

November 14, 2021

The View

“Sirs, we wish to see Jesus.” – John 12:21

Welcome Visitors!

You are our honored guests and we are pleased that you have chosen to visit us today. Our goal is to do everything according to God’s word, including respecting its silence. This is a church of Christ; we are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church and we have no earthly “headquarters.” The six elders oversee this work and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily aimed at our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don’t understand something, please do not hesitate to ask one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God’s word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

**Please fill out a visitor’s card and put it in the collection plate located near the entrance.
We do not solicit donations from visitors. See page 4 for more information.**

Schedule

The Lord’s Day

9:30 AM Bible classes for all ages

10:30 AM: Assembly

Preaching Today

David Posey

Jesus on Depression & Anxiety

Livestream at 10:30 <https://tinyurl.com/5f2cbm3y>

Bible Class @ 1:30 PM in room 15/16 Hebrews

Bible Class @ 5 PM — A Study of Prayer (Auditorium)

Young People’s Class, 5 PM

@ David & Christie Posey’s home

Middle school class: monthly

Contact Dan Stegall at 818- 209-9810)

Wednesday 7 PM @ Building

Bible classes for all ages

*Auditorium: A Study of Paul’s Letter to the **Philippians***

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“A way that is right and cannot be wrong”

By David Posey

If you were asked to draw a picture of Noah’s ark, what would it look like? Genesis 6:14-16 describes the ark this way:

Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits, its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above, and set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks.

Notice that the text says “*the door*” — *one door*. So, if I were to draw a picture of it, it would have one door, no more. If I do that, I can’t go wrong. So, I believe that the ark had one door. Why? Because that’s what the Bible says and when I stick to what the Bible says, I can’t be wrong.

Some people think I’m too strict. But why would I add or take away from what God says? I Peter 4:11 says, “*if any man speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God.*” An old saying I heard often, from preachers in my youth, was “*speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where it is silent.*” That needs further explanation, but it’s a good place to start. Why complicate it? When it comes to how we function as a church and how we conduct our assemblies, there is a way that is right and cannot be wrong.

Before I continue, let’s stipulate that there are many things in life that are left to our judgment, things God has not spoken specifically about. For example, we are to assemble (Hebrews 10:24-25) on the first day of the week “to break bread” (Acts 20:7), but God leaves it up to us to choose the “appointed time” within that 24 hours. We pray for wisdom in those things (James 1:5) but we must make the judgment.

So, when I say, “there is a way that is right and cannot be wrong,” I’m talking about the many things God has *specifically* addressed. We’ll look at some of those in a bit. But first, let’s make sure we all agree that there *is* specific truth. Sometimes we call it “doctrine,” or “teaching,” or “commands” from God that we are bound to keep.

Let’s look at a small sample of texts that speak to the reality and importance of the commands of God. Here they are:

Psalm 19:7-11; Proverbs 30:5-6; Matthew 4:4; Luke 8:20-21; 11:27-28; John 8:31-32; Acts 17:11; Romans 10:16-17; I Thessalonians 2:12-13; II Timothy 2:15; 4:3-4; Hebrews 4:12; I Peter 4:11; Revelation 19:12-14.

There are more, but that should suffice. All of these passages affirm that *God has revealed his will to us*. If we follow his will in those specific areas of life and worship, *we know we are right and cannot be wrong*.

Many of us love to think outside the box, and that’s great. But there are also many who are thinking “outside the box” who have no idea what is *in* the box. Paul, in I Timothy 6:3-5, warns us:

If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.

My point is simple: when it comes to our assemblies, in everything we do, there is a way that is right and *cannot* be wrong. I mentioned that if we speak as God speaks, and speak the way God speaks (I Peter 4:11) then how can we be wrong? Another old saying goes like this: “*do Bible things in Bible ways and call Bible things by Bible names.*” This seems so simple;

yet the majority of the religious world has rejected this and that’s why there is so much division in the religious world.

Years ago, Ken Sterling and I taught some classes inside a state prison. We learned that there were 33 men, representing about 20 different religious groups, all who were

allowed to teach Bible classes there. At the end of one of the classes, an inmate came up to me in tears and said, “I go to all the Bible classes offered here; but I’m very confused because they all seem to say something different. How can I know the right way?” What would you say to that man? All I knew to say was, “demand that anything someone tells you comes directly from the Bible.”

Paul told Timothy, “*The Lord knows who are his*” (read II Timothy 2:14-19). In context, Paul is talking about those who respect the word of God and handle it correctly. Those who quarrel about words or engage in irreverent babble are not his. God has given us *a way that is right and cannot be wrong*.

