

Sovereign Grace Chapel

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“When Should We Gather Together?”

By: Walter Pendleton

The question asked, and more directly stated, would be this, when should believers assemble together as the church? Is there a day that we should meet? Most all who profess to be believers in Christ would agree that we should meet as an assembly. All who are truly believers in Christ desire and enjoy meeting as an assembly gathered in common faith and fellowship around the gospel of God’s free and reigning grace manifested in the person and work of Christ. That person who

By: Joe Galuszek John 10:11–18

John 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

The hired man may run away, but the Shepherd will not. When the wolf comes (the wolf will come, perhaps in sheep’s clothing), the hireling will flee, but the Shepherd will stay and defend His sheep. However, please notice Jesus Christ is not just the Shepherd. He is the Good Shepherd. This reminds me of the time when the rich young man came to Christ and said, “Good master.” Christ asked him; why do you call me good? There is

professes to be a believer and views gathering together as a chore or a bore has a false profession.

Before we proceed with answering the question a few erroneous ideas need be addressed for proper foundation. (1) We do not “go to church” thus the question was not, “When should we go to church?” This makes the church a place or even a building. Many hold to that view but scripture does not. The church, locally speaking, is that body of believers in Christ in any given locality (Acts 11:22; Rom. 1:7; 16:1 etc.), and they are the

only one good and that is God. The young man did not call Him good after that. Here, Christ names Himself as the Good Shepherd. He is God; He is good.

How is the Good Shepherd different? He will give His life for His sheep. Jesus Christ did give His life for His sheep. “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which
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church even when they are not gathered together (I Cor. 14:23a) and thus there is a plurality of churches. The church, universally speaking, is every individual for whom Christ shed His blood and is Head (Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25; Heb. 12:23) and is thus one church. All references like: “Yet in the church...” (I Cor. 14:19) does not refer to the place or building but the assembly itself. (2) Our gathering together is not, in itself, our worship and service. Those who hold to this erroneous view also have the idea that the more they gather the more they are

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 worshiping and serving, thus they gather often, and since prayer, song, and preaching becomes boring they gather for just about anything under the sun and call it worship and service. We should gather together to worship, serve, learn and fellowship in the gospel. We also worship, serve, learn, and can sometimes even find fellowship throughout the whole of every day, whether gathered together as an assembly or in our everyday lives.

So then, when should believers gather together as the church? The practice of our early brethren in Christ was to gather together upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Clearly, there are at least three things associated with this day. (1) Our Lord was raised out from among the dead on the first day of the week (Mk. 16:9). (2) The resurrection of Christ is the central theme of the gospel (Rom. 1:1-4; I Cor. 15:1-4...). (3) The brethren had the tradition [a precept handed down to be practiced] of meeting on the first day of the week. This third point is even more clearly revealed in reading Paul's order to the church at Corinth, with the same order being given to the church at Galatia, concerning their laying by them in store, that they do so "Upon the first day of the week..." (I Cor.-

16:2). The very fact that Paul did not explain the significance of this "first day" implies the brethren's prior knowledge of the practice. All churches of orthodox doctrine hold to this practice, even today. Tradition is not only good but it is vital as well (cf. II Thess. 3:6). Nevertheless, we are never told to make our own traditions but to hold to what has already been established (II Thess. 2:15). The New Testament scriptures alone dictate our faith and practice. We dare not add to or take from that authority. We are given no exact time to meet on the first day nor given any exact length of time to meet that day, but meet we should with all expectation and joy of the fellowship of the saints (Heb. 10:24-25).

Scripture also reveals that the brethren also meet at various other times and on occasion other days of the week. In researching the various accounts we find these meetings not as a matter of tradition but of providence, expediency, or necessity. For instance, Paul preached at Ephesus for a total of somewhere around two years and three months, and in the latter two years Paul spoke every day (Acts 19:8-10). A special meeting was held in Jerusalem, with many in attendance, against the legalistic teaching of circumcision for salvation

(Acts 15:1-29). Paul held a meeting on a riverbank on the sabbath day (Acts 16:13-14). Clearly, these meetings were not that of those things Paul calls "the traditions taught" but as God in His wise providence allowed.

In summary, we should gather together as the church, as a matter of common faith and practice, on the first day of the week. To gather together any other time is certainly acceptable, but if it has been made into the tradition and is demanded as a rule of faith and practice then someone has overstepped their bounds! Many meet Sunday mornings and Sunday nights, then again on Wednesday or Thursday or Friday night in a mid-week service [some term these mid-week services has "Prayer Meeting" where praying is the least thing they do], at least one "Revival" or "Conference" meeting a year, then several other appointed meetings just for fun Christian events dotted at various times throughout the year. Any argument demanding one or more of these added days of meeting, or ridiculing others who do not, or basing faithfulness to God on such added meetings, on the basis of its better to meet more is based on human opinion. I recently heard a preacher on the radio say, after hav-

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 ing announced their Sunday morning Sunday school time and their Sunday Morning preaching time and their Sunday evening preaching time and their mid-week service time: “We have a full schedule of services.” He did not say, “This is our full schedule of services.” His actual words clearly imply that anyone who does not have such does not have a full schedule! Not one scripture can be given to prove its better to demand more than God in His wisdom appointed as a matter of faith and practice!

.....**John 10 (cont.)**
 is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” (Hebrews 13:20-21). Christ is the Great Shepherd. He literally shed His blood for His people, the blood of the everlasting covenant. He paid the price for the sin of His children. Now believers are to do the will of the Great Shepherd. Believers were lost even though they had been purchased, redeemed, 2,000 years ago. “For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls” (1 Peter 2:25). The Good Shepherd seeks, finds and brings in His lost sheep. They already were sheep. They already were His. He seeks and finds them, they do find Him but only after He has found them. He brings them into His flock and feeds them. Without Him, none would be found. With Him, all are found, for

He is the Good Shepherd. He knows His job and never fails. He is not the mediocre shepherd. Christ is not the incompetent shepherd. This God-Man knows every sheep by name and calls them. They follow Him, for He is the Good Shepherd. He laid His life down for the sheep, and He took up His life again for His sheep. He is seated at the right hand of the Father, and Christ ever lives to make intercession for His children.

Mal 1:1-14

1 The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.
 2 I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? *Was* not Esau Jacob’s brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob,
 3 And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.
 4 Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever.
 5 And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The LORD will be magnified from the border of Israel.
 6 A son honoureth *his* father, and a servant his master: if then I *be* a father, where *is* mine honour? and if I *be* a master, where *is* my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?

7 Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD *is* contemptible.
 8 And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, *is it* not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, *is it* not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.
 9 And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard your persons? saith the LORD of hosts.
 10 Who *is there* even among you that would shut the doors *for nought*? neither do ye kindle *fire* on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.
 11 For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name *shall be* great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense *shall be* offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name *shall be* great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.
 12 But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD *is* polluted; and the fruit thereof, *even* his meat, *is* contemptible.
 13 Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness *is it!* and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought *that which was* torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD.
 14 But cursed *be* the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for *I am* a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name *is* dreadful among the heathen.



Newsletter

The Newsletter is placed on the website each time. It will be in PDF format. This will require you to have the adobe reader to view it and print it out if you would like. You can go to the Adobe site and download their viewer for free.

Pamphlets

We have some pamphlets on the website, you should be able to see them there and print them out. They will be in the PDF format as well.

CDs

We now have our Sunday morning messages on CD as well as on the Website in MP3 format.

Articles on the Web

We also have some messages on the site that may not have appeared in our newsletter.

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