

Harmony Newsletter

Web Site: www.harmoniypbchurch.org

HARMONY PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

P.O. Box 351, Donaldson, AR 71941

Pastor: Neil M. Phelan, JR

Phone: 501-337-6456

Email: phelanneil@sbcglobal.net

“Come thou with us, and we will do thee good...”-Numbers 10:29

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FIVE DISTINGUISHING DIFFERENCES

I was recently talking to a friend who asked me what I thought the three most distinguishing differences were between the Primitive Baptists, and other Christian Churches. These are the three that first came to my mind, which bring me a world of joy, and peace. I have added a couple of extras for a bonus!

1. We believe in a *successful Savior*. What do we mean by that? Simply this: We believe that Jesus Christ accomplished what He came to do. What did He come to do? He came to save His people from their sins, of course (Matthew 1:21). There are many that say they believe this, when their doctrine flatly denies it.

Since we believe that Jesus was a *successful savior*, we do not believe that Jesus only made mankind *savable*. We believe that He saved His people from their sins. If man is only savable, then no one is truly saved. They are just savable. There is no success until a deed is done. We believe the deed is done.

We see success because we understand that Jesus died for *His people only* (the elect) and saved 100% of them. He didn't make His elect savable...He saved them. That is the Jesus of the Bible.

Though universalism is a false doctrine, it is at least *honest*. It lays hands on both: a successful Savior, and a Savior that died for everyone. Thus, universalism says that everyone is going to heaven. At least they have a successful Savior. But they have another glaring problem...there is no hell! Therefore, universalism cannot be true. Jesus didn't die for everyone. He died for His people, and He saved them from the wrath to come.

If we believe that Jesus was successful, we do not believe that Jesus made salvation *possible*. If something is possible, it is *uncertain*. What kind of Savior would that be? How could that be viewed as success? If you are worshipping a savior that only made your salvation possible, you may question the security of it. Our salvation is as secure as Jesus' Lordship. Satan would have to tear our Lord from glory to have one of His sheep. Jesus is successful. He is reigning today, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. That title, in itself, demands success!

Compare that view of Christ to every other system of theology offered in the Christian world, and you will find it to be a distinguishing mark of our people. That is the historical Jesus, the Jesus of the Bible. That is the Jesus of the Kingdom. That is the Jesus of the church in every age. We believe in a *successful Savior*.

2. We believe all the elect are *secure*. What does this mean? It means that none that Christ died for will suffer in hell. It means that Christ's death is effective. It means that His people, the elect, are secure in a Savior's love (See John 6:39; 10:27-29; Romans 9:33-39). It means that none of His chosen will be left behind, lost, forgotten, stolen, or kicked out.

According to Ephesians 1:4, God chose His people (the elect) in Christ before the foundation of the world. He chose them out of a fallen race to save them. He was successful! Therefore, we do not believe that the least will miss out on heaven for any reason.

We do not believe that people will suffer in hell because enough money was not given to evangelize the ignorant. People will not suffer in hell because preachers did not get to them in time. Nor do we believe that a person will suffer in hell because a church member did not share the gospel with them. Though all of these things should be done, they will not add one person to God's eternal election. They are secure because God loved them, and Christ died for them. They are saved! They are secure.

3. We believe in immediate Holy Spirit regeneration. What does that mean? It means that we believe that God gives spiritual life to His people apart from any human means. It means that the Holy Spirit acts independently of the gospel, the church, or any efforts of man. We see this displayed by the thief on the cross, Saul on the Damascus road, and John the Baptist in his mother's womb, when he leaped for joy. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit.

We believe that all of God's people are regenerated, or born again, in exactly the same way: By the immediate work of the Holy Spirit. God does not have one way for the church, and another way for those who have no church; one way for the savage in Africa, and another way for the educated businessman in the city; one way for the New Testament saint, and another way for the Old Testament saint. They all have been, and will be, regenerated in exactly the same way: by the immediate work of the Holy Spirit.

Since regeneration is not dependent upon man, man's ability, man's voice, or man's machinery, it is like Christ...it is always successful. Shouldn't it be? The Holy Spirit is God! God is always successful.

God's call cannot be frustrated. It is from the mouth of God, not the mouth of man. It always reaches its desired target, and imparts spiritual life: "The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." His voice!

