

Seeking Biblical Authority, Lesson 4
A Case Study: The Restoration Movement, Part 2

Theme: Authority

Aim: To show that we need to continue to seek Biblical authority in religion ... to restore the church.

1. If I were to tell you that Princeton, Harvard, Yale, and most Ivy League schools had among their founding goals that of training preachers, how would you react?
2. Given the philosophical positions of such schools today, you would wonder if religion is even welcome on the campuses.
3. The reality is that movements based on ideology can and do lose their way.

I. Some have said that the *Restoration Plea* is outmoded.

A. What some brethren are saying today:

1. There is no pattern in the New Testament. It is a "love letter" and not intended to be normative for the church for all time. Need to also listen to Christian tradition or the Spirit's leading.
2. The church of Christ is a denomination.
3. We need to modernize, and keep up with the religions around us.
4. The positions our Bible study have led us to have alienated us from other brotherhoods and traditions that differ from us.
5. We need to live in the diverse unity of the wider Christian world.

B. "Of this they are willingly ignorant ... "

1. That is what folks said that got the Israelites in trouble, 1 Samuel 8:1-9.
2. That is what was claimed in the late 1800 when the progressives said give us a Missionary Society and the instrument of music.
3. That I what some are saying as they seek a "reunion" with the Independent Christian Church.

C. If we reject the plea to go back to the Bible, to have Bible authority for all we say and do, where will it take us?

1. Where has it taken the Disciples of Christ and to a lesser degree the Independent Christian Church?
2. We've been down that road before and found it is a broad way ... Matthew 7:13-14.
3. Note: Consider the why of what follows, Matthew 7: 15-27.

II. Let us remember three Biblical teachings.

A. The "Seed Principle." What do I mean by that?

1. Genesis 1:11-12,21-23. Everything produces after its own kind.
2. Illustrated by pumpkin seeds found in an ancient Egyptian tomb. 2000 or more years old. When planted they produced pumpkins.
3. Jesus' own explanation of the Parable of the Sower in Luke 8:11-15. Compare Isaiah 55:6-11.
4. Question: How did the church get from Jerusalem to Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, or Rome?
5. If the seed of the Word of God is sown today, it will produce the same plant and fruit it did in Paul's day, or any other day.

B. It only takes a little neglect mixed with a little pride to cause us to drift away.

1. Hebrews 2:1-4.
2. Remember; "Give us a king ... "

C. John 8:32

1. Is this not why even in the New Testament letters Paul and others were calling folks back to the original?
2. Galatians 1:6-9.

III. Here is my vision of Restoration and the church in the 21st century, or any other century or time.

A. We need faith in the word.

1. Josiah had it.
2. The Restoration preachers had it.
3. Either John 14:26, 16:13, and 2 Timothy 3:14-17 are true or they are not.
4. Either the Word is all sufficient or it is not.

B. We need to free ourselves of our pride. How arrogant to think we know better than God!

1. Genesis 3:1-5. This has been Satan' favorite tactic since creation.
2. Are we so naive as to think he has abandoned his favorite tactic?
3. Our pride lets him succeed.
4. Remember how Josiah was described: "Because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke..." 2 Kings 22:19.

C. I want to know I have Bible authority, not the wisdom of men for all I am doing. Then I know I am pleasing to God.

1. He has never promised to bless any but those who are obedient to Him.
2. Consider Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 5:9-11: "Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences."

D. We are not alone. As God told Elijah, there are 7,000 who have not bowed the knee to Baal.

1. The Lord's church will continue to exist. We have the Lord's word on it. Matthew 16:18
3. Did Jesus break His promise?

1. When I look around me at the great brotherhood of which I am a part, I do not see dying out of touch churches. I see a dynamic brotherhood striving to be God's people, doing God's work.

2. Let us close by reading 2 John 4-11.

Michael D. Greene

Elizabethtown church of Christ