

# Do I Follow Jesus Christ

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung 11/18/2017

Cottonwood, Arizona

Greetings scattered brethren of God's Church. You are a valid part of the Church of God. You are a part of the Church that Jesus Christ built. It is so good to see you standing strong in the faith after so many years. Most of you remember back to the earlier days of the Church when we went to the world with power preaching the Gospel to the world. We had a tremendous income after the Radio Church of God to do a large work. Every large city in America had a large congregation for each Sabbath service. A clear voice of Truth was available to those God was calling to His Church.

After the death of Herbert W. Armstrong, for us the world wide web (www.) internet became a great way to preach the Gospel to the world. Now for the sake of the Gospel – the information world has become very compact. Weekly sermons can be heard at anytime all around the planet. Passover services do not work so well because God desires we keep Passover in real time as the sun sets beginning the 14<sup>th</sup> of Aviv or 14<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan.

Luke 22:13-15 ...They made ready the Passover. And when the **hour was come**, Jesus sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer:

1Corinthians 11:23-24 I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body for you: this do in remembrance of me.

In any case, the worldwide internet has made it possible to serve the brethren in an expedient manner in preaching, holding fast and contending for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Jude 1:3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

It was much more difficult for the apostles to reach the entire world back in their day.

Matthew 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach **all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Paul's missionary journeys covered the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea (Mediterranean means middle of the earth). But Paul only made **three trips** to those regions. He was not there every Sabbath as many groups have become accustomed today.

The **in-home** groups of Christians in the first century were the valid Church of God. Paul left us a number of examples to see – like down by the riverside...

Acts 16:13 And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a **river side**, where prayer was wont to be made;

The in-home or living-room Church of God is Biblical. They are valid "congregations" or "churches." What does the Bible say? Is the modern practice of small groups of people meeting in private homes for worship, fellowship and instruction unbiblical? Not at all.

1Corinthians 16:19 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

Paul warns the in-home brethren to be wary of church ministers who seek those who will follow them – and not God.

Acts 20:29-31 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, **not sparing the flock**. Also **of your own selves** shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away **disciples after them**. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

I heard Herbert W. Armstrong say, (I wrote it here in the margin of my Bible) "Do not let this happen to you when I am gone!" This is a very emotional meeting for Paul – knowing he would see them no more.

Acts 20:35 I have shown you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to **support the weak** [physically and especially spiritually], and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Acts 20:36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

Acts 20:37 And they all **wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck**, and kissed him,  
Brethren, it is possible that I too, may not see you again after this trip.

Acts 20:38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

Brethren, we too have been scattered – but we were not scattered by true ministers of Jesus Christ. You have been scattered by an abusive and devious segment of insincere hirelings. You and I know very well how much you desire to be among God's True people.

Paul sends greetings to the assembly of Christians meeting Philemon's **home**:

Philemon 1:2 And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the **church in thy house**:

We are living in dangerous days. I am almost sure that there are 7000 scattered faithful brethren today who have not bowed a knee to Baal. Do not ever allow anyone to infer that the reason you do not attend with a big-named group is because you're **lazy and unsociable**. Never mind the false teachings and lack of Godly standards you've had to put up with, and having been put out for maintaining God's doctrines. There are still heavy handed ministers who claim that you are not attending with the bigger groups because you are flippant, casual and disrespectful to God's Sabbath. Then they accuse us of not really wanting to keep the Sabbath, "Oh, I don't really feel like going to services today. I think I'll just stay home."

Brethren, the truth is we are ardent, zealous believers – still in search of all of God's truth. But, those who seek a following for themselves say, "But what about those people who willingly choose to go it alone? Can they really isolate themselves from the church and survive?"

We are not isolating ourselves from the Church – because we are a valid part of God’s true Church, the Body of Christ. We never chose to “...go it alone.” We were forced out unfairly and unjustly – not for any sin or heresy, but for standing for truth in the face of apostasy.

The false minister’s premise is that they are the church—and we are not. They put down the **Church-at-home** brethren.

The implication is that the big corporate organizations are edifying the brethren—while the Church-at-home brethren are keeping people out of God’s Kingdom. The corporate organizations twist Christ’s words saying, "Jesus attended Sabbath services despite the corruption there. Do you think our organization has a few things wrong with it? Things were corrupted in Christ’s time—doctrines, practices, religious leaders, everything. The whole synagogue was run by hypocrites! But Jesus still went to services with them."

Brethren, what these men are trying to do is say that no organization is perfect – so it is OK to go where there is corruption. But in saying this they are impugning Jesus for going along with the corruption –and saying nothing. They are accusing Jesus Christ of going along with the sins of the Pharisees, and doing nothing about it.

That is not the case! Jesus did not do that! Remember this, Jesus never “joined the ranks of the Pharisees! No, Jesus' life's work was to Preach the Gospel, and counteract the Pharisees, and point out what was wrong with that Pharisaical political religious movement - and supply God's righteous way of life - Christianity - an entirely opposite approach from the religiosity of His day and ours.

Some of these larger *splinter* groups – (we all splintered off of Worldwide Church of God) like to believe that they are “**The Church leaders**” among all the churches. But brethren, do not forget that those “**leaders**” did not take a stand against the Joe Tkach apostasy – just the opposite – they put out those faithful brethren who would not go along with the Joe Tkach apostasy.

We live in an era in which the true brethren must be allowed to patiently **heal** – it is only proper and right. Brethren are reluctant to trust again after being **hurt** repeatedly by a harsh ministry.

\*\*There are brethren like yourself, who continue seeking for others with whom to fellowship – who are **living** according to God's truth. It is God’s Will that all the brethren, including those that were **driven away**, be fed and nourished – that’s a **good work**.

