

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mrs. Douglas, Mrs. Hadley, Mr. Mathis, Lamar Mathis, Ms. Matchett, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mr. Sowder, Mr. Winns.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website:
www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com.
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

Oak Grove Church of Christ Bulletin

2922 NW 76th Terrace, Jennings, FL 32053

February 25, 2018

Religious Titles

By Derek Long

One of the practices Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees for was their wearing of religious titles. Jesus said, "They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.' But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ" (Matthew 23:6-10). Today the practice of men wearing religious titles for honor or distinction is still alive and well although our Lord clearly condemned such.

Religious Titles Which are Unauthorized

In certain denominations, individuals wear the title "Father." Jesus clearly condemns us applying the term Father to ourselves as a religious title of honor or distinction (Matthew 23:9). Men who would wear such a title and groups which would endorse the taking of such a title are displeasing in the sight of God. If you are a part of a group which refers to its religious leaders by the term "Father," it would be good to consider how God feels about this practice and repent.

Another term applied to men at times without scriptural authority is the term “Reverend.” The King James Version only uses the word “Reverend” in one passage. The passage where the word appears is in Psalm 111:9. Psalm 111:9 says, “He has sent redemption to His people; He has commanded His covenant forever: holy and reverend is His name.” The passage is referring to the Lord and not to some man. We are to hold God in reverence but we are not to hold some man in reverence.

The terms “Father” and “Reverend” are two religious terms applied to men which ought not to be used as religious titles at all.

Religious Titles Which are Misapplied

The Bible speaks about those who are bishops (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-2; Titus 1:7). The term bishop is used in these passages interchangeably with the term “elder” to describe the same group of men. In Titus 1:5, Paul commands Titus to “appoint elders in every city” and then talks about what a “bishop must be” (Titus 1:7). The reason he can go from “elders” in verse 5 to “bishop” in verse 7 is both terms refer to the same group of people. Today there are religious groups with bishops who are unmarried or are women. When we read the qualifications for a bishop or elder though it becomes apparent they were married men (1 Timothy 3:1-2; Titus 1:6). In addition, 1 Peter 5:1-2 speaks about how the elders are to serve as “overseers” (same concept as the word bishop) by shepherding the flock of God which is among them. Here we find bishops or elders were limited in overseeing only the particular congregation of which they were a member. Today when the term bishop is used to refer to an individual overseeing multiple congregations throughout a geographical

area it is being used in a manner unknown to the New Testament. We need to avoid using the term “bishop” in this manner.

One of the most misused religious terms in our society today is the term “pastor.” The word “pastor” appears in the New Testament only once in the King James Version (Ephesians 4:11). It is found among a list of various gifts God provided the church with to help it carry out its work (Ephesians 4:7-16). The word “pastor” comes from the concept of serving as a shepherd. Therefore, if we understand who it is who shepherds God’s people today, we will know who the “pastors” are in the Lord’s church today. When Paul spoke to the elders from the church at Ephesus (Acts 20:17), he told them to “shepherd the church of God” (Acts 20:28). When Peter wrote to exhort the elders (1 Peter 5:1), he told them to “shepherd the flock of God” (1 Peter 5:2). Therefore, pastors are the same group of men referred to as elders or bishops. Pastors must meet the qualifications laid out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. There was always a plurality of elders or pastors in a local congregation (Titus 1:5; Philippians 1:1; Acts 14:23). Therefore, the one man pastor system is wrong. Just because an individual is a preacher or evangelist (Ephesians 4:11; Romans 10:14; 2 Timothy 4:5) does not necessarily mean the man is also a “pastor”. If a man is a preacher of the gospel and yet does not meet the qualifications for a pastor and has not been appointed as an elder of the congregation he is working with, he should not be considered as a “pastor” but simply as a “preacher” or “evangelist.”