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Applying this principle to our assemblies

So, let's think about this from the standpoint of how a church should function. Can we know? Can we be sure? Are we doing the right things in the way we worship, use the Lord's money, and doing all the work that Christ has assigned to his church? Specifically, how should we conduct our assemblies? Is there a way that is right and cannot be wrong?

In churches today we see extremes. There are men who are always pushing the envelope, testing the waters to see how far they can go. For example, one large community church had a youngish preacher who made himself the center of everything. He is a talented speaker with lots of charisma. His sermons, however, are always challenging the plain meaning of the text. And he was given to theatrics. One Sunday, as he walked out on the stage, he did it to AC/DC's song, *Highway to Hell*. I'm not kidding. That song includes these lyrics:

And I'm going down/ All the way/ I'm on the highway to hell.

Why would he do that? Would you say that he was worshiping God in spirit and truth as John 4:24 instructs us to do?

At the other extreme are churches that have reduced everything down to a couple of songs, with loud organ music, a 10 minute homily (sermon) and taking the Lord's Supper once-a-year. Ironically, all of these churches take up a collection every week. I wonder what authority they use to do that? Other than that, their services are short and compact so that the people who come are not inconvenienced too much.

We hit on something there: *people don't want to be inconvenienced*. When I was preaching in surf city, California, otherwise known as Huntington Beach, a couple drove up behind the building, came in the back door and asked if they could take the Lord's Supper. They were in a rush, on their way to Las Vegas. Is that what Jesus had in mind when he instituted the Lord's Supper?

We believe that taking the Lord's Supper every week, taking it seriously, giving it ample time in our service, is a way that is right and cannot be wrong. We have a clear example of it in Acts 20:7. Why would you *not* want to remember the Lord's death every first day of the week?

There is a right way to do things, a way that cannot be wrong. I was talking to a man who had visited with us but was not a member of a church of Christ. He said he attended a church in Arkansas when his daughter was looking into attending Harding University in Searcy. He was impressed with the simplicity of the service there so, living nearby, he decided to attend. I contacted him and in our discussion, he asked, "OK, tell me why a church way back in Arkansas and a church here in Folsom are doing exactly the same things in the same way in their assemblies. And don't tell me it's

because you're reading from the same book," he said with a grin. I said, "it's because we are reading from the same book."

It's not that complicated. The Bible is not hard to understand when it comes to what we do on the first day of every week — pray, sing, preach, take up a collection and observe the Lord's Supper — all "Bible things." Every church that is aiming for truth does those things. When we stick to the things God has told us to do, and avoid those things about which God is silent, how can we go wrong?

So... we preach and teach directly from the scriptures — and make sure that any other material we use utilizes the Bible properly (see II Timothy 2:15). When it comes to leadership, we choose a plurality of men who are married and have believing children (I Timothy 3; Titus 1) and meet all the qualifications of elders. We sing songs, hymns and spiritual songs, without a choir and without musical instruments (see Ephesians 5:19). Some may disagree but how can that be wrong? The Lord's Supper is observed every first day of the week: not monthly; not quarterly; not annually (Acts 20:7). All of our income is derived from the free-will contributions of our members, collected on the first day of the week. See I Corinthians 16:1ff.

If we follow the pattern as laid out in the scriptures for how we spend the money in the treasury — for edification of the saints here in Folsom, or for helping brethren ("benevolence") when they are suffering loss or for supporting individual preachers in other places, how can we be wrong?

And, if you call me David, Mr. Posey, Brother Posey, Poppy, or even "hey preacher," that can't be wrong. But if you call me *the* Pastor with a capital "P," that can be wrong. Why? Because I am just one of six "pastors" (shepherds, elders). And, please, *never* call me "Reverend." That title means "a person to be revered" and only Christ is to be revered (see Matthew 23:1ff).

When it comes to telling a person how to be saved, is there a way that is right and cannot be wrong? In Acts 2:37-38, when people asked Peter "what must we do?" What did he say? "Repent and be baptized for forgiveness of sins..." So, tell me: *how can we be wrong if we repeat exactly what an apostle said?* People can debate all they want about the necessity of baptism or what happens to the man in the desert who can't find water or the woman who dies before she gets to the church building baptistry. But let's talk about what we *do* know: Peter said, "repent and be baptized for forgiveness of sins." And that's **a way that is right and cannot be wrong.**

If I'm reading my Bible, there are things that are right and cannot be wrong. If you don't agree, please tell me where I've got it wrong. — dpaulposey@mac.com

[Adapted from a sermon I preached on October 6, 2019]