

longs to Christ. Locally, the town or area may be used to identify one church from another (Revelation 1:11), but all other names are similar to the above (Romans 16:16 - churches of Christ; I Corinthians 1:2 - a church of God; I Corinthians 3:16,17 - calls a congregation the temple of God, etc.) Out in front of our building we have two: One says "church of Christ", the other, "Christians meet here". Whether speaking of all the Lord's people (church) or identifying a congregation of His people locally, any description should be as the Bible terms it.

4. Why Is The Church Important?

The universal church is comprised of all the saved of the ages, so it goes without saying that it is important, but what about a local

assembly of Christians, or church? Hebrews 10:23-25 teaches that assembling with other Christians is to provide occasion for stimulating one another to love and good works. One of the main reasons we must join ourselves to a congregation following after Christ, is in order to encourage, strengthen, and teach each other. God knows us better than we know ourselves and He has said that we regularly need to get together with other Christians for worship, building up, and comfort.

5. What Should A Person Look For In A Church?

A group of people following Jesus the best they can. No, they will not be perfect people, but a group of sinners who have been forgiven by a merciful Lord and Savior, and after having been added by the

Lord to His ONE church have banded themselves together to help one another go to heaven. If you have been baptized into Christ you can join, too.

6. What Is The Church To Do?

A local church engages in the works, worship and activities approved by Jesus Christ, seeing they profess to be owned by Him. The list is almost altogether spiritual in nature. A) Weekly observance of the Lord's Supper in memory of the death of Jesus. B) Singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs C) Praying D) Freewill contributions for the work of the church and E) Studying the Bible. Of course, just seeing each other's face provides occasion for greeting one another, rejoicing and weeping with one another, etc., all of which are Scriptural. ~

We meet on James M Harvell Rd next to the public library in Navarre.
Call for directions and more information (850) 939-8109

Navarre church of Christ
8490 James M Harvell Rd
Navarre, FL 32566

Place Stamp Here

Assembly Schedule
Sunday
Bible Class for all ages ___ 9:00 AM
Morning Worship Service ___ 10:00 AM
Evening Worship Service ___ 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Class for all ages ___ 7:00 PM

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The Dark Path of Bitterness



Return of the Prodigal Son

by Larry Rouse

How is it possible for Satan to defeat and capture a child of God who had previously escaped his grasp? Satan is exposed in the Bible for the deceiver that he is. Jesus described him as having "no truth in him" and as being a "liar and the father of it" (John 8:44). While it is inconceivable for a Christian to ever imagine himself as willingly placing his life under the control of the "evil one," Satan, in fact, has a strong track record of accomplishing this very thing. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

Satan's goal is to cut off the word of God from your heart and then drive you by your emotions. The

Bible frames the struggle in this way: "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Rom 8:12-13). Over the years I have witnessed many of my brethren destroyed in this manner, and the vast majority were overcome with bitterness and anger.

There is a place for anger! When Jesus asked a straightforward question and received no reply, He looked into their hearts and responded in this way: "And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts..." (Mark 3:5). My Lord was angry, but my Lord never sinned. There is a place for anger when it is under control and directed by the principles of God's word. "Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil." (Ephesians 4:26-27). We need to be angry when we see sin! But always remember this warning "do not let the sun go down on your wrath," because a failure to do so will give the devil a place in your heart. And be assured, he will take advantage of it.

Why do so many of my brethren not take uncontrolled anger seriously? I know of too many men that laugh about their temper and others who laugh with them saying "that's just the way he is." What does the Bible say? "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:15). Does this verse get your attention? My eternal life is no laughing matter and

anything that could come between me and my God has my attention.

Consider the works of the flesh: "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21). Did you notice the "anger family" in this passage? While we hear many good sermons on immorality and false doctrine, do we hear that same emphasis on uncontrolled anger? Remember "those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

The Bible plainly tells us of the difficulty of controlling our anger. "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city" (Proverbs 16:32). Moses was commended by God above all others for his ability to control his spirit (meekness – Numbers 12:2 ASV), but in a moment of anger he spoke rashly and thus sinned. "They angered Him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses on account of them; because they rebelled against His Spirit, so that he spoke rashly with his lips" (Psalm 106:32-33). While Moses went to the ultimate Promised Land of God, heaven, he was not able to enter the physical Promised Land because of this one moment of anger.

