

5 Reasons Why I Don't Criticize The Church Of Christ

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Reading Time: 4 minutes

I don't criticize the church of Christ. Why? Because I am head-over-heals in love with her. The church of Christ is the Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:25-27; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:24), and as such He loved her enough to die for her (Acts 20:28). I want to see her as Christ sees her. Therefore the last thing I want to do is tarnish something Christ desires to "be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27).

The Bible likens Christ and His church to the relationship between a husband and wife (Eph. 5:22-33). Good marriages require hard work, but the principles that make them good are simple. For example, the husband who "cherishes" his wife (Eph. 5:29) loves her as himself and will never treat her in a way he wouldn't want to be treated (cf. Matt. 7:12). This means:

- A good husband never publicly criticizes his wife. In fact, he looks for opportunities to build her up.

- A good husband understands that when *constructive* criticism is needed in a particular area, it should be given in private.
- A good husband views the needs of his spouse as being more important than his own needs.
- A good husband is mindful of himself because he knows that his actions reflect on his wife.

The same principles apply to the Christian and his relationship to Christ's church. If I am critical of the church - if I force my opinions and preferences into the church - if I do not care how my actions and teachings reflect on the church - what does that say about *me*? **I fear for the man who must stand before Christ in Judgment (cf. 2 Cor. 5:10) when on earth he was defined by his criticism of Christ's Bride.**

Here are five (5) reasons why I do not criticize the church of Christ:

I do not want to hurt her reputation in the eyes of the world.

The church is the "pillar and foundation of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15), and thus evil people will always hate her (Prov. 29:27). As such, enemies of the church already do a pretty good job smearing her reputation. The last thing the church needs is for *me* to publicly point out what I think are her problems.

The world shouldn't be the place we go to for sympathy when venting our frustrations over doctrinal disagreements. Nor should the world be our sounding board when we are hurt or disappointed by other Christians. **When we share our problems with non-Christians rather than bringing our concerns to the Lord and His Word (Psa. 55:22; 1 Pet. 5:7), we demonstrate a lack of faith and confidence in His care.**

To avoid hurting the world's image of Christ and His people, ask yourself, "When Christians and non-Christians alike are around me, does my influence help or hurt their image of the church of Christ?"

I recognize that her problems are not her problems at all (rather, they are the result of the people that

comprise her).

There is a big difference between the man who is critical of *the church of Christ herself* and the man who is critical of *the sins and bad attitudes that sometimes plague God's people*.

I am highly critical of Christians who tolerate impenitent sin within the church. I hate it when Christians develop attitudes of laziness and indifference. I fume when Christians forget their identity as the New Testament church. **But I will not confuse problems among individual Christians with Christ and His glorious Bride. Yes, the church is comprised of imperfect people (cf. 1 Cor. 12:12), but that doesn't mean we comprise an imperfect church.** God designed His church, and He did so perfectly. She is worthy of her Husband.

I want to build her up, not tear her down.

Like it did in the 1st century, I want the church to “grow in favor with all the people” (Acts 2:47). So let's *shout* what we like, and *whisper* what we dislike. Let's talk more about what is *right* about the church and less of what we think is *wrong*. Because if we actually think there is something wrong with the product of the “manifold wisdom of God” (Eph. 3:10), the problem lies not with the church of Christ, but with us.

The church already has enough finger-pointing, name-calling, bad attitudes, and negativity among her own. In this regard, the church doesn't need you. What she does need, however, is for you to bring her more *commendation* and less *condemnation*.

I am not a wolf in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15; Rom. 16:17).

There will always be the vocal few who actively promote revolution within the church. Like the Israelites of old who wanted to be like the pagan nations around them (cf. 1 Sam. 8:20), they want the church of Christ to be no different than the denominational churches that have already left their first love. **They are like the husband who marries a woman because of who he wants her to be, not for who she is.**

The church of Christ is, and always will be, the church you find in the New Testament. The day she changes will be the day she ceases to legitimately be the church of Christ. If you do not like who she is, then why are you still here? There are plenty of other churches out there.

- Have a problem with the hierarchy of authority in the church (Acts 20:17,28; 1 Tim. 3:1ff; Tit. 1:5ff)? Then leave.
- Have a problem with music in corporate worship that is exclusively *a capella*, reciprocal, congregation, singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)? Then leave.
- Have a problem with not being in spiritual fellowship with those who are not first in fellowship with God (1 John 1:7)? Then leave.
- Have a problem with the restoration plea of simply following the New Testament ([John 17:20-21](#); [Rom. 6:17-18](#); [1 Cor. 4:6](#); [2 Tim. 1:13](#))? Then leave.
- Have a problem with viewing the Bible as the Word of God and thus authoritative in all matters of faith and religion (2 Tim. 3:16-17)? Then leave.

I love the distinguishing characteristics of the bride of Christ. **I love her for who she is, not for who I may want her to be.** I love her just as I find her in the New Testament. Who am I to place my opinions and ideas above the simple teachings of the New Testament?

I do not want to bite the hand that feeds me.

I am guilty of sin (Rom. 3:23), and deserve death (Isa. 59:1-2; Rom. 6:23). Because of His love, God has offered me salvation (Eph. 2:8-10). By His grace, has placed me in His church (Acts 2:38, 47). The church is the vessel of the saved (Col. 1:13). I cannot be saved outside of the church.

When I attack the church - my only hope for salvation - I attack the very gracious hand of God. There is a word for this: stupid.