

THE POWERFUL TEACHING OF CHRIST

There are many people in the world who ridicule Jesus Christ. The word "ridicule" means to "mock" or "scorn" or "laugh at". You know that these people are ridiculing Christ because they scorn Jesus' teaching. Jesus did teach by saying "I am the resurrection and the life." He also taught "I am the way the truth and the life." But many people laugh at the teaching that Jesus is the "resurrection", that He is the only "life", the only "truth" and the only "way" to God. Are you one of those people who ridicule the teaching of Jesus Christ?

Hello I'm Larry Murdock. I preach for the Gandy church of Christ.

"Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ does not have God." This is the inspired conclusion of Jesus' apostle John found in 2 John verse 9. John went on to write, "Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son." Friends, these are bold statements! If these statements are true then whoever does not stay in the teaching of Christ has no avenue to God. He or she does not have God!

The apostle John boldly asserts that "everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ does not have God." Notice the phrase "goes on ahead". What does it mean to "go on ahead" of Jesus' teaching? This is a reference to someone who has once been following the teaching of Christ, but is now going on out ahead and beyond his teaching. In fact, the Greek word literally means to "progress."

In most cases the word "progress" is a good word, isn't it? For instance, we want our cities to progress toward perfection. And so, cities move away from dirt streets to paved streets. Cities move away from polluted water to clean water. Cities move away from dilapidated buildings to new buildings. Progress. We want progress for everything we are involved in. We want education to progress so that more and more children learn more and more knowledge. We want the medical field to progress so as to put an end to devastating disease. We want to grow; we want progress.

But friends, when it comes to the teaching of Christ there is to be NO progress. John said, "everyone who progresses beyond the teaching of Christ does not have God." It is a serious, deadly mistake to think that you can add to the teaching of Christ or improve upon the teaching of Christ, or that you can launch from the teaching of Christ to another kind of instruction! That's right!

The opposite of progressing beyond Jesus' teaching is to stay with it. John used the word "abide". Jesus used that word also. Jesus said to the Jews who had believed [on] him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31-32) Are you trying to be a "true" disciple of Christ? Then you must STAY with His teaching! You see, the importance of "abiding" in the teaching of Jesus lies in the fact that Jesus' teaching is truth. The reason you should want to stay with Jesus' teaching is because you will come to know the truth. If truth is NOT appealing to you, then Jesus' teaching will have no appeal to you! You will have no desire to remain with Jesus or to sit at His feet to learn from Him.

Abiding in the teaching of Jesus is the same thing as keeping His commandments. Jesus said this to his followers, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love." (John 15:9-10) If we remain in Jesus' teaching we will be remaining in His love. That means that Jesus will continue His expressions of love toward us. In my opinion, the greatest expression of Jesus' love is the fact that he stays with his people "always" even to the end of the world. I cannot think of a greater gift!

I am reminded of something that happened to the first king of Israel, whose name was Saul. God gave Saul the Holy Spirit, God's continual presence. In fact, at one point Saul prophesied like a true prophet. Saul met a group of prophets on a road one day "And the Spirit of God rushed upon him, and [Saul] prophesied among them. And when all who knew [Saul] previously saw how he prophesied with the prophets, the people said to one another, "What has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" (1 Samuel 10:10-11) That event happened in chapter 10 of 1 Samuel. But in chapter 16 we read that "The Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the LORD tormented him." (1 Samuel 16:14) Between chapters 10 and 16 Saul was accompanied by God's Spirit wherever he went. But something happened in chapter 16 that caused God's

Spirit to depart from Saul and leave Saul with his tormented heart. What happened? Saul disobeyed God's command. Saul did not abide in God's teaching.

Friends, if we do not abide in Jesus' teaching we will be left with our own thinking! We will be left with our own broken hearts! The Spirit of God will depart. The daily presence of Jesus will evaporate. We will have progressed away and beyond the presence of our Savior and Master! Are you ready for that? That's what it means to "abide not in the teaching of Christ."

All during his earthly ministry Jesus maintained that His teaching was what His heavenly Father wanted Him to say. One day while Jesus was teaching in the temple in Jerusalem, the people marveled at his teaching and began to ask one another, "How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?" Well, Jesus must have overheard the question because he immediately answered it: "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether [my] teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood." (John 7:15-18)

Friends, if anyone's will is to do God's will that person will recognize that abortion is completely opposite the teaching of Christ. If anyone's will is to do God's will he will recognize that so-called "same-sex marriage" is no marriage at all! It is abomination. If anyone's will is to do God's will then he will seek God's will at the source, Jesus Christ and His apostles. One of Jesus' apostles suggested to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves." (John 14:8-11)

Friends, the real reason people of the world **do not like** Christians is because they follow Jesus' teaching. The world does not like the people who believe Jesus' worldview and live by His teaching. And in many instances, Christ-followers are persecuted because of their righteous living. That's right! And that is exactly

what Jesus and His apostles predicted. Jesus said, "The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil." (John 7:7) Furthermore, Jesus said, "Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets. "But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. "Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. "Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. "Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets. "But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you." (Luke 6:22-28)

Yes, there are many people and thus many governments in this world who ridicule Jesus Christ and His teaching. They "mock", "scorn", and "laugh at" Jesus' teaching and His commands. They mock His teaching of the resurrection thinking there is no life after death. They mock Jesus' exclusive statement that He is "the way the truth and the life." Are you one of those people who ridicule the teaching of Jesus Christ? Or are you one of those people trust Jesus. You believe that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. If so, then you will want to repent of your sins and find someone who will baptize you into Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. You will want to be added to the church of Christ by Jesus Himself, even as is promised in His Word. (Acts 2:47) You will want to assemble with Jesus' people and promote Jesus' teaching where you live. You will want to filter all the chatter of this world through the teaching of God's Son. And you will remember the command of Jesus' apostle John when he wrote:

"If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works." (2 John 1:9-11)

Visit a church of Christ near you and begin learning the powerful teaching of Jesus Christ.