!