How many of us were driven away by harsh ministers who remain in the larger groups? How many of us were **disfellowshipped** and **marked** for holding fast to God’s Word? We had our names read from the pulpit so that the brethren would not speak to us!

We had to look all around – all over – to find likeminded brethren. The big organizations **did not** send search parties out to look for us. And most of the Worldwide Church of God brethren did not come looking for us either.

Ezekiel 34:4 *Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; ... **neither have ye brought again that which was driven away**, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.*

*With force and with cruelty* – those are God’s words. How many organizations boast that they are **God’s favorite** group – pleasing God the most?

Some of those groups think that the “work of God” depends on **them**.

Or, that **they are doing** the **primary work** at the forefront of preaching the gospel;  
Or they possess the **privilege of leadership** because of their past positions in the apostate Worldwide Church of God,  
Or claim to be doing the **greatest work**...  
Or they are the **biggest work**;  
Or have **more TV** stations;  
Or they claim to be the **spear point** of the work of God.  
Or they have the most **senior man**;  
Or they have the **brand** that isolates and distinguishes them above all the others;  
Or they have produced the **most literature**;  
Or that they alone **received the baton of Church authority** that was passed down;  
Or some such claim of **dominance**?

Brethren, are we blind to the **divisiveness** of that rationale? Is God pleased with the divisiveness? Where were they when the apostasy set in? ... they were on the wrong side – just going along with it.

**\*\*It is God who does the "Good Work" – we are merely His tools at best.**

John 6:29 This is the **Work of God** that you believe on Him [Jesus Christ] whom He [the Father] has sent.

Jesus prayed **FIVE** times *that His people may be one*.

Here's one of those places:

John 17:11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, **that they may be one**, as we are.

Which organization possesses the faith and humility to **act on unity**?

I want to turn to some Scriptures that show how God will select one of these big groups, or their head man, to lead all the other groups to the Place of Safety. **Brethren – there is no such Scripture.**

And if we can't find any Scriptures that show **a particular man** will speak for **all** the corporate organizations – let's turn to some Scriptures that show how God will bring hundreds and hundreds of people from these big groups, and leave to others out. **Brethren – again there is no such Scripture.**

At the point in **time** when God speaks to Jeremiah in the Book of Jeremiah 1:2, Judah has turned completely away from God. Brethren, you and I have come to the point where we are a very scattered people – even all around the world. No longer do we find ourselves in large congregations of 400 or 800 people.

Those large congregations did not remain faithful to the Truth of God... And now we find ourselves a small flock - **one of a city, and two of a family**.

Jeremiah 3:11 And the LORD said unto me, [Jeremiah says], The **backsliding** Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah.

Idolatrous Israel looked "good" compared to treacherous Judah.

Jeremiah 3:12 Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for **I am merciful**, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger forever.

Jeremiah 3:13 Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, [Idolatry with the stocks] and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD.

\*\*Jeremiah's prophecies are **dual in nature** – having more than one fulfillment.

Jeremiah 3:14 Turn, O **backsliding** children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you **one of a city, and two of a family**, and I will bring you to Zion:

Jesus is prophesying to Jeremiah about those going into the millennium here – and how He will provide a **good ministry** for them!

Jeremiah 3:15 And I will give you **pastors according to mine heart**, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

Where are the big organizations then?

Jeremiah 3:16 And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more.

Jeremiah 3:17 **At that time** they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the **imagination of their evil heart**. [which is all too prevalent today.]

Jesus said:

Luke 12:32 Fear not, **little flock**; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.

Brethren, look at our ages, look at the gray heads among us – just about everyone of us – we are fast becoming, not the Church of God at home... But we are the **Church of God at Senior Citizen's homes!** And we are fast becoming the **Church of God in Nursing Homes**. And time is fast running out.

On a more serious note, I'd like to answer the question, "Is it safer to attend with the big political church groups – or not?" Is it wrong to meet with **Church-in-home brethren?**

Acts 5:42 Daily in the temple, and in **every house**, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

The New Testament example was **house-churches**, not controlling corporations with a hierarchical class systems.

Romans 16:3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus...

Romans 16:5 Likewise greet the **Church that is in their house**.

We have brethren in the Church today who were called by God before there was a single congregation in their entire state—and yet they were a part of God's true Church. True Church people came from everywhere to attend the Feast in those early days of the Radio Church of God. They had zeal. God tells us to regain that zeal.

Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: **be zealous** therefore, and repent.

There is a clear and present danger in the bigger groups which believe that “They have arrived – they are doing everything correct.” I want you to turn to a scripture in the New Testament that shows that weekly Sabbath services consist of **large congregations in every town** with a pulpit at the front and a headquarters dictating what is to be played in all the congregations so that some particular leader or leaders are held in the limelight. ***Brethren – again there is no such Scripture.***

There are not any Scriptures like that! And yet – that is exactly what so many people are still looking for more than 30 years since Herbert W. Armstrong died.

\*\*The clear biblical example is that individual congregations were taught to be spiritually dependent from any remote leadership’s headquarters.

They were taught to take the responsibility in hand — in their local congregations — and to work at independently administering God’s perfect way — autonomously in their local congregations.

Consider the example of Paul in instructing the local congregation at Corinth to put sin out of their midst — in order to keep the congregation Holy unto the Lord.

Paul desired to see the congregation become spiritually mature enough to handle their own affairs in a biblical way.

That kind of spiritual maturity is considered rebellious by today’s larger corporate organizations.

\*\*When it looks like we are joyfully going along with all the programs of large political churches — we encourage the weak brethren to **accept their destructive agenda**. We are responsible to give a good and right example to others.

Brethren, you are a valid part of the Body of Christ.

End: Do I follow Jesus Christ