

Discussion Guide: The Simplicity of the Gospel

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42 (NIV)

March 30, 2003 - 8:00 AM Service: "The Simplicity of the Gospel" by Pastor Ken Jones - Greater Union Baptist Church in Compton, CA. Pastor Ken was the keynote speaker at the "Christ and His Church" Reformation Theology Conference. Pastor Ken gave us a background of the conditions of the church when Paul wrote to the church at Corinth and explained how many people get sidetracked from the simple truth of the gospel.

In the church at Corinth they...

- focused on who led them to Christ. Today it's to which denomination are you aligned, or I attend the same church as [a prominent personality], etc.
- were involved in interpersonal disputes (i.e., taking each other to court).
- ignored poor Christian conduct (i.e., immorality in the church, etc.).
- improperly handled the ordinances of God (i.e., Agape Feasts).
- become involved in love affairs within the church...leading to divorce.
- allowed Pagan practices to creep into the life of the church.

In 2 Corinthians 11:1-4 we see how Paul yearned, as a husband for a wayward wife, for the affections of the wayward believers in Corinth to return to their sincere and pure devotion to Christ. Paul was concerned that they were corrupting the simplicity of the gospel of Christ. Just as Eve was enticed by Satan into thinking that, with all God had provided, she still needed something more, we fall for the same line and do the same today.

Pastor Ken shared how he, after receiving Christ, felt he needed something more to make his faith complete. During altar calls at the end of their church services he would come forward time and time again to rededicate himself to God, but it did not bring lasting satisfaction. So, on the advice of other well meaning Christian friends [kind of like Job's friends] who said that if he wants to have a deeper life with Christ he needs to put away his music collection, change his movie going habits, start listening to Christian music, stop smoking cigars, etc. This too did not bring lasting satisfaction. Then he came across a book entitled "Knowing God" by J. I. Packer that changed his way of thinking. In reading the book and getting into the scriptures he learned about the sufficiency of Christ and found that he did not need something else...only Christ.

Before coming to Christ we are alienated from our creator...separated from God. After we receive Christ he comes into our lives and gives us the capacity to live our life through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

Discussion Questions:

- In what ways do many Christians find themselves sidetracked today?
- What are the characteristics of one who is on the right track? ¹
- Are you on the right track? If not, make a commitment tonight to change one thing that will help you get back on the right track.

¹ Matthew 6:33-34, 2 Peter 1:1-11, Philipians 4:19