



"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 – April 18, 2010

Heart to Heart...

One of the greatest blessings of the Lord's church is the autonomy. We do not have to give account for any other congregation other than us! We take no direction from another congregation or eldership. Never in the true church of the New Testament did they have a central place that directed "satellite" churches. We can see in our present world how the denominational churches have a central headquarters somewhere and that headquarters determines the doctrines and teachings. When Jesus addressed the seven churches in Asia, we can see this autonomy clearly.

The church at Ephesus was warned to restore the first level of service and love or it would be removed from existence (Revelation 2:1-7). The church at Smyrna was commended for their faithfulness and encouraged to hold tightly to Jesus (Revelation 2:8-11). The church at Pergamum was warned to repent from the false ideas and teachings or the Lord would come and war with them with the sword of His mouth (Revelation 2:12-17). The church at Thyatira was told to stop tolerating a woman who claimed she was a wonderful, spiritual lady and those who follow her teachings or they would have great suffering if they did not repent (Revelation 2:18-29). The church at Sardis was called a dead congregation that better wake up or face the wrath of God (Revelation 3:1-6). The church at Philadelphia was promised and encouraged to hold tightly to His word because help was on the way (Revelation 3:7-13). The church at Laodicea was rebuked for their lukewarmness and they would be "vomited" out of the mouth of Jesus. Their contentment had come because of wealth and in need of nothing (Revelation 3:14-22).

Today, the church of our Lord of the twenty-first century is no different. Some congregations serve the Lord while others are dead. Some hold tightly to His word while others embrace Satan. Some congregations are filled with people who know they are forgiven and show their love by their devotion to His name. Some congregations are dominated by head-strong, self-willed people who are unfaithful to the Lord's word and hateful in action. Some churches of Christ are like a beautiful radiance of Christ's love and discipline. Some, regardless of their sign on their building, continue to shatter one another, dividing over issues that have little to do with anything other than their personal opinions. They can become breeding grounds for workers of the devil (II Corinthians 11:14-15).

On a final note, let's always remember and apply the words of our Lord and Savior, "***Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.***" (Matthew 7:21) Yes, the church is autonomous but in each location there will be accountability to the Lord. May God be magnified through our service and love to Him and may we forever hold to His precious name! Think about it!!!

Brent