When we begin to dwell on our hurts and nourish our anger, we

are placing ourselves firmly in the hands of Satan. Have you ever tried to reason with an angry person? When you give in to a life of anger you also give up your ability to reason. "A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle" (Proverbs 18:19). The corrupt politician and the false teacher specialize in slander designed to shut down the thinking process. There are many Christians that I have known who, because of their anger towards a man, have quit serving God. What sense does that make? It is like getting mad at the dog and kicking the cat! In short your anger will make you behave as a crazy person, unwilling to listen or reason, and ready to fight anyone or anything that gets in the way of your desire for revenge.

Local churches have been devastated by just one man who plants seeds of bitterness. We are warned in the scriptures to be "Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled" (Hebrews 12:15). Bitter people often try to build their own personal kingdoms that one has described as "the fellowship of the miserable." You will be received and flattered by this group as long as you hate whoever the leader hates. I personally have been attacked by such groups for doing nothing more than showing kindness to someone that was an object of another's anger.

Bitter people will be lost if they do not repent. The greatest evangelists for Satan today are those Christians who plant the seeds of hatred in the church of our Lord.

In time bitter people will burn themselves out and their kingdoms will disband. Sometimes the bitter person will repent and return to the grace of God. Sadly, however, they often are unable to reverse the effects of the angry seeds they planted in the hearts of those that were closest to them. It is in the lives of their friends, and especially in their children, that the harshest fruits of planted bitterness will be seen.

There is a better way. "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-

hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:31-32). You will never regret releasing the desire for vengeance upon those who have hurt you. Our God has pleaded with us in this regard: "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord" (Romans 12:19).

Do you really believe in God? Are you really a Christian, willing to follow in the footsteps of Jesus? Look carefully at the specific footsteps our God has placed before us: "For to this you were called,

because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously" (1 Peter 2:21-23). The next time you are tempted to inflict punishment upon your enemy, I hope you will remember the pleading voice of God where He said "vengeance is mine." If you really trust God then you will let it go. Please do not allow Satan to do his work through you. ~

Some Basic Church Questions

by Whit Sasser

1. What Is The Church?

The church that belongs to Jesus Christ is His group of people (Matthew 16:18). It is made up of all the people (both dead and alive) who have responded to the teaching of the good news about Jesus by believing it and obeying it. (Mark 16:15-16). God forgives their trespasses, adopts them as children, and adds them to His ever-expanding family of people being prepared for eternity in heaven. In short, the church of Jesus Christ is the people of Jesus Christ..His purchased ones (Acts 20:28), those called out of the world to be His own.

2. Is There Only One Church That Is Right?

Ephesians 1:22,23 says that the church is Christ's body and chapter 4:4 says that there is one body. So there is only one church. But, Revelation 1:11 mentions seven churches in Asia. How can this be? Simple. The word church is sometimes used to describe those discussed in the question above. Numerically, there is only one such church. It has no geographical boundaries, visible headquarters, or register on earth. Its head (Jesus) is in heaven and He alone knows perfectly those that are His (II Timothy 2:19).

On the other hand, the word church is used to describe a congregation of these people of God in a given location (I Corinthians 1:2). In this way there may be many churches, as there are many places where Christians

meet.

A person is added by the Lord to the one church of Jesus Christ when He is baptized. (Acts 2:38,47). You cannot join it. A person who has been added to the Lord's church will then join himself to a local church following the commandments of the Lord (Acts 9:26).

3. What Is The Proper Name Of The Church?

There is no one exclusive name given in the Bible. In fact, there is no proper noun name at all. Rather, we find descriptions of the church, eg. household of God (I Timothy 3:15), the temple of God (Ephesians 2:19-22), the kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:13). If "church," then simply the church that be-