Jesus taught this truth. He compared this immediate work of the Holy Spirit with the wind. He said the wind blows where it pleases, so is every person that is born of the Spirit (John 3:8). The wind blows independently of man. Man cannot control the wind. Man cannot direct the wind. Man has absolutely nothing to do with the wind. Conclusion: Man has nothing to do with regeneration.

If I were to ask you when you were born again, what would you say? You may remember a time that your heart was convicted, and you made a decision to follow Christ, but that is different from receiving spiritual life. A person dead in trespasses in sins does not make that kind of a decision. You must have had life previous to your conviction, and decision. A heart of stone feels no pain. A heart made alive can be pricked.

If I were to ask you when you were born naturally what would you say? You may have a birth certificate that gives a date. You may have witnesses that will confirm that date. But you do not really remember it. Nor do we remember our spiritual birth. Nor did we have anything to do with it. But we have evidences of it.

Why is all of this important? Because we give credit to God as the giver of life, both natural and spiritual; we are not responsible for doing what we cannot do; we submit ourselves to God's sovereign will in regeneration; we see regeneration as a power that only God can command. Regeneration is the immediate work of the Holy Spirit alone.

4. Our worship service is apostolic. When you read the worship scenes in the New Testament what do you find? You find knowledgeable adults, worshipping. You always find mature men, preaching and teaching. That is apostolic.

Our worship service is made up of an adoring assembly, not a group of spectators at a performance. The emphasis of our worship service is the preaching of God's word. That is the most important thing we do.

Our worship service it is not designed to please teenagers, and children. It is not a program. It is not a series of man-made rituals.

The whole congregation is involved in the worship service from start to finish. The children sit with loving parents. We sing from the heart, and listen to the word of God expounded by God-called men. That is the simplistic worship service that we find in the Bible concerning the infant church.

Can you imagine Paul playing an electric guitar, Peter on the drums, and John singing vocals? Do you read anywhere where they got a group of young people in a room, and scared them into confessing Christ? My, how Christianity has changed! Yet the Bible has not changed. Nor has God changed concerning how He wants to be worshipped. That is one of the first things that I first noticed when I came to the Primitive Baptist Church. The worship service was reverential, respectful, worshipful...*apostolic!*

5. We view the Bible as God's revelation of Himself to His people. Therefore we do not view the Bible as a book designed by God to get people to heaven. If the Bible is a book designed to get people to heaven many will miss out because there have been ages when Bibles were burned, and the saints were not allowed to worship. If the Bible is a book designed to get people to heaven, many will miss heaven because of the many ways they have interpreted the way, the truth, and the life. Let us be thankful that God did not leave His book for that purpose or men would destroy themselves. The Bible is not a road map to heaven. It is God's revelation of Himself to His people. After all, His people are the only ones that will read it, and believe it.

Yes, the Bible is God's revelation of Himself to His people, to tell them about their God, their Savior, their relationship to Him, and their promises in Him...past, present, and future. It instructs His people how to live, how to walk, how to glorify Him, and how to keep themselves unspotted from this present, evil world. The Bible gives His people the evidence they need to know that their heavenly Father loves them, that they belong to Him, and that they will be with Him one day. The Bible answers all the *big* questions: where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going. God's word is His revelation of Himself to His people. Read it, and you will know more about Him, and your relationship with Him.

Though there are others, those are the ones that come to my mind first. You may say that I am a little prejudiced. I am. That is why I chose to be a Primitive Baptist. Their teaching is based upon biblical truth. That is the most important reason for choosing a place of worship! According to Jesus, the truth will set you free. -NMP

MEETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Mother's Day is this Sunday!
- Annual Picnic at Leon's and Patti's on the 4th weekend in May. Bring your best ice cream recipes and a change of clothes. This is a great time of fellowship! Thank you Leon and Patti for sharing you beautiful place with us.
- Singing at the Crossing on 3rd Sunday after lunch
- Elder W.C. Hatten is scheduled to be with Mt. Paron for their annual meeting:
Friday, May 18: Supper 5:30, Worship 7 P.M.
Saturday, May 19: Worship 10:30 A.M.
Lunch-Worship 2:00 P.M.
Sunday, May 19: Worship 10:30 A.M.
Lunch-Communion and feet washing

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ✓ Norma Phelan
- ✓ Lema Clayton
- ✓ Venette Burnett
- ✓ Ronnie Ledbetter
- ✓ Brenda Stafford