

A SOUND CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

- A. When we publish the fact that denominations contradict the will of the Lord regarding unity and that they ignore the pre-denominational nature of the church Christ bled for, we are, invariably, answered with hostility from our neighbors in the denominations. Rather than contemplate Scripture, most of our neighbors prefer to be offended, so they retort, “You people in the church of Christ think you’re the only ones going to heaven” or something similar.
- B. The fact is, though, that we do not believe everyone in churches of Christ will be eternally saved.

I. WHAT IS MEANT BY “SOUND”?

- A. **Luke 5:31; 15:27**

The word means to be healthy or well.

- B. **Titus 2:1, 2, 8**

Applied spiritually, soundness describes what is appropriate for “doctrine”, for “faith”, and for “speech”. There is healthy teaching and, implicitly, unhealthy teaching. There is healthy belief and, implicitly, unhealthy belief. There are healthy words and, implicitly, unhealthy words. Although the words “sound” and “church” are not paired in the New Testament, the concept of churches needing to be healthy and whole in what they teach, believe, and say is ever present.

II. MANY SO-CALLED CHURCHES OF CHRIST ARE UNSOUND

- A. **1st Corinthians 5:1-8**

Paul warned the church of Corinth that the whole lump could become leavened by just a little leaven. He used this analogy to chasten the

Corinthians for continuing to receive in fellowship a brother guilty of fornication. Tolerance of immorality causes a church to be unsound.

B. 1st Corinthians 11:17-34

When a church is not worshiping correctly, it is coming together for the worse rather than the better (17), it is coming together for judgment (34).

C. Galatians 1:1-2, 6-10; 2:16, 21

Brethren who pervert the gospel are cursed by God! Churches that receive perverted gospels are turning away from grace. Specifically, the churches of Galatia were reverting to the Law of Moses and thereby spurning faith and grace.

D. Revelation 1:12-13, 2:5

In the Revelation, the churches are depicted as lampstands and the Lord warned these churches He might remove their lampstands if they persist in their faults. It is entirely possible for a congregation meeting under a “church of Christ” banner to be one no longer recognized by Christ as His own.

1. Revelation 2:4, 15, 20; 3:1, 15

Churches risk their lampstands because of:

- a. Lacking love,
- b. Idolatry,
- c. False doctrine,
- d. Sexual immorality,
- e. False prophecy,
- f. Deadness, and
- g. Lukewarmness.

Thus, a church can be in danger of losing its fellowship with Jesus for wrong worship, wrong teaching, wrong living, and failure to do good.

2. Revelation 2:5, 16, 21; 3:3, 19

All those churches in error were called on to **repent**.

3. Revelation 2:5, 16, 22-23; 3:3, 16

Those churches that refused repentance faced dire consequences:

- a. Losing their lampstand (identity),
- b. Fighting Jesus,
- c. Sickness, tribulation, and death,
- d. Facing Jesus as a thief in the night (sudden judgment), and
- e. Being vomited out!

III. UNSOUND SOULS MAY BE HIDING IN SOUND CHURCHES

A. 1st Corinthians 12:12

The body is composed of many members, but the members are still individuals.

B. Galatians 6:5; Ephesians 4:16

Even in churches that are sound, Christians need to pull their own weight.

C. Romans 14:12; 2nd Corinthians 5:10

Final judgment in eternity will be determined on a case-by-case basis, the Lord evaluating the accountability of each soul.