

Redwater Restorer

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness..." (Matthew 3:3)

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Behold The Pattern

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Redwater
Church of Christ

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AM Worship 10:45 a.m.
PM Worship 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday
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Throughout time God has given man a pattern to follow. Noah was given a pattern for the Ark and was commended for following it (Genesis 6:14-15, 22). It was the vessel built to Divine specifications which delivered Noah and his family. Moses was given a pattern for the tabernacle and was commended for following it (Exodus 25:9, 40; 40:16) It was the tabernacle built to Divine specifications that God filled with His glory (Exodus 40:16, 34).

In like manner, God has given us a pattern to follow in the New Testament for our worship and service. From the Greek word TUPOS, found 16 times in the New Testament, come the words "pattern" and "form" (1 Timothy 1:16; Romans 6:17,18; 2 Timothy 1:13). It can be seen from 1 Timothy 1:16 that there is a moral pattern which God expects us to follow. "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." It can be seen from Romans 6:17,18 that there is a doctrinal form that God expects us to follow. "... But ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." Notice Paul says "Being then made free." It was when this form was upheld by obedience that they were "made free from sin" and considered "servants of righteousness." It can be seen from 2 Tim-

othy 1:13 that God expects us to maintain "the form" established by His word. "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." Notice Paul says "the" form. The definite article conveys the idea of "one and only." When a pattern or form are put into words they become instructions. God's word, Scripture, when maintained in true form is instruction in righteousness. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16,17). Notice, this pattern includes "all scripture," the entirety of the New Testament, and is able to "thoroughly furnish" us in every area of our life. Thus it can be seen that there is a moral and doctrinal pattern set forth in God's word. God's word is the one and only pattern. This pattern involves the entirety of the New Testament. This pattern guides us in every avenue of our life. And adherence to this pattern is essential to salvation.

Pattern and identity go hand in hand. Pattern produces identity. If something can be identified it has a pattern. If something has a pattern it can be identified and reproduced. It is this pattern principle which enables us to identify and reproduce the New Testament church. Consider this analogy if you will: Your vehicle is built according to a pattern.

Behold The Pattern (Cont.)

You know and recognize certain characteristics of that pattern. The make, model, color, etc. When you enter a parking lot to locate your vehicle you look for those characteristics determined by the pattern in order to identify your vehicle. When you find a vehicle that has each and every distinguishing characteristic you know you have identified the correct vehicle. (Nothing can be more embarrassing than trying to enter the wrong vehicle.) In like manner God has built His church according to a pattern, the New Testament. You can know and recognize the characteristics of that pattern. The biblical place and time of origin, a biblical name, a biblical organizational structure, a biblical plan of salvation, biblical worship, etc.. To locate the Lord's true church we need to look for those characteristics determined by the pattern. When you find a church that has each and every distinguishing characteristic you can know you have identified the Lord's true church. (Nothing can be more fatal than to enter a church that God has not built.) Without this principle we would have no hope of locating the Lord's true church.

One might question whether adherence to such a pattern principle is important to God. Would God have issued such stern warnings concerning His word, the pattern, if it were not important to Him. *"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man*

preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man" (Galatians 1:6-11; see also Revelation 22:18,19). Consider one last analogy if you will: Suppose you wanted to build a house. You present a plan to the builder. He proceeds in building your home, but takes the liberty to add an extra bedroom, eliminate a bathroom, etc. Would you accept the home with its changes in design? Certainly not! Then why would anyone expect God to accept a church that is not according to His divine plan? Now some may be saying to themselves, "If the changes were improvements I would accept the house as it was built." This might be so with men, but who would dare say that they can improve on God's plan? The church is the Lord's house (1 Timothy 3:15), built by Him (Matthew 16:18), paid for with His own blood (Acts 20:28). He invites us to enter and be His bride, but not to tamper with its plan. Only the fact of a pattern can make the following words profitable, *"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen."* (1 Timothy 6:20,21).

When this pattern principle is upheld the Lord's true church will be restored, those within will be Christians only, true unity will be established, souls will be saved, and God will be glorified.

Mark Miller

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