

It Doesn't Matter

Premise: We often use the phrase, "It doesn't matter," regarding church practices or doctrines. However, in reality, everything matters to some degree. What we mean is that the "it" in question is not the most important thing, that "it" should not be the focal point of the discussion, but rather something else should be.

How can we say these better?

- Attendance doesn't matter. Rather, attendance is not the make-or-break issue when God decides whom to accept. But attendance is important for these reasons:
 - Admonition: gentle, patient warning about potential pitfalls (Romans 15:14)
 - Connect spirits (1 Corinthians 5:4)
 - Display the character and power of Jesus (1 Corinthians 5:4)
 - Build up and be built up (1 Corinthians 14:26)
 - Singing as teaching and admonition (Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16)
 - Comfort (1 Thessalonians 4:18, 5:11)
 - Exhortation (Hebrews 3:13)
 - Stir up love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24 – 25)
 - Share problems and pray about them (James 5:16)
 - Serve one another with the power supplied by God (1 Peter 4:10 – 11)
 - Lord's Supper
 - Remember redemption
 - Proclaim return
 - Sacrificial meal: celebration of forgiveness (God trusts us anyway)
 - Fellowship: connectedness of spirit
 - Re-assert unity
 - Singleness of purpose, conscience sprinkled, sanctified
 - Sincerity and truth
 - Release from slavery
 - Unavoidable affliction
 - Haste to reach the Promised Rest
 - Imbibing Jesus' character (drinking blood and eating flesh)
- Baptism doesn't matter. Rather, faith is the deciding factor, which is partially illustrated in baptism. Refusing to follow directions is one thing, ignorance is another. The symbolisms of baptism are (I am declaring that I accept):
 - Sins are washed away, bodies washed with pure water. (Acts 22:16, Hebrews 10:22)
 - Into the forgiveness of sins and receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)
 - I am reserved for godly purposes (sanctified). I have been declared debt-free with regard to justice (justified). (1 Corinthians 6:11, Ephesians 5:26)
 - I am being transformed into the image of Jesus, putting on Christ. (Galatians 3:27)
 - I am a sacrifice like Jesus. (Romans 6:3, 12:1)
 - I walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4)
 - I will be raised on Judgment Day. (Romans 6:5)
 - I am freed from slavery to sin. (Romans 6:6)
 - I am dedicated to miraculous unity. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

- I am redeemed and forgiven. (Colossians 2:11 – 14)
- I am being renewed by the Holy Spirit. (Titus 3:5)
- I am being rescued from an evil world. (1 Peter 3:21)
- Doctrines don't matter. Rather, weaknesses in doctrines create problems. Again, there is a difference between believing what I want to believe and just being ignorant.
 - Weaknesses in faith which may collapse when the “fires of life” occur. (1 Corinthians 3:9 – 15)
 - Differences in understanding often create division (1 Corinthians 1:12 – 17, 1 Corinthians 8, Romans 14)
 - Authority-driven leadership infringes on liberty (1 Corinthians 10:29, 3 John 9, 1 Corinthians 4:19)
 - Authority-driven leadership preys on the weak (2 Timothy 3:1 – 9)
 - Irrational doctrines lead to unhealthy practices (1 Timothy 4:1 – 5)
- Behavior doesn't matter. Rather, redemption has already happened. Now faith is the deciding factor. The indwelling Spirit is given to the faithful. The Spirit then repairs the character which results in good behavior. If behavior goes wrong, it is still sin and is inappropriate. Don't excuse it; work on faith so the Spirit can fix it.
 - ...as free, not using liberty as a cloak for vice (1 Peter 2:16)
 - You have been called to liberty, only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh. (Galatians 5:13)
 - We are the Temple of the living God, therefore cleanse yourselves, perfecting holiness in the fear of Christ (2 Corinthians 6:16 – 7:1)
 - Unrighteousness is not “fitting” (Romans 1:28, Galatians 5:1 – 14) Fitting?
 - John 17:20 – 23 “That the world may believe that Thou sent Me”
 - Matthew 5:48 “Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect”
 - Malice and wickedness spoil sincerity and truth (1 Corinthians 5:8)
 - Displaying the power of God (2 Corinthians 4:7)
 - Works of the flesh are contrary to the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16 – 25, Colossians 2:18 – 3:10)
 - We are no longer slaves of sin (Romans 6:1 – 18, 8:13)
 - Everyone who has this hope purifies himself just as He is pure (1 John 3:3)
 - Failing to put off the old man grieves the Holy Spirit of God (Ephesians 4:30)
 - Inconsistent behavior causes the name of God to be blasphemed (Romans 2:24, Isaiah 52:5, Ezekiel 36:22)
 - Christian slaves who do not honor their unbelieving masters cause the name of God and His doctrine to be blasphemed (1 Timothy 6:1)
 - Poor behavior by older women (perhaps including all Christians) causes the word of God to be blasphemed (Titus 2:5)