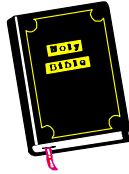


WEST COLUMBIA CHURCH OF CHRIST



“every disciple that is perfect shall be as his master.” Luke 6:40b

God Accepts No Substitutes

One of man's most common practices is substitution. Sometimes it is of necessity and sometimes the substituted product is better than the original. But substitution has its place. The wise may substitute for the ignorant, but the ignorant cannot substitute for the wise.

Instead of making every man suffer the consequences of every sin, God substituted his own Son as a sacrifice for our sins in order for us to escape the penalty of them. (Heb. 5:8-9). But man may not substitute for God. In spite of this truth, man has always tried to substitute his own ways for God's commands. That effort has always failed and always will.

Man attempts to substitute sincerity for truth. The doctrine that "It makes no difference what you believe, just as long as you are sincere" is a vastly popular one. Saul of Tarsus was a sincere, religious man worshipping God according to his conscience, but was "chief of sinners" at the same time. (1 Tim. 1:15; 1 Cor. 15:9). Sincerity does not save. Only the truth makes one free. (John 8:32).

Men substitute prayer or sacrifice for obedience to the truth. It was that very substitution that cost Saul the throne of Israel. **"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."** (1 Sam. 15:22).

Paul wrote, **"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin ye became the servants of righteousness."** (Rom. 6:17-18). Only obedience to the doctrine of Christ will save us. No amount of sacrifice or good moral living will take the place of it.

Christ is the Saviour to all who obey him. (Heb. 5:8-9). The Bible teaches that faith in Christ, repentance from sin, confession of Christ as God's Son, and baptism are necessary for the remission of sins are necessary before the promise of salvation is ours. (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 10:10). Prayer is of no avail if we neglect to obey these commands.

—Continued on page 3

Choose the Strait Gate in 2008!

VOLUME 34, NUMBER 48 December 3, 2008

RECORDS 11/30/2008

SERMONS 12/3/2008

Sun 10 AM Bible Study: 48
Sun 11 AM Assembly: 84
Sun 6 PM Assembly: 45
Weds 7 PM Bible Study: 63
CONTRIBUTION: \$1925

AM: Jerry Manning
PM: Jerry Manning

**“By this we know that we love the children of God,
when we love God, and keep his commandments.
For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments:” - 1 John 5:2,3**

SERVICES

Sunday 10 AM Bible Study
Sunday 11 AM, 6 PM Assembly
Wednesday 7 PM Bible Study
Office Phone (803) 794-5320
Nursery provided
Bible Classes for all ages

LADIES CLASS
2nd Tuesday of month 7-9 PM

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A Warm Welcome awaits you at all our services. Come see!
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“PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER” - James 5:16

- **REMEMBER IN PRAYER:** Beryl Parks, Nina Ruth Meadows (Marcella Klieves' mother), Jack and Elma Berrier, Lynn Drago (Jerry's sister) and Phyllis Johnson.
- **Betty Mathis** is expected to be in rehab at National Healthcare (NHC) Parklane, Room 104A, phone 741-9090 till New Years. She's in good spirits and would love a visit.
- **Elgene Sanders** isn't doing well and hasn't been able to get out the last few weeks. **Eddie Sheppard** isn't well either but has been able to get out.
- **Ron Banks** was due to have spinal surgery Friday.
- **Carolyn Stidham** is to have her knee replacement surgery redone 12/17. She's in considerable pain at the moment.
- **Jan and Sarah Kelleher** have been down with that flu thing that's going around, but are doing better now.
- **Dawn Gamble** was out with some back problems but is doing better now.
- **Lamar Reeves** was out with a flare-up of his Crohn's disease but is doing better.
- **Bobby Giles** was in the hospital last week.
- **Jeanette Reeves** continues to struggle with sin. Pray for her repentance.
- Remember all these, our new brothers and sisters in Christ, and brother **Manning** and those he studies the Bible with, in your prayers.

**"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
- 1 Corinthians 15:57**

“AND THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY” - Acts 2:42

- First Sunday Luncheon, with **Men's Business Meeting** at 1:30 PM.
- **Ladies Bible** class is now meeting Tuesday evenings at 7 pm.
- **MISSION TRIP:** Brother Manning did well in India and is supposed be back in Columbia for this Sunday's assemblies. Remember to thank God for his successful trip and safe return.

**“But to do good and to communicate forget not:
for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” 1 Hebrews 13:16**

“WEEP WITH THEM THAT WEEP” - Romans 12:15

- We are saddened to announce that Sister **Luree Griffin** passed away last Wednesday. She would have been 94 later this month. Funeral and interment were at Greenlawn on Leesburg Road. Remember her and the family in your prayers.

WORK TEAM SCHEDULE: 12/7—D 12/14—A 12/21—B 12/28—C

Choose the Strait Gate in 2008!

God Accepts No Substitutes—continued from Page 1

Paul was a penitent believer, had confessed Christ, and was praying. Yet he was told to "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." (Acts 22:16). If these commands are neglected, even our prayers are abominations. (Prov. 28:9). If we neglect to obey the plain commands of God while we have opportunity in this present world, we are destined for certain eternal punishment. (2 Thess. 1:8).

Many substitute the precepts of men for the plain doctrine of Christ. We cannot hope for a happy resurrection unless we remain true to Christ's doctrine. (1 Tim. 4:16). Those who teach any other gospel or doctrine rest under the curse of God. (Gal. 1:9). Those who are deceived by these false doctrines are likewise condemned, (Matt. 15:9, 14), and a curse instead of a blessing will be a surprising disappointment to them in the day of judgment. (Matt. 7:22-23). The only sure preventive measure against false doctrine is to "search the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11).

Modern religion substitutes entertainment for true worship of God. The items of divinely appointed worship are eating the Lord's Supper, prayer, singing, teaching the word of God and giving of our means to support the Lord's work. All of these are to be done on the first day of the week. (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Eph. 5:19-20). This is a simple system in which all men can participate and glorify God as he has directed.

But some have substituted an elaborate system of entertainment by which they glorify themselves. They offer music concerts, puppet skits, dramas, and human testimonials in place of God-ordained worship. One of the very first lessons man was ever taught was that God will not accept a substitute for an item of worship. Abel offered a blood sacrifice as God directed. (Heb. 11:4). But Cain offered a substitute sacrifice and God rejected his. (Gen. 4:5).

God commands that "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." (1 Cor. 16:2). That financial arrangement for support of the Lord's work is divinely appointed, but man substitutes his own devices such as car washes, garage sales and carnivals in order to please himself. God will accept no such substitutes.

Jesus defined how God is glorified. "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." (John 17:4). God is glorified only by doing his will as he has directed. Jesus did not substitute his own work for that of God's. God has never accepted a substitute for what he commanded. We dare not substitute our own ways for God's today. He simply won't accept them and we will be lost for so doing.

- Alan E. Stout, edler Southwest church of Christ, Oklahoma

“If ye love me, keep my commandments.” - John 14:15