

WEDNESDAY SERMON

Willow, Alaska

Date: August 7, 2019

Scripture Reading: Acts 15:1-4

Text: Multiple

Subject: CONFESSION OF FAITH SERIES – Every Church is Complete under Christ - 48.

48. Every Church Is Complete under Christ*

Although the particular congregations are distinct, individual bodies, every one complete within itself, yet they are all to walk by one rule of faith. Also, they should have the counsel and help of one another, if necessity requires it, though every church is under Christ her head.

1Co.4:17, 14:33, 36, 16:1; Eph.2:19; 1Ti.3:15, 6:13, 14; 1Co.4:17; Ac.15:2, 3; 2Co.8:1, 4, 13:14; Jude 3.

**Formerly Article 47 of 1644 COF*

1 Corinthians 4:17 (KJV) *For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in **every church**.*

- **[Although the particular congregations are distinct, individual bodies, every one complete within itself,]** - The expression "every church" tells us that all churches are distinct and equal. They are complete in themselves with Christ as the head of the church. Let us notice the expression "the whole church" in these few verses. If these individual churches were whole churches, how then could they be parts of a larger entity (a supposed universal church), either physical as the Roman Catholics think; or spiritual as the daughters of the whore (the protestants) contend.

Acts 15:22 (KJV) *Then pleased it the apostles and elders, **with the whole church**, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:*

Romans 16:23 (KJV) *Gaius mine host, and of the **whole church**, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.*

1 Corinthians 14:23 (KJV) *If therefore the **whole church** be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?*

- **[yet they are all to walk by one rule of faith.]** As these next few verses tell us.

1 Corinthians 14:33 (KJV) *For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in **all churches of the saints**.*

1 Corinthians 14:36 (KJV) *What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?*

1 Corinthians 16:1 (KJV) *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given **order to the churches of Galatia**, even so do ye.*

Ephesians 2:19 (KJV) *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the **household of God**;*

1 Timothy 3:15 (KJV) *But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the **house of God**, which is the **church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.***

1 Timothy 6:13-14 (KJV) *I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; **14** That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:*

- **[Also, they should have the counsel and help of one another, if necessity requires it, though every church is under Christ her head.]**

Acts 15:1-4 (KJV) *And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. **2** When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. **3** And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. **4** And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.*

In this passage from Acts 15, we see the church at Antioch making a determination that Paul, Barnabas, and certain others would go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about the question of circumcision. So they went and we have the record. Let us keep in mind that the New Testament was still being written at this point in time and was not finished till near the end of the first century – so the churches did not yet have a full revelation in writing. They had

to lean to the Apostles' doctrine. The apostles' doctrine was not different from the completed New Testament – it is just that the churches did not yet have it in writing.

2 Corinthians 8:1-4 (KJV) *Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; 2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. 3 For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; 4 Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.*

In these verses, we read an account where the Corinthian Church was encouraged by the grace of God bestowed on the Macedonian churches. It is always an encouragement to see the LORD work in other churches to His glory and this is the case with Corinth and Macedonia.

2 Corinthians 13:14 (KJV) *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.*

Blessed words of encouragement from the Apostle Paul to the church at Corinth where he had spent many months in serving in their midst. Such words of comfort and encouragement are always appropriate to all the churches.

Jude 3 (KJV) *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you **that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.***

Here is a very serious exhortation to all of the saints in the churches everywhere. Near the end of the New Testament, this is a startling exhortation to us all. Jude gave diligence to write to us of the common salvation, but there was a need for him to write to us and exhort us. To what end?

The ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. – Earnestly? Earnestly means in an earnest manner. What does earnest mean? It means serious, important; ardent in the pursuit of an object; eager to obtain or do; zealous with sincerity; with hearty endeavor; heartfelt; fervent. Earnestly is an adverb which modifies the verb “contend.”

What does contend mean? Webster’s 1913 defines contend as: “To strive in opposition; to contest; to dispute; to vie; to quarrel; to fight.” Seriously, zealously, heartily, fervently strive in opposition to (in this case, error); to contest it; to dispute it; to vie against it; to quarrel against it; to fight against it.

What are we earnestly contending for? For the faith which was once (for all) delivered unto the saints? Who are the saints? They are the members of the Lord’s churches. The faith once delivered unto the saints includes the whole body of revealed truth of the Holy Scriptures and most certainly includes all that is involved in the truth of the gospel.

We must, therefore, contend for:

1. The Plenary, verbal inspiration of the scriptures in the sixty-six books of the King James Version of the Bible.
2. The existence of God – the Father, the Son (or the Word), and the Holy Spirit. One God.

3. The Genesis account of creation in seven 24-hour days consisting of an evening and a morning.
4. The world-wide flood in the days of Noah in which eight persons were saved in the Ark prepared while all life in which was the breath of life died.
5. God's choosing of Israel as his covenant nation to the exclusion of all other nations to whom He gave his word, the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the law, the service of God and the promises; the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.
6. Jesus Christ of Nazareth, God's only begotten son, was born of the virgin Mary, who had known a man. That holy thing born of her was conceived of the Holy Ghost.
7. Jesus Christ, the Word, was in the beginning with God and was God and all things were created by him and for him.
8. Jesus Christ was tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin, for there was no sin in him – he could not sin.
9. Jesus Christ died on a cross at the hands of wicked men being delivered to them by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.
10. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; to save His people from their sins which he did when he died in their stead on the cross.
11. Jesus Christ died on the cross; was buried in the borrowed new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea; and was raised from the dead after three days and three nights.
12. Jesus Christ showed himself alive for forty days after his passion and was seen of witnesses, not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God and was seen of Cephas and of the twelve and of above five-hundred brethren at

once; then of James and all the apostles and then the Apostle Paul as one born out of due time.

13. Jesus Christ commanded his church to go into all the world; to make disciples; to baptize them; and to teach them all things whatsoever he had commanded them; and promised to be with his church until the end of the age.
14. Jesus Christ was received up to the right hand of the Father after showing himself to the witnesses for forty days and is now seated at the right hand of the Father as our great high priest to make intercession for us.
15. Jesus Christ is our coming king for he shall descend with his saints at the first resurrection where the bodies of his saints shall be raised and all who are alive be changed and caught up to meet him in the air.
16. Jesus Christ and his saints shall rule the world with a rod of iron during the 1000-years-reign on this earth.
17. Etc, etc.