



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – October 30, 2022

Heart to Heart...

I don't know if it is concerning to you but it is to me. People aren't reading Scripture much less studying to seek truth. Many are just listening to what someone tells them and that's how they arrive at their faith. No seeking. No searching. Just accepting almost anything tied to God. It leads to spiritual disaster.

Baptism is one of those areas. People are told they must be baptized or they won't go to heaven. While there is some truth in that statement, it can easily be a scare tactic especially when it comes to youth. Rather than being brought face to face with sin and their separation as a result of sin, they are simply told you must be baptized to be in heaven. This is what leads to little faith in Jesus, so faith in Jesus is really never sought. No real tie to Jesus and no real love for His church. Scriptures are not studied to grow our faith and make sure our convictions are founded upon God so many just flounder in religion. We need to teach people what God did before we tell them what to do! The real, true motivation of faith is the grace of God. When we speak of Christianity, we are speaking of the grace of God in Christ Jesus extended to us. When we speak of the Church, you cannot separate Christ and grace from it! When we speak baptism, it's where God's grace and man come together. Paul expressed this thought when speaking with the elders from Ephesus in Acts 20:28 and the teaching to the church at Ephesus in Ephesians 3:21 and 5:25-27.

We must believe in the grace of God and that belief will take one into the love of His Church, His body. It was Jesus that told Peter He would build His Church and the gates of Hades would never prevail against His Church (Matthew 16:18). Why do so many never seek out what the Church of Jesus really is about? Scriptures are not being studied. Jesus never taught He would build "*a church*" or "*that church*" but His Church. It will be based on Him being the head and the grace provider of it. Too many are making the Church what they want it to be and believe

the way they want to believe. That's why when someone is upset, they easily go to 'another' church without any thoughts of doctrine or ownership. Jesus never built "*our church*". Grace from God through Jesus Christ built the Church of Jesus on His terms.

The Church is about God's grace to us. Jesus built His Church without man's involvement. Man's efforts or ideas has nothing to do with His Church. Jesus built His Church on His blood because of the grace of God. The Church Jesus built is not self-reliant. It is completely dependent upon the grace of God. The Church is where God's 'grace-works' are done (Ephesians 2). Grace is through faith. The Church Jesus built is not a denomination because Jesus did not build denominations. That's the work of man. Have you ever thought about why denominations teach so many different doctrines? People are not seeking or searching Scripture. Grace teaches us to love the Church of Jesus Christ because of our love for Christ. We are never baptized into the Church! We are baptized into Jesus where His grace is received, His love is accepted, His blood applied and we are one with Him. You can't be one with Jesus and not be one with His Church!! Impossible! The Church exists because of Jesus.

Spend time with THE BOOK. Our eternal destiny is based on the teachings of God's word. They are simple but must be sought by faith. There are too many things floating around us, too many good and nice people speaking without any foundation of the truth. Trust God and know His teachings! Seek Jesus and trust what He says. Otherwise, everything gets so mixed together that people have no idea what to believe. It's not because the word of the Lord isn't available. It's because people aren't seeking, just accepting what nice, religious others say as truth. Jesus is the one who came and established the truth from God (John 1:14, 17-18). Think about it!!!

Brent